

Welcome to a Conversation



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Advance Care Planning: Your Voice, Your Values, Your Future

A guide to making your wishes known — so the people you love never have to wonder.

Open Dialogue on Aging™

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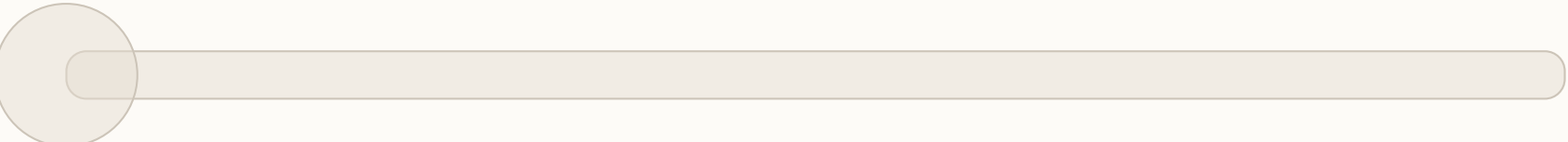
Last Aid



WHAT WE'LL COVER TODAY

Today's Objectives

By the end of this session, you'll have the tools and confidence to take your next steps toward an Advance Care Plan that truly reflects you.



Engage with ACP

Explore what Advance Care Planning means — and why it's one of the most caring things you can do for yourself and the people you love.



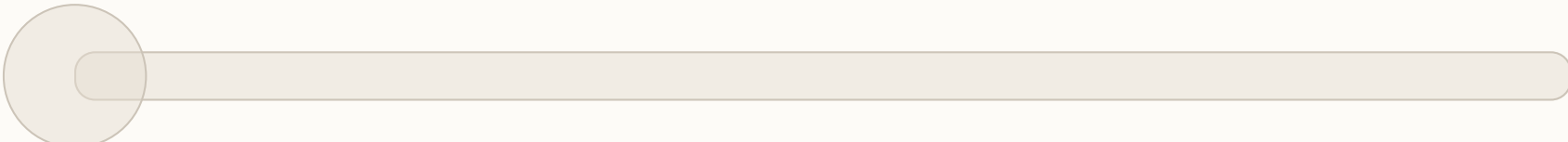
Start the Conversation

Discover simple, practical ways to talk about your wishes with the people who matter most — even when the topic feels hard to raise.



Understand the Process

Walk through the key steps — from thinking about what matters most to you, all the way to putting your wishes in writing.



Choose a Decision Maker

Think about who you trust to speak for you if you can't speak for yourself — and what they'd need to know to do that well.

DEFINITION

What is Advance Care Planning?

Advance Care Planning is an ongoing journey of thinking and talking about the kind of care you'd want if you were ever unable to speak for yourself. It's about making sure your voice is heard — even when you can't use it.

A Lifelong Process

ACP isn't a one-time event. As your life, values, and health evolve, so can your plan — it grows with you.

Thinking About Your Wishes

It starts with reflection — asking yourself what truly matters to you when it comes to your health and how you want to be cared for.

