CONVERSATION :COYL OF YOUR LIFE (COYL) TOOLKIT



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<u>Conversation of Your Life</u> ("COYL") is a program of The <u>New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute</u>'s <u>Mayors Wellness Campaign</u>.

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For more information, or to become a COYL Partner, please contact: <u>Julie DeSimone</u> or <u>Katie Bisaha</u>.

New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute PO Box 2246 Princeton, NJ 08543

For more information, please contact: Jdesimone@njhcqi.org Kbisaha@njhcqi.org 609-452-5980

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INTRODUCTION TO THE TOOLKIT

The <u>New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute</u> (Quality Institute) is the only independent, nonpartisan, multi-stakeholder advocate for health care quality, safety, and affordability in New Jersey. We work at the local, state, and national level to make New Jersey a healthier place to live, work, and thrive. At the local level, in partnership with the <u>New Jersey State League of Municipalities</u>, we run the <u>Mayors</u> <u>Wellness Campaign</u> (MWC). The MWC is a statewide community health initiative that provides mayors and community leaders with evidence-based tools and strategies to improve the health and wellness of their community.





The MWC has grown to include 432 participating communities, with more joining every year. Local MWCs are encouraged to form diverse stakeholder committees to assess local health needs, plan and implement programs, and evaluate program impact. Committees include local leaders, municipal staff, business owners, non-profit social service and religious organizations, health care providers, schools, and residents – who are key to the success of programs. For more information about how to start or strengthen your local MWC, review our <u>MWC Handbook</u>.

COYL BASICS

WHAT IS COYL?

<u>Conversation of Your Life</u>, or COYL, is an initiative of the Quality Institute's MWC that aims to provide communities throughout New Jersey with resources, educational programs, and connections to subject matter experts and speakers on how advance care planning (ACP) is an essential part of health and wellness. Advance care planning is something individuals can do to express their priorities for how they want to be cared for and how and where they want to live.

COYL aims to empower residents throughout New Jersey to discuss, document, and share their health care priorities with the people who matter most, their health care proxy, and their health care providers to ensure their voices are heard in case they are not able to speak for themselves in a medical emergency or due to a serious illness. The program aims to spark a community culture change so that speaking openly about the later stages of life and end-of-life is normal and encouraged.



KEY TERMS

Gaining familiarity with the key terms at the heart of COYL will help you to successfully incorporate it into your MWC. These terms include active, intentional health care planning and meaningful conversations about choices for living and care at the later stages and end of life. Whether these are unfamiliar terms or a refresher, reviewing them and including them is essential to incorporating COYL into your MWC.

Advance Care Planning (ACP): A

process of making decisions about future health care preferences in case a person becomes unable to make their



own decisions. ACP includes discussing values, goals, and treatment options with loved ones, as well as documenting these preferences in legal documents like advance directives.

End-of-Life Care: Medical, emotional, and practical support provided to individuals nearing the end of their lives. This care aims to improve the quality of life and provide comfort for those with life-limiting illnesses.

Advance Directives: Legal documents that outline an individual's health care wishes and preferences, including choices about medical treatments, life-sustaining interventions, and organ donation. These directives guide health care decisions if the individual is unable to communicate their wishes.

Below are some common types of advance directives:

- Living Will: A document that specifies the medical treatments or procedures a person wishes to receive or avoid if they become incapacitated and are unable to communicate their preferences. It typically covers treatments like life support, resuscitation, and artificial nutrition.
- **Do-Not-Resuscitate (DNR) Order:** A specific advance directive that indicates the person's desire to avoid cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) in the event of cardiac or respiratory arrest.
- **Practioners Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST):** This form enables patients to indicate their preferences regarding life-sustaining treatment. This form, signed by a patient's attending physician, advanced practice nurse or physician's assistant, provides instructions for health care personnel to follow for a range of life-prolonging interventions. This form becomes part of a patient's medical records, following the patient from one health care setting to another, including hospital,



nursing home or hospice.
Five Wishes: An advance directive document that combines the elements of a living will and health care power of attorney. It often includes personal, emotional, and spiritual considerations along with medical preferences.

