

Advance care planning guide: General Practice

Triggers

Consider advance care planning in the following person scenarios:



- If the person raises advance care planning with a member of the general practice team
- Has an advanced chronic illness (e.g. COPD, heart failure)
- Has a life limiting illness (e.g. dementia or advanced cancer)
- Is aged 75 years or older, or 55 years or older if they are an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person
- Is a resident of, or is about to enter, an aged care facility
- Is at risk of losing competence (e.g. has early dementia)
- Has a new significant diagnosis (e.g. metastatic disease, transient ischemic attack)
- Is at a key point in their illness trajectory (e.g. recent or repeated hospitalisation, commenced on home oxygen)
- Does not have anyone (e.g. family, caregiver, friend) who could act as substitute decision-maker
- May anticipate decision-making conflict about their future healthcare
- If the person has a carer
- If the answer to 'Would I be surprised if this person died within the next 12 months?' is 'No'.

Talking about advance care planning

Introducing the topic

'I try to talk to all my patients about what they would want if they became more unwell. Have you ever thought about this?'

Who will speak for you?

'Who would you like me to talk to if you were unable to talk to me about important medical treatment decisions?'

Broad topics - goals, values and beliefs

'What does it mean to you to 'live well'? What are your goals at this time?'

Specific topics - care and treatments preferences

'What do you understand about where things stand right now with your illness?'

Concluding the conversation

'Thank you for clarifying your values and goals. Does your family (or caregivers or friends) know what you would want?'

Additional resources

Think GP advance care planning education resource
www.thinkgp.com.au/education/advance-care-planning-primary-care

Think GP advance care planning video
www.thinkgp.com.au/video/supporting-your-patients-advance-care-planning

Advance Care Planning Australia state-specific legal factsheets
www.advancecareplanning.org.au/resources/advance-care-planning-in-my-state

Advance Care Planning Australia Learning
<https://learning.advancecareplanning.org.au/>

Where can I get more information?

Advance Care Planning Australia:
advancecareplanning.org.au
National Advisory Service: 1300 208 582