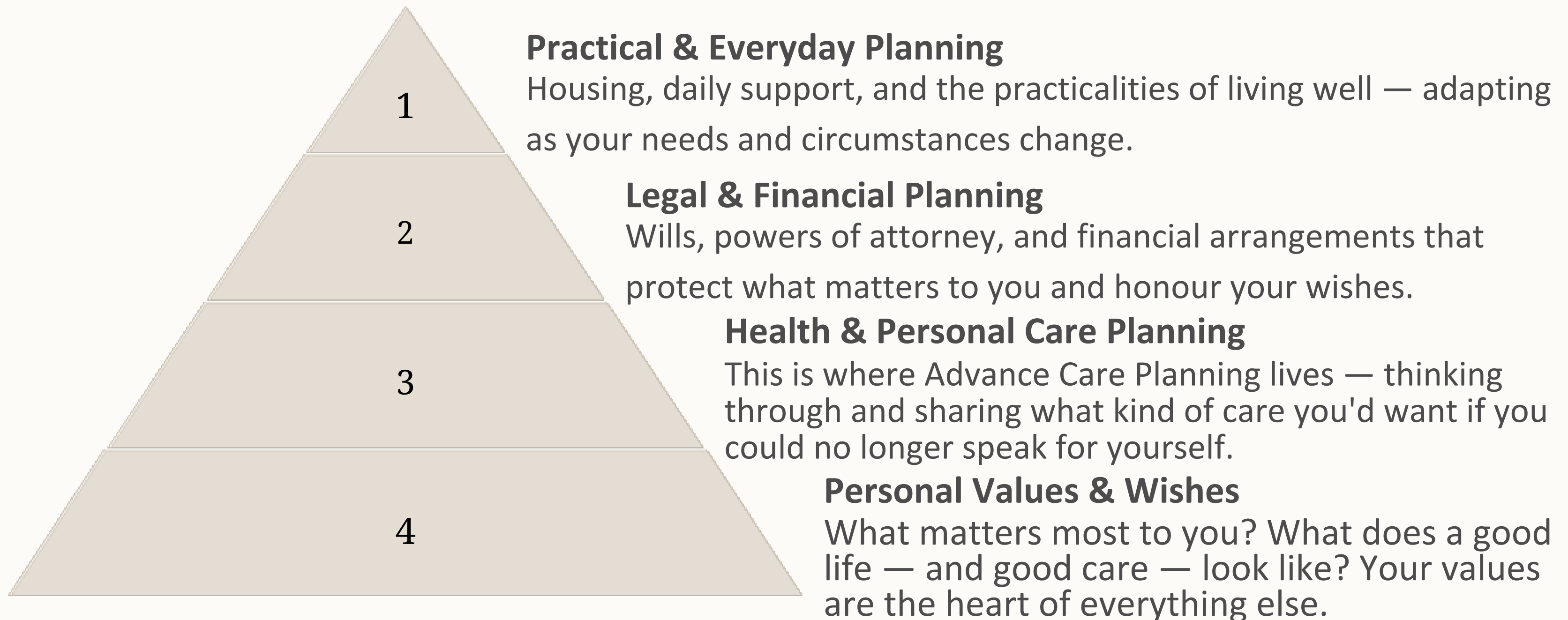
Communicating with Others

Talking with your loved ones and healthcare team means the people who care for you will know exactly how to support you when it counts most.



ACP is Part of Life Planning

This model shows how planning for future care fits into the bigger picture of life planning. Think of it as a flexible guide — one that grows and shifts as your life does.



There's no single right place to start. Begin where you feel ready and come back to it as life unfolds.

THE REALITY IN CANADA

Facts & Figures

93%

Believe It's Important

Canadians say it's important to talk with family about their wishes for future care.

17%

Have an Advance Care Plan

Yet only 17% have put their wishes in writing. Wanting to plan and doing it are very different things.

52%

Have Done No Planning

More than half of Canadians haven't started any planning at all — not even a conversation.

There's a big gap between what people intend to do and what they actually do. Advance Care Planning helps you bridge it — one small step at a time.

THE SHORT ANSWER: EVERYONE!

Who Should Do ACP?

Advance Care Planning is for everyone — at almost every age and every stage of life.

ACP May Be More Urgent For:

Those with Different Family Views

If your values or wishes around care might differ from your family's, putting them in writing means your voice will still be heard, even when you can't speak for yourself.

Those Living with a Chronic Condition

A diagnosis can change things quickly. Planning now means the people caring for you will know exactly what matters most to you — no guesswork required.



THE ANSWER: ANY TIME IS A GOOD TIME

When is the Right Time to Do ACP?

There's **no perfect moment**, but certain life events are a natural nudge to start or revisit your plan.

Life's Milestones

- Getting married
- Buying a home
- Having children
- A shift in your relationships
- A change in where or how you live

Health Events

- Facing an upcoming surgery
- A new diagnosis — like heart disease, cancer, or dementia
- Noticing changes in your strength or health over time

ACP isn't something you do once and forget. As your life and health evolve, your plan can too.

The ACP Journey

Advance Care Planning unfolds over time; it's a journey you can take at your own pace. These five steps will help you get started.