Health Care Proxy/Surrogate: An

individual designated to make medical decisions on behalf of another person, often outlined in an advance directive. This person ensures that the patient's wishes are respected if they cannot communicate.

Palliative Care: A specialized form of health care that focuses on improving quality of life for individuals facing

serious, life-threatening, or terminal illnesses. Palliative care aims to improve the quality of life for patients and their families, regardless of the prognosis which focuses on providing relief from the symptoms, pain and emotional distress associated with these conditions. Not only does it address physical symptoms, but also the emotional, psychological, social and spiritual needs of patients and their families. A multidisciplinary team of health

care professionals works together to provide comprehensive support and care.

Hospice Care: Specialized care for individuals with terminal illnesses, emphasizing comfort and quality of life rather than curative treatments. Hospice care provides physical, emotional, and spiritual support to patients and their families.



PURPOSE OF THE TOOLKIT

The COYL Toolkit serves as a comprehensive resource to promote ACP and healthy aging within New Jersey communities through the following key objectives:

- **Providing Foundational Education:** The toolkit offers an essential introduction to advance care planning, equipping communities with the knowledge to initiate discussions effectively.
- **Showcasing Practical Strategies:** Through a variety of program ideas and awareness tools, the toolkit inspires communities to implement engaging initiatives that facilitate conversations about end-of-life care.

• **Empowering with Resources:** By sharing a wealth of valuable materials, the toolkit empowers residents with the information needed to make informed decisions about their health care preferences.

HEALTHY AGING AND COYL



WHAT IS HEALTHY AGING?

Healthy aging is the process of maintaining physical, mental, and emotional well-being as individuals grow older. It encompasses several factors that contribute to a high quality of life during the aging process. Here are key aspects of healthy aging:

- **Physical Health:** Healthy aging involves maintaining physical fitness, preventing chronic diseases, and managing existing health conditions. Staying active, making nutritious food choices, getting enough sleep, limiting alcohol intake, and proactively managing your health are essential components.
- **Mental Well-Being:** Cognitive health is crucial for healthy aging. This affects how we think, feel, act, make choices and relate to others. Check out our MWC Mental Health Toolkit.
- Social Engagement: As we age, it can become challenging to maintain social connections. This makes adults more likely to be socially isolated or to feel lonely. Social interactions reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness and reduce risk for heart disease, depression, and cognitive decline. Check out our <u>MWC Reducing</u>. Social Isolation Toolkit.
- **Emotional Resilience:** Emotional health plays a significant role in healthy aging. Practicing stress management, cultivating positive emotions, and seeking support when needed, contribute to emotional well-being.
- **Aging in Place:** An integral aspect of healthy aging is the concept of aging in place. This approach emphasizes individuals' desire to live in their familiar homes and communities as they age. Aging in place aligns with the principle of maintaining independence, well-being, and a sense of belonging as individuals transition through different life stages.
- Preventive Care and Chronic Disease Management: Regular medical check-ups, vaccinations, and screenings are essential to detect and prevent health issues. Preventive measures help individuals maintain their overall health and manage chronic diseases.
- Advance Care Planning: Considering and planning for later stage and end-of-life care preferences is an important aspect of healthy aging. Communicating health care priorities and values ensures individuals' choices are honored.



HOW DOES COYL ALIGN WITH HEALTHY AGING EFFORTS IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

The COYL initiative aligns with healthy aging initiatives. COYL provides residents with the information and resources they need to create an ACP to support their choices for later stage and end of life care and express their wishes through ACP. Healthy Aging programs at the local level often include programs or policies that enable people to stay in their homes and "age in place." Indeed, according to a 2021 AARP Home and Community Preferences Survey, over six in ten adults express a strong desire to age within the comfort of their homes and communities, a sentiment even more pronounced among individuals aged 50 and older.

