

YOUR LOVED ONES

It is important to talk with our loved ones about what matters most to us should we become seriously ill. This conversation may be difficult. However, it is a very important conversation to have, especially before a medical crisis occurs. Having this conversation can help ensure that the health care received supports our goals, values and preferences at all

stages of life and in all steps of our care.

If you become seriously ill, would the people who matter most *really* know what matters most to you? Having this talk is best when friends and/or family members are calm and not in distress, before a crisis. Start talking now about what matters most to you should you become seriously ill. Doing so will help prepare those who love you to



make decisions for you because they will have had the chance to ask questions and talk about why certain things are important to you. Having these conversations early will prevent your loved ones from making decisions on your behalf without knowing what you would want.

Talking can strengthen relationships.

The trust involved in having these conversations brings everyone closer together. Opening up about what we would want in the face of a serious illness or injury is a way to show care. It also helps prepare our decision maker(s) to best support you during a medical crisis.

Learn More:
MyLifeMyChoices.org

CONVERSATIONS CLARIFY

We can't plan for everything. We *can* help manage life's unknowns by talking openly about what matters to us and what we'd want, or not want, if faced with a serious illness or injury.

Conversations about things that can't be controlled can actually help give us a sense of control. Tomorrow's questions can be answered today by sharing our values and preferences with the people who matter most.

We cannot predict every choice to be made, but we *can* empower loved ones to make decisions for us with confidence. If we don't say it, they won't know it, and may feel helpless or guilty about the decisions made on our behalf.

WHEN THOSE YOU LOVE DON'T WANT TO TALK

These talks can be difficult. Some people may try to avoid talking altogether; try to find a way to *show* how important this is to you. The following are two ways to deal with resistance:

RESISTANCE *"I don't want to talk about it now. Let's do it later."*

RESPONSE *"Later may be too late. I want you to know my wishes today, in case you have to make decisions for me tomorrow."*

RESISTANCE *"You're not sick or dying. Why do we need to talk about this now?"*

RESPONSE *"That can change any minute, leaving me unable to make decisions."*

CONVERSATION STARTERS

REFER TO PAST TRAGIC EVENT/SUDDEN ILLNESS

"Remember the (car wreck, sports injury, drug overdose)? It came out of nowhere! Their family had no idea what type of treatment he/she wanted, and there are still hard feelings among family members."

BRING UP A SPECIFIC SHARED MEMORY

"Remember how hard it was for Dad when Grandma had her stroke? He and your uncles argued over everything. I don't want you to go through that if something happens to me. So here's what I want if something happens to me."

REFERENCE SOMETHING YOU RECENTLY READ

"I just read about Health Care Decisions Month. It's in April to encourage us to express future health care wishes to others. It made me think about what I'd want, and I'm comfortable talking to you."

MENTION A MOVIE EVERYONE'S SEEN

"Did you see (movie name)? It made me start thinking about what I would want if I get that sick. Can we talk about it a little?"

DISCUSS THE DEATH OF A CELEBRITY

"Can you believe Kobe Bryant died at 41? Hard to imagine the difficult decisions his family had to make while going through tremendous grief. What would you want?"