Think

Start by reflecting on what matters most to you: your values, your beliefs, and what brings your life meaning.

Learn

Explore the types of care and treatment you might face one day. Understanding your options helps you decide what you would and wouldn't want.

Choose

Pick someone you trust to speak for you if you're ever unable to speak for yourself. This person becomes your voice when it matters most.

Share

Talk openly with your decision maker, loved ones, and care team about your wishes. These conversations are a gift to the people who care about you.

Record

Put your wishes in writing so they're clear and easy to find when they're needed most.

 **And remember to review. Life changes, and your plan can too.**

Revisit it whenever something significant shifts in your life or health.

STEP 1: THINK

Think: What is Important to You?

Values

The things that matter most to you: your beliefs, priorities, and what makes life feel meaningful.

Wishes

The things you hope for yourself: the kind of care, comfort, and quality of life you want.

Questions to Help You Reflect

"What does a good day look like for me?"

"Who or what do I lean on when things get hard?"

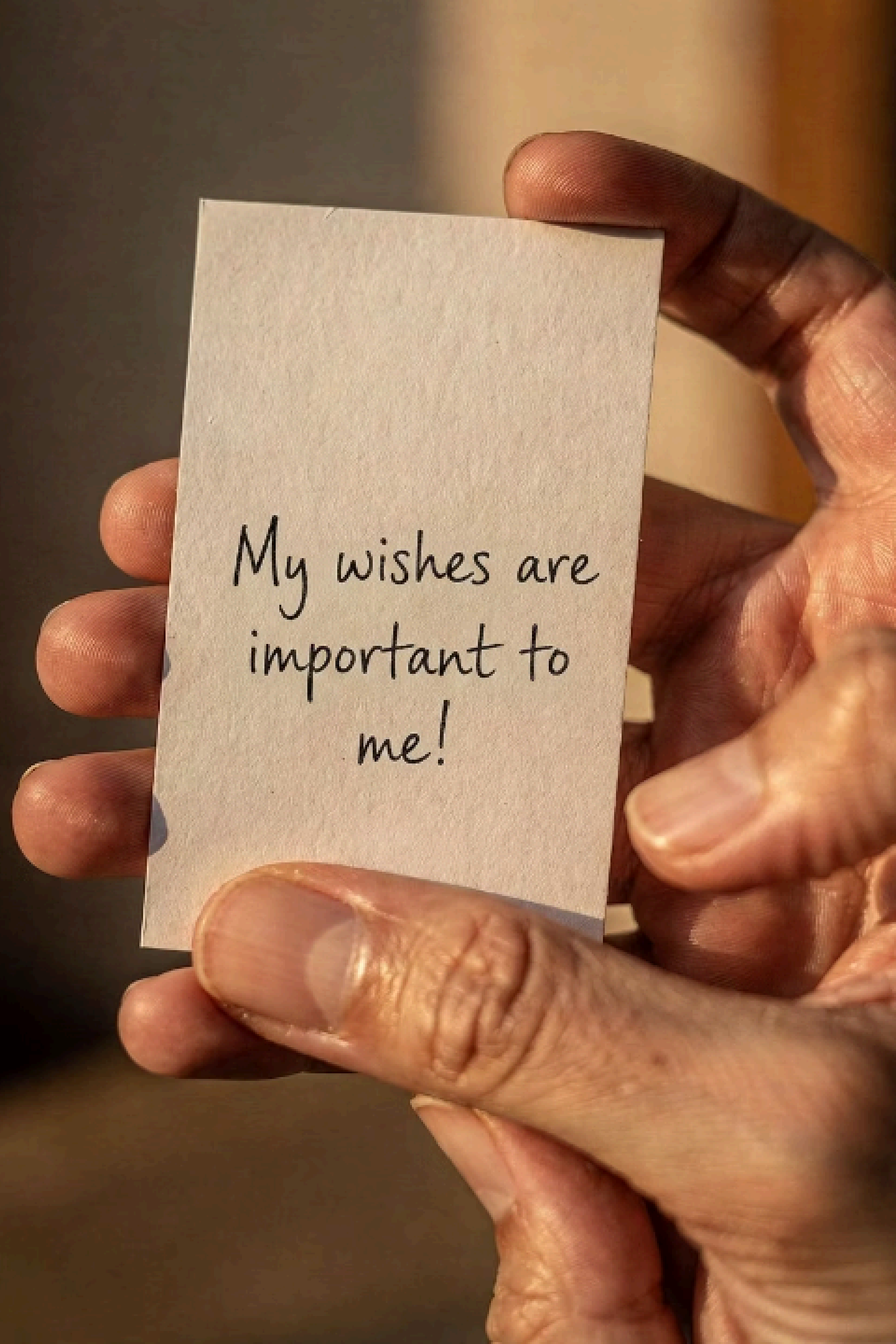
"Are there spiritual or religious beliefs that bring meaning to my life?"

