

### SIMPLE ADVANCE CARE PLANNING SCRIPTS FOR EVERYONE

## Advance Care Planning Conversations in 3 Easy Steps

Any person, from any discipline, can start an advance care planning conversation. We made it easy with 3 simple steps, which can be done over time.

### WHAT YOU CAN SAY



#### 1 Ask About a Surrogate Decision Maker (e.g., proxy, agent, representative, etc.)

“I wanted to take a moment to talk to you about advance care planning. This involves choosing an emergency contact and the medical care that is important to you.”

“First, I would like to ask if there is someone you trust to help make medical decisions for you if there ever came a time you could not speak for yourself?”

**YES:** “That’s great. If not already, now is a good time to reach out and tell them that you chose them for this role and what is important to you. That way they can be the best advocate and speak up for you, if needed.”

“I will put this information in your medical record. It’s also important to keep their name and phone number, in your phone or in your purse or wallet.”

“It would also be important to write their name down on a legal form called an advance directive. I can help you with that.” (see [PREPAREforYourCare.org](https://www.preparesforyourcare.org))

**NO:** “It is OK if you cannot think of someone right now. If someone comes to mind in the future, please let your medical providers know so we can put the information in your medical record.”

#### 2 Ask About Advance Directives

See [PREPAREforYourCare.org](https://www.preparesforyourcare.org) for easy-to-read advance directives for all US states in several languages.

“Have you ever completed an advance directive? This is a legal form that lets you write down the name of your medical decision maker and your wishes for medical care. Some people may also have a bright pink form called a POLST form.”

**YES:** “That’s great. Do you remember what you wrote down? Do you still feel the same way? Do you know where this form is? Do you need help to make copies?”

“Now it’s most important to share the information in this form with your family and friends. It is also important to bring a copy of the form with you if you need to come to the clinic or hospital. That way your family, friends, and medical providers will know what is most important to you.”

**NO:** “This is OK. A good place to start is a website called [PREPAREforYourCare.org](https://www.prepareforyourcare.org). It has simple information and advance directive forms for free. You can get the website on a smartphone, a tablet, or a computer. You can even do this with your family and friends. You can download the form to fill out on your computer or print it out. Do you need help getting a copy of the form?”

### 3 Document Patients’ Wishes in the Medical Record

Learn and use your hospital’s standard documentation practices that allow the information to be in a *central location* so that other medical providers can find it when needed.

## IF YOU HAVE MORE TIME



### Additional ACP Communication:

*Focus on values, not a menu/checkbox approach.*

“What is most important in your life and what brings you joy? Is it family, friends, pets, or hobbies?”

*Ask about their own experiences to help shape their values.*

“Have you ever had your own experience with a serious illness or a friend or family member who was very sick or dying?” *[Optional]*: “Do you remember seeing someone on TV who was very sick or dying?”

*When you think back, what do you think went well and what did not go well?*

“If you were in these situations [again], what would you want for yourself?”

*Normalize the spectrum of peoples’ preferences.*

“It can sometimes be helpful to think in general about what kind of medical care would be important to you. How people feel about their quality of life falls along a wide spectrum (can use hands to show the spectrum). On one end of the spectrum, some people may say that life would always be worth living no matter what type of serious illness, disability, or pain they may be experiencing. And, on the other end of the spectrum other people may say that there may be some health situations or experiences that would be really hard on their quality of life. And, those things may make them want to focus their medical care more on comfort rather than trying to live as long as possible. To get the care that is right for you, it can help to think about where you are on this spectrum? What type of person are you? Are there any health situations or experiences that would be hard on your quality of life?”

*[Optional]*: “People may feel very differently about their care, now in their current health, and in the future if they were to get very sick. Have you thought about this?”

“It is very important that you share this with your family, friends, and medical providers. If you have to come to the clinic or hospital, you may be asked these questions again.”

For more information visit: [www.prepareforyourcare.org](https://www.prepareforyourcare.org)

Copyright © The Regents of the University of California, 2012-2021. All rights reserved. Revised 2021. No one may reproduce PREPARE materials by any means for commercial purposes or add to or modify PREPARE materials in any way without licensing agreement and written permission from the Regents. The Regents makes no warranties about PREPARE materials.

To learn more about this and the terms of use, go to [www.prepareforyourcare.org](https://www.prepareforyourcare.org)