



Ameriprime Hospice



Planning Your Life's Journey Toolkit

Take charge of your choices
and let your wishes be known.



Peace of mind begins with preparation.

As a hospice provider, our role is to listen to you, your family and caregivers. We aim to provide you with comfort and peace on your terms, according to your wishes.

To help you with this, we've created this Planning Your Life's Journey Toolkit so you have the opportunity to share your concerns and values and plan an end-of-life journey with your loved ones for a smooth and comforting transition.



These four modules will help guide you through expressing your desires for your end-of-life care so you can spend your cherished moments with your loved ones instead of being consumed by decisions and details.

We hope this will be of benefit to you, your family, your caregivers and physicians by providing the information they need, so together you can share a clear understanding of your final thoughts, goals and wishes.



Ameriprime Hospice

Table of Contents



Module 1:

How to talk to your loved ones



Module 2:

Let your preferences and concerns be known



Module 3:

Voice your wishes and desires



Module 4:

Checkoff paperwork and necessities



Module 1:

How to talk to your loved ones

It's extremely difficult for most people to discuss the end of life with their family. It's only natural for us to want to protect our loved ones from challenging and difficult times, and even suggesting something such as hospice care may make a family member feel guilty for not providing care to the person him or herself.

However, by suggesting hospice as an empowering and helpful arrangement, you are allowing you and your loved ones to facilitate the best possible quality of life care performed for the end-of-life journey.



How to talk to your loved ones

It is important that you choose the right emotional and physical space to enter into this difficult conversation to discuss end-of-life care. Start by talking about your wants and desires when you feel the end of life is imminent.

Talk in detail about what kind of quality of life hospice care would bring if there is no other alternative for recovering from an illness.

Suggesting Hospice Care as a Care Option

It's appropriate to bring up the benefits of what hospice care can do for you and your family and loved ones. If you are in pain or sick, or visiting the hospital or your doctors multiple times a week, this can be a difficult struggle. But know, with hospice care, you can receive high quality care right from your home. Also, your caregivers and nurses can come into the home daily to help manage symptoms, which will keep you more comfortable overall.

Hospice care offers pain relief and emotional and spiritual support to you and every member of your family. They take care of the physical tasks to give friends and family more quality time to spend with you.

Ultimately, facing the decisions regarding the last months of one's life is important. This doesn't mean the person suffering a terminal illness has to stop living. Instead, they can live on their own terms in their own space in a more comfortable way. While having a conversation about hospice care may be difficult, your loved ones will thank you for considering the end of life challenges, and will most likely be receptive to beginning this important step which will benefit the entire family.

Module 2:

Let your preferences and concerns be known

Once you are seriously ill, it's more difficult to make your wishes known. You would obviously want your doctors to try to improve your condition. However, in case they can't, you might want them to know the things about your life and health that matter to you most.

These end-of-life priorities let your caregivers and physicians know your values and preferences so they can make more informed decisions.



What's most important to you?

Rate from 1-5 the level of importance of each one that applies to you:

- That I'm not a physical burden to my family
- Being free from pain and suffering

- Avoiding prolonged dependence on machines
- Being able to feed, dress and care for myself
- Not being a financial burden to my family
- Avoiding prolonged dependence on artificial or assisted nutrition through tubes
- Dying at home
- Being with my family or loved ones
- Resolving conflicts
- Being at peace with my God

If it were possible to choose, check how would you spend your final days?

- At home
- In a hospital
- In a hospice facility
- I'm not sure

Other thought and concerns:

Module 3:

Voice your wishes and desires

You have the right to plan how you want to be treated and cared for. In case you were cared for by someone who didn't know you that well, what following thoughts would you like to be known?



My likes and joys

Describe the things that bring you joy: Photographs or items you like to have nearby, or music you'd like to hear. A favorite pillow, a night light or your favorite flowers.

My Dislikes and Fears

Describe the things you fear, like being left alone or being in the dark. Maybe you don't like needles. Perhaps there are visitors you don't want to see, or maybe you fear a family member or pet won't be cared for.

How to Care for Me

Describe how you want people to care for you. When do you want to be bathed, and how do you want your appearance to be maintained? Do you like to be kept warm or cool? Maybe you like to be near an open window to let in sunlight and fresh air.

My Religion

Do you identify with a particular religion or faith? Would you like the people treating you to contact someone from your faith? Do you have any special religious rituals, dietary issues or other observances you'd like caregivers to know about?

Unfinished Business

Describe any unfinished emotional business that needs to be addressed. Record any thoughts, comments or wishes you'd like to express to anyone you choose.

If I Were to Pass Away

Record any pre-arranged funeral or burial plans, or express any wishes that you'd like healthcare providers, family or friends to follow.

Laughter

Use this space to tell caregivers what makes you laugh. There's growing evidence of the role laughter can play in healing and grieving. Just knowing what makes you laugh may be comforting to others.

If you cannot express yourself, use this space to say something to your hospice caregiver, family and friends.

Module 4:

Checkoff paperwork and necessities

Though it's difficult to start conversations about later years and end-of-life preparedness, doing so in advance saves a lot of heartache later.

Use the Important Document Checklist as a guide. Understand anyone must have your permission to discuss the specifics of your decisions, your health status, and/or your plans with medical professionals or other advisors. In the best of all worlds, schedule a time to meet together with professionals to discuss how your loved ones can support and honor your wishes.



Prepare a contact checklist

- List names and phone numbers of people who should be notified of a serious illness, change in health status, or in the event of death (immediate family, friends)
- Make a list of people who should be notified and invited to the funeral/memorial. Make a note if you prefer that someone should not attend your service/memorial

Update your will/Trust

- Ensure your will or trust accurately reflects your wishes for distribution of your remaining assets upon your death. This should be kept with your Power of Attorney (see below) and Advanced Directive (see below)
- People who should have a copy: Lawyer, you, and Power of Attorney (whoever you decide)

Plan for passwords and social media

- Be sure to document your cell phone password for those authorized to access your device
- Make sure your passwords are current and in a secure place
- Be sure those designated to make decisions on your behalf know where all your passwords can be found
- Determine what you want done with your social media, such as Facebook
- There are guidelines available on social media sites to help you make such decisions

Designate a Power of Attorney (if necessary)

- Give someone the power to make financial decisions for you, when you are not able to make those decisions for yourself
- Remember: accidents happen that can result in your inability to make decisions, so plan ahead
- People who should have a copy: Lawyer, you, and Power of Attorney
- Fill out Advance Directive & POLST

- Designate your medical wishes
- Meet with your physician to review and sign your POLST
- People who should have a copy: Doctor, you, Power of Attorney, and local hospital
- Keep a copy in a glove compartment of your car

Consider your wishes

- What type of service you would like
- Where you want the service
- Where you are to be buried/cremated
- Think about what you would like in your obituary and who might write it for you
- Burial/Cremation/Donation to Science – be sure to complete the legally required permit forms for your state in order that your loved ones can carry out your wishes

SOURCE:

**HG Foundation. [Hospicegiving.org](https://www.hospicegiving.org).
January 2021.**