

GETTING PAST THE RESISTANCE

Communication is the single most important step in health care planning. Why is it important to talk about your wishes with the people who may be called upon to speak or decide for you?

1. No matter what your Advance Directive says, others will not fully understand your wishes. The more thoroughly you communicate, the easier it will be for everyone to respect your wishes.
2. It will help you think about what you want. Others will ask you questions or tell you things that will make you think about your wishes in another way.
3. It will help your loved ones make difficult decisions with less pain, doubt, and anxiety
4. It may save money. Sometimes families continue medical treatments long past the point where they are helpful, simply because they are unsure what their loved one would have wanted. This is emotionally and financially costly.
5. It may even bring your family closer together.

There's no "right" way to start, nor is there a "right" time. The discussion does not have to be somber and mournful. Here are some suggestions for getting started:

Start with a story of someone else's experience:

"Do you remember what happened to so-and-so and what his family went through? I don't want you to have to go through that with me. That's why I want to talk about this now, while we can."

Blame it on your attorney:

"Mr. Darrow, my lawyer, says that before I complete some legal documents, I need to talk over with you some plans about end-of-life medical care."

Use the worksheets provided in this packet to guide the discussion.

Use a letter, tape, or video recording as a starting point. At first, it may be easier for people to hear what you have to say if you are not there.

Ask someone to be your spokesperson if necessary.

**START THE
CONVERSATION**