"How much would I want to know about my illness?"

"How important is my privacy to me?"

"Am I someone who finds it easy or hard to ask for help?"





STEP 1: THINK

Think: Personal Values

Take a look at the values below.
Which one matters most to you?

Dignity

Independence

Wellness

Clear-Mindedness

Family

Strength

Spirituality

Relationships

Not Being a Burden

Other

There are no right or wrong answers. What you value is deeply personal, and it's exactly the right place to begin your Advance Care Plan.

STEP 2: LEARN

Learn: About the Care You Want

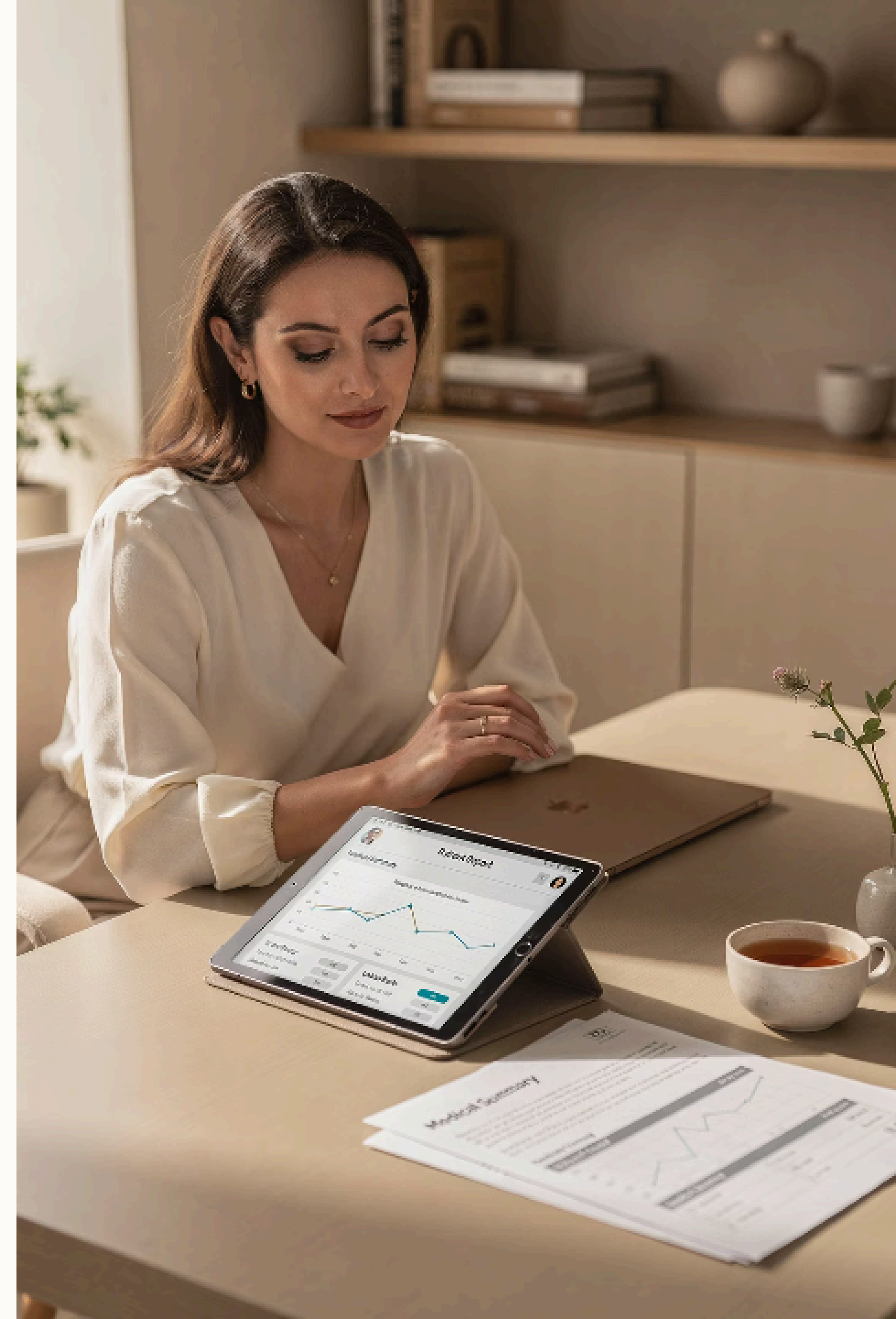
Knowing your options puts you in the driver's seat. The more you understand, the easier it is to choose care that truly fits your values and wishes.

