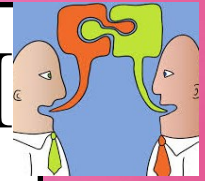




TO YOUR HEALTH



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The Conversation Project

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Have you had the conversation yet? You know, the one in which you tell your loved ones how you want to be treated at the end of your life. This topic may be hard enough for many of us to even think about, let alone talk about with a family member. Now there is a tool that can be used to prod us towards starting this difficult conversation. It is the Starter Kit from *The Conversation Project*.

The Conversation Project gives tips and ideas about how to start the conversation since many of us have a difficult time broaching such a tricky subject with those closest to us. Learn more online at www.theconversationproject.org.

Just as the customs around childbirth evolved and changed over time, a change is happening in how we think about and prepare for the end of our lives. Our ancestors viewed death as a natural part of life, however over time it became a taboo subject that was taken out of the home environment. Until the late 1800's most deaths occurred at home. By the 1950's, life-saving discoveries extended the length of life. People were increasingly cared for in institutions rather than at home. Isolation from the death experience has increased our discomfort with death and the dying process.

Now we are being encouraged to communicate our wishes to those who may be responsible for determining our care if we are no longer able to make our own decisions.

Consider the facts:

- **90% of people say that talking with their loved ones about end-of-life care is important, but only 27% have actually done so. (Source: *The Conversation Project National Survey—2013*).**
- **80% of people say that if seriously ill, they would want to talk with their doctor about end-of-life care, yet only 7% report having had a conversation about end-of-life with their doctor. (Source: *Survey of Californians by the California HealthCare Foundation (2012)*).**
- **Research shows that around 70% of people would prefer to die at home, yet around 50% currently die in hospital. (Source: *DyingMatters.org*).**



If so many of us consider conveying our wishes to our loved ones important, then why is it that more of these conversations are not happening? According to Dr. Lachlan Farrow, Director of Ethics and Palliative Care Programs at Boston's Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center “...we know we ought to talk about these things but it's always too early until it's too late.”



Some of us may just need some tools and encouragement to begin. This is where The Conversation Project can be helpful.

The Conversation Project breaks down this sometimes overwhelming process into manageable steps:



1. **Get Ready**—What do you need to think about or do in order to feel ready to have the conversation? Begin preparation.
2. **Get Set**—Start thinking about what you want for end-of-life care. What's important to you? What are your values? Whom do you trust to speak for you if you are no longer able to make your own decisions?
3. **Go!** - Consider the who, what, where, when and how of the conversation. What setting or timing will work best for you and your loved ones? Whom do you want to be present to participate in the conversation? Once you have envisioned these details, just go for it!
4. **Keep going**—Now that you've had the conversation, record your wishes on the forms that make it legal. Discussed in the kit are:

AD—Advance Directive (also known as a Living Will)

HCP—Health Care Proxy

The **MOLST** form is the legal form in Massachusetts. This is not discussed in the Starter Kit, however you should

Speak to your health care provider about it.



Expressing our wishes to our loved ones can help to guide their decision-making on our behalf as our lives come to a close. It may be the final gift we give.

HEALTH EDUCATION LECTURE

On Wednesday, February 4, 2015.

Susan Cusson, NP

will present a health lecture education talk on "Falls Prevention".

Falls are the leading cause of serious injury in older adults.

Susan, the Clinic NP, will discuss risk factors and ways to help prevent falls.

Marcelo Knapik, Fitness Assistant, will demonstrate some balance exercises.

Please join us for this interactive discussion.

Auditorium Center from 10:30—11:30 am

BEDFORD DRUG PICK-UP

The Bedford Police will pick-up expired and unused medications on:
Friday, February 13, 2015

You can drop off any prescription or over-the-counter unused/expired medication at the Clinic between 8:30 am and 12 noon on

Friday, February 13. Unfortunately, we can only accept the medicines during these times and on the date of pick-up.