Having a COYL initiative in your community can support healthy aging and aging in place by:

- Creating Open Dialogue and Social Connections: COYL encourages open discussions about later in life and end-oflife care preferences. These conversations not only address medical choices but also foster social connections among family members, community members, caregivers, and health care providers. Meaningful communication supports emotional well-being and reduces feelings of isolation, aligning with the social engagement aspect of healthy aging.
- Furthering Personal Empowerment and Autonomy: COYL empowers individuals to express their priorities and values. This empowerment aligns with healthy aging principles by giving individuals greater control over their medical decisions and promotes decision-making even the later event where someone may no longer be able to speak for themselves.
- Reducing Anxiety and Promoting Resilience: Engaging in advance care planning through COYL can reduce anxiety about uncertain medical situations and end-of-life decisions. This emotional preparation contributes to emotional resilience, an essential part of healthy aging that allows individuals to adapt positively to life's challenges.
- **Promoting Meaningful Life Transitions:** COYL facilitates conversations about significant life transitions, which is integral to healthy aging. These discussions help individuals navigate changing circumstances while maintaining a sense of purpose and fulfillment.

Incorporating COYL into healthy aging initiatives strengthens communities' commitment to supporting individuals throughout their aging journey, ensuring their voices are heard, choices are respected, and overall well-being is enhanced.



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HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCH COYL IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Below you will find a collection of guidelines and resources specifically tailored for COYL programming. They are designed to help you plan and implement successful COYL events that promote meaningful discussions on advance care planning and later in life and end-of-life decisions.

ADDING A COYL ADVOCATE TO YOUR MWC COMMITTEE

To enhance advance care planning and healthy aging in your community, consider having a designated COYL advocate on your team. This advocate can be anyone with an interest in promoting advance care planning and healthy aging. They will advocate for the inclusion of healthy aging discussions in your local MWC programming and assessments. Having a COYL advocate on your team ensures that these crucial discussions are integrated into your MWC, positively impacting the health and wellness of your community.

Quality Institute staff can connect your MWC with a local COYL partner who can potentially join your team as a dedicated COYL advocate.

Examples of COYL Advocates:

- Palliative and Hospice care professionals
- Older Adult Services professionals
- Health care professionals
- Librarians
- Clergy members
- Eldercare attorneys
- Caregivers
- End-Of-Life Doulas
- Subject matter experts in ACP



COYL Advocates can fulfill various roles to support the integration of COYL and health aging by:

END-OF-LIFE DOULAS

End-of-life doulas provide companionship, comfort, and guidance to those facing a terminal illness or death.

- Serving as the voice of COYL and healthy aging by attending MWC meetings to ensure these important topics have a dedicated space in the conversation.
- Acting as liaisons with the Quality Institute staff to identify ideal speakers and programs to promote COYL and healthy aging in the community.
- Publicizing COYL programs.
- Offering expertise as speakers at COYL

programs, sharing valuable insights and knowledge with participants.

 Collecting survey data to evaluate and improve COYL programs.

To become a COYL advocate, fill out our <u>COYL</u> <u>Partner Form</u>.

INCLUDE COYL IN YOUR COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Assessment is a crucial step in assuring your MWC addresses your community's health and wellness needs. If your municipality plans to



conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment, consider asking questions about ACP and resources to support residents as they age and face new health challenges.

For example, feel free to use this <u>COYL Needs Assessment</u> for more guidance.

IDEAS FOR COYL PROGRAMMING

When planning events and programming with your MWC, consider <u>these</u> workshop



options. Quality Institute staff can connect you with subject matter experts for these programs.

We understand that the concepts of advance care planning and later in life or end-of-life topics are broad and diverse. While these resources provide a starting point, we are open to your suggestions and welcome your input to ensure we cover a wide range of relevant subjects. Please let us know if you have any specific topics in mind that you would like us to include in our discussions and materials.

STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION

Now that you understand your community's needs and have selected a COYL program, it is time to take important steps towards development and implementation. This section provides you with valuable guidance and actionable steps to ensure the success of your COYL program.