Medical Treatments

Life Support Options

Palliative & Comfort Care

Care Settings



STEP 3: CHOOSE

Choose Your Decision Maker(s)

Think about the people in your life who show up for you. Your decision maker is someone you trust to speak for you, **honoring your wishes**, if you're ever unable to speak for yourself. You get to choose who that person is.

Questions to Ask Yourself

Who do I trust?

Who would feel confident making healthcare decisions that truly reflect what matters to you?

Who can handle the hard moments?

Who stays calm under pressure and can speak up clearly, even in difficult conversations?



STEP 3: CHOOSE

Choosing the Right Person

Think about someone in your life who knows you well and has your best interests at heart. The right person doesn't have to be perfect, they just need to be someone you truly trust.

Calm in a Crisis

Stays grounded and clear-headed when things get hard.

Can Handle Conflict

Able to stand firm and speak up for you, even when others disagree.

Knows What Matters to You

Understands what brings you joy, meaning, and a sense of purpose.

Easy to Talk To

Someone you feel comfortable opening up to, even about hard topics.

Will Honour Your Wishes

Will follow your wishes, **even** when it's not what they would choose themselves.

Accessible & Committed

Present, reliable, and ready to step in when you need them most.

STEP 4: SHARE

Share Your Wishes and Preferences

Who to Tell

- Your decision maker(s)
- Family and close friends
- Others who support you

What to Share

- What matters most to you in your care
- Your fears and concerns
- Who your decision maker(s) is and how you'd like them supported

Why It Matters

- It helps everyone around you feel prepared and confident
- It guides your decision maker(s) to choose in ways that truly reflect you
- It builds a circle of support around the person you've chosen
- Your wishes may change and that's okay. Sharing them is an ongoing conversation

STEP 4: SHARE

Conversation Starters

Starting the conversation is often the hardest part. These simple openers can help you take that first step.

"I need your help with something..."

"I've been thinking about what happened to [someone we know], and it made me want to talk to you about my own wishes."

"If I were ever seriously ill and couldn't speak for myself, here's what I'd want you to know about what matters most to me..."

"I've been thinking about what good care would look like for me. Can we talk about it together?"

"I want to make sure you never have to guess what I'd want. Would you be willing to be my Substitute Decision Maker?"

"I'm living with [condition], and I expect [prognosis]. Is that your understanding too?"

There's no perfect way to begin. What matters most is that you do.



Sharing with Your Healthcare Professional

Why Share with Your Healthcare Team?

- You're more likely to receive the care that truly fits your wishes.
- Your wishes may evolve. Sharing them helps ensure your care always reflects who you are.

What to Share

- Your wishes for your care right now.
- Who you've chosen as your decision maker.
- Anything else they need to honor your wishes.

As You Age, or If You Have a Chronic or Serious Illness, Also Share

- What Matters Most to You -** Your values, what you care about, and what brings your life meaning.
- What Living Well Looks Like for You -** What quality of life means to you — and what you want to hold onto.
- Treatments You'd Be Willing to Try -** Which treatments feel right to you, and which don't when weighing more time against what matters most.

