

Video 1

Introduction to Advance Care Planning, and Having the Conversation



0:02 – Narrator: Are you prepared?

We plan for trips, marriage, our education, the birth of a child...and yet, we often forget to plan for something that is very important.



0:15 – Narrator: There are some situations that no one really wants to think about: being sick, being in an accident, or even dying. We don't like to think about these situations because they're unpleasant, because they're scary, or because we may believe that thinking about these situations will bring them about. The reality is, whether we think about these situations or not, they may occur when we least expect it.



0:40 – Narrator: Why is it so hard for us to discuss with our family about what type of medical treatment we would want in these situations? One reason it's hard to discuss this is that we don't have much information about these choices. That's what these two videos are about – giving you the information and tools you need to have discussions with your loved ones so that you and your loved ones are prepared.



1:08 – Narrator: Imagine that you are in a situation where you are too ill or severely injured to speak for yourself. For instance, on your way to work you could be in a car accident that leaves you unconscious. How would your family or the medical team know what kind of treatments you would want in this situation, especially if there are several different treatment choices? There is a process you can use to tell your loved ones and medical professionals about your wishes, before you find yourself in these situations. This process is called Advance Care Planning.



1:47 – Narrator: Did you know that?:

You have the right to know your medical options and to tell medical personnel what treatments you want?

Did you know that,

You have the legal right to choose someone to make your medical decisions for you when you are too ill or injured, either temporarily or permanently, to make your own decisions?

Did you know that,

Letting your family know your medical wishes is an act of love. It helps relieve them of some of the burden of making medical decisions for you when you are unable to do so yourself.



2:19 – Narrator: When you go through this process, you will have the opportunity to complete forms that will help medical professionals (doctors, nurses, etc.), and your family, make the decisions about your medical care that you would want them to make for you. These documents can include a "health care power of attorney" and "living will."



2:43 – Narrator: But it all begins with a conversation. The first, and most important step, is to take some time to think about what is important to you: your values, your life goals, your beliefs, your family relationships. These are the things that make you the unique individual that you are. Then, it's important to reflect on how these things would influence the type of health care, and how much of it, you would want to receive when facing an illness. These conversations are important because your loved ones are usually the people who can speak for you when you cannot speak for yourself, and it's important that they know how you would like to be treated.



3:23 – Narrator: The second step is to share these values, goals, beliefs, and desires with your family. What are some important things that you would like them to know? How would these values influence decisions about your health care?



3:40 – Narrator: When you are preparing to have a conversation with your loved ones, give some thought to the following:

Who should you include in this conversation?

Who do you trust to speak for you and make the decisions that you would want made?

When would be a good time to talk?

Where would you feel comfortable talking?

Once you have made these decisions you are ready to have the discussion with your loved ones.

Having the Conversation:



4:13 – Maria: You know, Gerardo, I was thinking about what happened to Uncle Manuel when he had cancer and it made me realize that I should begin making some plans in case something like that happened to me.

Gerardo: Nothing is going to happen to you! You're too young and healthy!

Maria: I am, thank goodness, very healthy. But no one knows what can happen in the future, and we all need to think about it. You know, just in case I should become sick and I'm not able to speak for myself. If you are comfortable with it, I would like you to be the person to speak for me.

Gerardo: Me? Are you sure you want me? What about Dad?

Maria: I need someone who will speak for me and will honor my wishes. I'm afraid that it may be too hard for dad to make difficult decisions about my health care. We have talked about this, and he agrees that he would want you to speak for me in case I'm too sick to speak for myself.

Gerardo: Ok, I'm glad to hear he understands.

Maria: Here are some things that I want you to know...



5:20 – Narrator: Don't put pressure on yourself. You may say everything you need to say in one conversation, or you may need several conversations to discuss your wishes with your loved ones. If your loved ones find the conversation uncomfortable, ask them to think about their own wishes for a few days and then schedule another time to talk.



5:49 – Narrator: When you have finished your conversations, it's time to put your wishes in writing so they are easily communicated with medical professionals and others. Our next video will explain more about what these documents are and how you can complete them.