Steps to Implementing Your COYL Program:

- 1. Establish Program Goals
- 2. Consider these Program Planning Essentials
- 3. Develop And Implement a Promotional Plan
- 4. <u>Schedule a Prep Call</u>
- 5. <u>Implement the Program</u>
- 6. <u>Measurement and Evaluation</u>
- 7. <u>Acknowledgements and Thank Yous</u>

Step One: Establish Program Goals



Before planning a COYL program, it is important to determine what you want to accomplish. Consider these questions when planning:

• What is the purpose of the program? Identify the key objectives you intend to achieve through this program. Is it to encourage advance care planning conversations,

promote community engagement, or enhance awareness on later in life and end-oflife care options?

- How can we collaborate and form partnerships? Explore potential collaborations with local organizations, community groups, health care providers and more. Each of these partners can amplify the program's reach, share resources, and diversify perspectives.
- What program will we implement? Diverse program options can be found in the <u>Program Guide</u>. Consider aligning the chosen program with your community's needs and identified goals.
- Who is our target audience? Are you targeting older adults, caregivers, young adults, cultural or religious communities, or specific settings such as an assisted living facility or senior center patrons? Tailoring the program to your audience enhances relevance and impact.
- What is our timeline? Establish a realistic timeline for your program planning. Determine if it will be a short-term initiative over a few months or a year-long effort. This will help you effectively distribute resources, plan, and coordinate.

Step Two: Consider these Program Planning Essentials

Consider the following elements when developing your program plan:

- **Capacity:** Assess the time availability of your MWC members, volunteers, and partners. Explore opportunities for collaboration with other organizations or employers to expand capacity.
- **Budget:** Identify cost-free options for program offerings and seek potential sponsors or partners



willing to support expenses or provide incentives for the program.

- **Measurement:** Define success by establishing measurable goals such as the number of attendees, frequency of COYL events, distribution of pamphlets, survey results, and identification of new partners.
- **Audience:** Identify the potential number of participants and address any specific needs they may have, such as accessibility for elderly or individuals with disabilities, or multilingual materials for a diverse community.
- Location: COYL programming is best held in "community living rooms." These include but are not limited to local community centers, libraries, housing complexes, faith-based organizations, or senior centers where people already gather. Reach out to secure a suitable venue. Ensure it accommodates the intended audience with considerations like parking, public transportation, clear signage, and any audiovisual requirements.
- **Timing:** Schedule the program to suit your target audience, maximizing attendance. Leverage noteworthy events like National Health Care Decisions Day on April 16 or National Hospice and Palliative Care Month in November for additional promotional opportunities. Be mindful of any conflicting community events that might impact attendance.

Step Three: Develop and Implement a Promotional Plan

Keep your target audience in mind when deciding on advertising options.

Here are some budget-friendly ways to spread the word about your COYL event:

 Utilize event creation networks such as Facebook "events,"



or your municipality events

Eventbrite, Meetup, and/



page. Make sure to contact neighboring municipalities, organizations, and agencies to help spread the word.

- Create or use <u>sample promotional posts</u> for MWC committee members, partners, and community organizations to post on their social media channels (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter). Tag @NJHCQI, #ConversationOfYourLife, and/or #COYLNJ so the Quality Institute and our members can also help promote your events.
 - Develop or use <u>COYL template flyers</u>.
- Include in newsletters of local community and civic organizations.
- Send them to local newspapers (online and in print).
- Post in community centers, grocery stores, and local doctor's offices.

- Ask local businesses to hang flyers to advertise events to customers.
- Mail to or drop by large companies to distribute to employees.
- Share with Quality Institute staff to include on the <u>COYL</u> <u>event page</u>, on our social media channels, and for distribution to surrounding MWC towns as well as COYL partners.
- Partner with libraries, senior centers, assisted living facilities, faith-based organizations, and others to promote the event.



