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

Think GP advance care planning video

Advance Care Planning Australia state-specific legal factsheets

Advance Care Planning Australia Learning

**Where can I get more information?**
Advance Care Planning Australia:
advancecareplanning.org.au
National Advisory Service: 1300 208 582