

Advance Care Planning: Preparing for the Unexpected



COVID-19 has taken away our control over daily life. But we do not need to lose control over how we want to be treated at the end of our lives. The pandemic is prompting many people to consider the advance care directives they may have been putting off. The Quality Institute's [Conversation of Your Life \(COYL\) program](#) has advocated for everyone to talk openly with their loved ones about their end-of-life wishes—whether it's months, years, or even decades before a medical crisis. The truth is none of us know the future.

COYL guides families toward valuable and supportive conversations, and then helps people express their wishes in legally binding documents. Many of our COYL events are community gatherings. Physical distancing, however, does not have to prevent you from having these vital conversations with your family, especially if you are all hunkered down together. Great conversations can also take place through the phone or other means, such as video-chatting platforms such as Skype, Zoom, or FaceTime.

Many COYL participants tell us that they document their wishes as a gift to the people they love. We also find that in the most unsettling times being prepared can bring a measure of peace and comfort.

Safe Social Distancing Practices to Share Your End-Of-Life Care Wishes Virtually



Below we compiled trusted resources, all accessible from home, to help you start thinking about your wishes and to show you how to approach these important conversations with loved ones and document what's most important to you.

Consider Your Priorities



What Do I Value and Want? Play a round of [Go Wish](#) online. Go Wish is a game, which helps you find words to talk about what is most important to you and your end-of-life care planning. View instructions on gameplay [here](#).



Who Will Be My Health Care Proxy? The Conversation Project's YouTube Video, "[Who Will Speak For You](#)," is a great way to begin thinking about who you would ask to be your health care proxy (someone you designate to make health care decisions for you if you become unable to speak for yourself).



Listen to BBC Radio's Podcast, [My Dying Wishes](#). Joan Bakewell, and her panel, explore why it's so important to make your wishes known—and how to go about doing it.



Why is Advance Care Planning Important? Learn why by reading [Mrs. Lee's Story](#) (available in both Chinese and English) and [Finding Your Way](#) (available in Spanish), which was developed by the Coalition for Compassionate Care of California.

Communicate Your Wishes



Hear tips from [Dr. Angelo Volandes](#) on how to talk with your loved ones and health care providers about your values and what's important to you.



Use The Conversation Project's [Conversation Starter Kit](#) to help you have the conversation with your loved ones. This kit is available in multiple languages and is free to download.



The [4-step iCare Plan](#), from the Goals of Care Coalition of New Jersey, can help you make difficult medical decisions and communicate them with your health care providers.



Films and documentaries are great ways to introduce the topic to your family and friends. Some selections include:

- [Consider the Conversation: A Documentary on a Taboo Subject](#) – A 360-degree view on end-of-life care featuring the perspective of three patients in their fifties and the professionals who care for them.
- [Being Mortal](#) – Follows writer and surgeon Atul Gawande as he explores relationships between doctors and their patients nearing end of life.
- [Dr. Angelo Volandes: The Conversation](#) – Join Dr. Angelo Volandes as he explores the stories of seven patients with very different experiences and demonstrates what seriously ill people need most—having the *The Conversation*.

Create Your Advance Directive: Options to Virtually Put Your Wishes in Writing

[Five Wishes](#) is an easy-to-use, legal advance directive that helps you think about the medical, spiritual, and psychosocial aspects of care that you want to receive. During the COVID-19 crisis, Five Wishes is free to download online and print at home.



Record your wishes using the New Jersey Department of Health's [Instruction Directive](#) and [Proxy Directive](#).



Use websites, such as [MyDirectives](#) or [Cake](#), to start a new advance care plan online to share with your loved ones, upload your Five Wishes or another advance directive you've already completed.



For more information about COYL, how to join your local COYL task force, and access to additional resources, please visit our [COYL page](#) or contact [Dapa Wilcox](#), Community Coordinator, at info@NJHCQI.org.

*Conversation of Your Life (COYL) aims to engage communities in conversations around advance care planning. Learn more [here](#).
COYL is generously supported by [The Horizon Foundation of New Jersey](#).*