Step Four: Schedule a Prep Call

To ensure a successful program, host a prep call with all involved. Consider the following recommendations:

- Set a clear agenda: Outline the topics and goals to be discussed.
- **Define roles and responsibilities:** Assign tasks to participants leading up to and during the event such as registration, room set up, moderators.
- Share relevant materials in advance: Distribute necessary documents ahead of time.
- Encourage active participation: Create an inclusive environment for open discussion.
- Take thorough notes: Assign someone to document important discussions, decisions, and action items.
- Follow up with action items: Summarize key takeaways, decisions, and action items in a follow-up email. Clearly communicate responsibilities, deadlines, and any next steps.

Implementing these recommendations will help make your program prep call effective and productive.

Step Five: Implement Program

Before the event, foll<mark>ow this sho</mark>rt checklist:

- Confirm all reservations and event speakers to ensure and assess their availability and preparedness.
- Review responsibilities with MWC team and COYL partners leading up to and including the day of the event to ensure everyone is clear on their roles.
 - Identify and choose one person as the point of contact to manage any unforeseen problems.

Step Six: Measurement and Evaluation

Evaluation is crucial to figuring out if the program goals were accomplished. There are many ways to evaluate the success of your program. Some options include:

- Record attendance to evaluate the reach of the event by using our <u>attendance</u> <u>template</u>.
- Keeping records of COYL program attendance allows you and the Quality Institute an opportunity to measure the scope of COYL programs and serves as a feedback mechanism to improve program promotion. Design your own sign-in sheet or use our template.
- Gather participant feedback by:
 - Distributing self-developed surveys or using our program evaluation surveys at the end of events. This is a cost-effective way of collecting data on behaviors, values, beliefs which can help you in planning future programs. We designed a survey you can share with participants hosted through Survey Monkey as well as a few ways to administer it.
 - The link to the survey can be found <u>here</u>.
 - A QR code printable template to place on tables during events can be found <u>here</u>.
 - A slide template to add to presentations can be found <u>here</u>.
 - A printable survey can be found <u>here</u>.
 - If you use a printable survey, please email scanned copies of surveys to Katie Bisaha at kbisaha@njhcqi.org.
 - Conducting interviews and focus groups.
 - Collect any press coverage and share with Katie Bisaha (<u>Kbisaha@</u><u>njhcqi.org</u>).

Step Seven: Acknowledgement and Thank You's

Be sure to send thank you letters or emails to all sponsors, volunteers, speakers, and partners. Solicit their feedback as well and be sure to keep in touch with them when planning your next event. It is important to acknowledge the hard work of all involved with the event.

RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT COYL

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In this section you will find strategies and resources that your municipality can use to raise awareness about COYL and healthy aging.

PLANNING EVENTS AROUND KEY DATES

<u>National Health Care Decisions Day</u> (NHDD) and <u>National Hospice and Palliative</u> <u>Care Month</u> (NHPC) are great opportunities to share the importance of advance care planning with your community through your MWC. April 16th is National Health Care Decisions Day (NHDD). The day exists to inspire, educate, and empower the public and providers about the importance of advance care planning. NHDD is an initiative to encourage individuals to express their wishes about

health care and for providers and facilities to respect those wishes, whatever they may be. Check out these resources to support NHDD in your community.

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Chatham MWC Advanced Care Planning Presentation

This is a short video that you can share with residents on the importance of advanced care planning. Check out this <u>article</u> and how Chatham incorporates COYL into their MWC. The Conversation Project

NHDD is an initiative of the Conversation Project. Access this website for ideas, tools, and resources to promote NHDD in your community.

November is National Hospice and Palliative Care (NHPC) Month. This is an opportunity to raise awareness and recognize the importance of hospice and palliative care services. It serves as an opportunity to educate the public about the benefits of compassionate end-of-life care and to honor the dedicated professionals who provide comfort and support to individuals and families during challenging times. Check out these resources to support NHPC in your community.

CaringInfo

A program of the <u>National Hospice</u> and <u>Palliative Care Organization</u> that provides free resources to educate and empower patients and caregivers to make decisions about serious illness and end-of-life care and services.

