

Self-Examen Guide **CONSIDERING** End-of-Life Care

PREPARE FOR THE CONVERSATION

WHY IT MATTERS

Planning for our final days can be difficult, but it offers an invaluable gift to loved ones and caregivers. These discussions often become the most rich and meaningful that friends and family ever share. Studies have shown that when there are open conversations about end-of-life care wishes, surviving family members and friends report feeling reduced pain, guilt, and depression, with a more peaceful process of grieving.

This guide is designed to help you prepare for such a worthwhile discussion. Thinking through these issues at the kitchen table (rather than in the hospital) will position you and your loved ones to make the best decisions in the future; basing them on what matters most, without the influence of stress and fear.

KEY POINTS TO CONSIDER

- ✓ WHAT MATTERS MOST
- ✓ HEALTH CARE DECISION-MAKERS
- ✓ CARE SETTING & STANDARDS
- ✓ MEDICAL INTERVENTIONS
- ✓ RELIGIOUS & SPIRITUAL WISHES
- ✓ ORGAN DONATION & LEGACY

THINK & PLAN AHEAD...

- What do I need to *ponder* or *do*, before I feel ready to have this conversation?
- What topics do I really want to address most?
- Should I have a practice conversation first? Who should be part of the real thing?
- When and where would be a good time to discuss, so that all feel welcome and safe?

NEED A MEDIATOR? OUR TEAM CAN HELP.



574.213.2021



JOSEPHLEGACYPLANNING.COM

Topics for Self-Examination

WHAT MATTERS MOST

- What fills you with joy, meaning, and purpose on any given day?
- What would a “good death” look like to you?
- Do you have any relationships that you hope to reconcile before leaving this life?
- Are there any concerns regarding your children or grandchildren that weigh on your mind?

HEALTH CARE DECISION-MAKERS

- Whom do you trust to make medical decisions for you, if you can’t speak for yourself?
- Does this person understand your health care wishes clearly?
- Have you authorized and empowered this person as your Health Care Representative (aka Power of Attorney for Health Care) in a legally binding way?

CARE SETTING & STANDARDS

- Where do you hope to be when you die—at home, in hospice, in a hospital? Elsewhere?
- What helps you feel most at peace—music, nature, spiritual guidance, certain people?
- Do you want legal protections to ensure that providers work to control your pain and give you food and drink, until these are no longer of physiological benefit?
- Do you want specific family, friends, or caregivers with you when you are dying?

MEDICAL INTERVENTIONS

- If seriously ill or injured and death is imminent, are there any particular treatments you would want to avoid, even if they could extend your life by weeks or months (e.g., amputation, chemotherapy, highly experimental treatments)?
- As death approaches, would you like to remain conscious and as communicative as possible, assuming that any pain is well managed?

ORGAN DONATION & LEGACY

- Would you like to make an anatomical gift of any organs or tissues? If yes, have you executed an advance directive with provisions to protect you from premature organ harvesting?
- Is there a good cause or message you would like to support or pass on?
- Have you composed a Legacy Letter, recorded a meaningful message, or otherwise left some guidance “from the heart” for your heirs?
- Who will be managing your funeral arrangements, and how?

