

“Preparing for end of life” conversation

Many people find working on an end-of-life plan an inspiring and empowering process. It brings a sense of creating something very important and meaningful. It is a time of “putting our lives in order” in both practical and personal terms.

How would you like to die?

Think about the following

- Where would you like to die?
- How involved in your care and medical decisions do you hope to be?
- Do you want to remain lucid at all times and be able to make decisions?
- Would you prefer medical information to be given to a relative or friend rather than receive it directly from medical staff?
- What kind of music and what songs, would you like to hear?
- Would you prefer silence?
- Who would you like to be with you/not be with you?
- Would you like any healing, stroking, or talking, (or to be anointed), or any other therapies?
- What spiritual figure may be there for you? Would you like any religious ceremonies or rituals before you die?
- Would you like singing/chanting or poems or prayers to be read out loud?
- Are there any particular items or possessions that you would like to be near you?
- Have you imagined a place where you can rest and heal after you have died?
- What does it look like?
- How long would you like to be left after you have died and before you are removed and prepared for burial?
- What would you like to be done with your body?
- What sort of celebration of your life would you like?
- If only one story is told at your memorial, who should tell it?
- Are there any things that you definitely do NOT want?

Putting the house in order

Think about the following:

- Advance care directives such as a Living Will
- Making a will (Your will is a list of things you give away after you die. What gift would you be better off giving today, rather than after your death?)
- Other financial considerations
- Are there any outstanding issues, emotional or financial, to be resolved?
- Making a file with instructions regarding your bank, accounts, debit orders, other accounts
- Making a list of all the “stuff” you possess and where you want it to go (and who will be responsible for distributing and sorting it all out)
- Arrangements for care of dependents, pets etc.
- Put a contact list in order for the person who will inform you circle of friends/family
- Do you intend becoming an organ donor?
- If you are an organ donor, have you informed your family and doctor?

Imagine that you are no longer able to communicate in any way. Who would you want to speak for you to communicate your needs?

Have you had this conversation?