New Jersey Long-Term Care Ombudsman

Resources for residents about longterm care facilities. Residents can access local volunteer opportunities, access the Social Isolation Project, address challenges they face, and more.

COYL EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES TO SHARE WITH RESIDENTS

The resources below reference relevant material that can be used to educate your MWC committee and residents. These resources also serve as educational tools to spread the importance of advanced care planning and related topics.

Community Messaging Toolkits

Utilize our community messaging toolkits throughout the year to spread awareness of advance care planning. Toolkits include:

- Themed messaging and images that can be used on social media.
- Newsletter blurbs.
- Instructions on adding resources to your website.
- COYL bookmark and more!

Access these toolkits <u>here</u>.

COYL BOOKMARK

The COYL bookmark can be shared with residents to offer them a reminder to engage in conversations that matter. Community leaders can distribute these bookmarks to residents to raise awareness around this topic. <u>Contact Quality Institute staff</u> to order bookmarks.

COYL TRI-FOLD

Distribute COYL brochures to community organizations and municipal buildings in your

area to help residents reflect on and share their values and preferences. Brochures are available in multiple languages, including English, Spanish, Polish, and Korean.

MEDIA CLUBS

Invigorate conversation with movies, articles, books, and podcasts. Each media club is an opportunity to have residents connect with the municipality and each other on what their wishes and priorities are.

These media clubs can be used in a variety of ways:

- On social media,
- Book/movie discussion clubs,
- As handouts to have available at your local libraries and community centers, and
- Libraries can set up COYL conversation starter stations with the suggested media lists and the media to borrow on display.



WEBINARS

Check out and share our recorded educational sessions. Topics include:

- Workplace Wellness and COYL
- Living with Alzheimer's for Caregivers
- Planning Ahead for a Medical Emergency
- The Heart of the Veteran and Advance Care Planning and more!

Access these educational sessions here.





MAYORAL PROCLAMATIONS

A proclamation is an official announcement that affirms the mayor's or council's support of the COYL program in your community and offers another opportunity to generate attention to your work and upcoming events.

To provide an official announcement that affirms the mayor's support of National Health Care Decisions Day (April 16), a nation-wide effort to promote advance care planning use <u>this</u> sample proclamation.



LET US HELP

Quality Institute staff are here to help you successfully integrate COYL into your programs and goals. Quality Institute staff will provide:

- Technical assistance to integrate COYL into your MWC,
- COYL presentations at your MWC meetings,
- Connections to COYL advocates to your MWC who can champion healthy aging,
- Subject matter experts for community programming,
- Tools and resources that can support your efforts related to COYL.

For technical assistance with COYL, contact Community Health and Policy Associate, Katie Bisaha at <u>kbisaha@njhcqi.org</u> or 609-452-5980

KEEP IN TOUCH

With more than 70 percent of New Jersey's towns participating in the Mayors Wellness Campaign, there is a strong culture of MWC towns sharing innovative ideas, best practices, and suggestions about how to be successful in your efforts. We want to hear from you – about your program successes and where you are struggling. We can help promote your good work or help connect you with other towns that have planned

similar programs. Sharing our triumphs and struggles allows us to build each town's programs to be better in the following year. And remember, we would love to share your success, so please send us your press clippings, photos, videos, and stories via info@njhcqi.org.



RESOURCES (APPENDIX)

Sample COYL Proclamations

- <u>NHDD</u>
- <u>Community Needs Assessment</u>
- Workshop Guide
- Implementation Tools
- Promotional Social Media
- <u>Promotional Flyer Templates</u>
- <u>Attendance Template</u>
- Program Evaluation Tools
- Awareness Tools
- <u>Community Messaging Toolkits</u>
- <u>COYL Bookmark</u>
- <u>COYL Trifolds</u>
- Media Clubs
- <u>Webinars</u>
- Additional MWC Resources
- <u>Handbook</u>
- <u>Reducing Social Isolation Toolkit</u>
- Mental Health Toolkit



CONVERSATION OF YOUR LIFE (COYL) TOOLKIT



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