As Your Needs Change

As life evolves, so may your wishes. Share these deeper reflections with your healthcare team and loved ones to ensure your care always reflects who you are.

- What Is Important to You**
Your values, your priorities, and what brings your life meaning and joy.
- How and Where You Want to Spend Your Time**
Where you want to live, receive care, and be surrounded by the people you love.

- What Living Well Means to You**
What a good quality of life looks like for you — and what matters most to protect.
- Treatments You Are Willing to Undergo**
Which treatments feel right for you — and which ones you'd rather not have, even for more time.

As You Near End of Life

- Where Would You Like to Die?** Whether that's at home, in hospice, a hospital, or somewhere else — your wish matters.
- What Might Change Your Mind?** Think about what situation might lead you to revisit or update your wishes.
- How to Prepare Together.** You don't have to do this alone. Talk to your loved ones and care team so everyone feels ready.



STEP 5: RECORD

Record Your Preferences and Decision Maker(s)

Your plan is only as powerful as it is findable. Keeping your wishes and any legal documents together in one place means the right people can act on them when it matters most.

Keep Everything Together

Store your advance care plan, legal documents, and any related paperwork in a single, easy-to-find location.

Secure Storage

If you use a lock box, safety deposit box, or a password-protected digital folder, make sure your decision maker knows exactly how to access it.

Tell Your Decision Maker

Let your decision maker know where your documents are, and how to get to them quickly, especially in an emergency.

A plan no one can find can't be followed. Make it easy for the people you trust to step in and speak up for you.

STEP 5: RECORD

Why and What to Record

You don't have to write anything down, but when you do, it makes a real difference.

Why Record

- Helps you remember what you thought through and decided
- Gives your decision maker(s) the details they need when it matters most
- Protects your wishes if there's ever any uncertainty about your care

What to Record

- Your values, goals, and wishes — written down, or as a voice or video recording
- The names and contact details of your decision maker(s)
- Any legal documents related to your care

Recording your wishes is a gift— to yourself, and to the people who care for you.

The Why: Why Plan Now?

Your Autonomy

Planning ahead keeps you in the driver's seat. Your values, not circumstances, shape the care you receive.

Your Loved Ones

When your wishes are written down, the people you love don't have to guess. That's a gift that eases their burden when it matters most.

Your Care

A healthcare team that understands what you value can make decisions that truly reflect who you are, not just what's standard.



The Evidence: Why It Matters

2x

More Satisfied

People who document their wishes feel more in control, and report a much better experience with their care.

↓\$

Lower Costs

Clear plans mean fewer unwanted treatments, saving money while honouring what truly matters to the person.

↓ICU

Fewer Admissions

When wishes are known, people are far less likely to end up in intensive care— often not what they would have wanted.

↓Grief

Less Family Conflict

When loved ones know your wishes, they carry less guilt, less uncertainty, and less heartache during an already difficult time.

Defining the Roles

Advance Care Planning works best when everyone knows their part — and each role truly matters.



You

You're at the center of this. While you're able, your values and wishes guide every decision.



Your SDM

Your Substitute Decision Maker speaks for you if you can't speak for yourself, following what you've shared, not what they'd choose.



Your Healthcare Provider

A caring guide through the process — answering questions, supporting the conversation, and making sure your wishes are honored.

Navigating the Canadian Framework

In Canada, Advance Care Planning is guided by provincial law — so the rules, forms, and legal tools you need depend on where you call home.

- **Ontario:** The Health Care Consent Act sets out who can speak for you and in what order
- **Speak Up Canada** offers free, plain-language workbooks tailored to every province and territory
- Legal documents — like a Power of Attorney for Personal Care — give your wishes real weight when it matters most

i Take a moment to learn your province's tools. The right document in the right place can make all the difference.





The Conversation: How to Start

An Advance Care Plan isn't just paperwork — it's an ongoing conversation with the people you love and trust most.

Your "Must-Haves"

What does it mean to feel like yourself? Think about the treatments or conditions that are essential to your sense of dignity and wellbeing.

Your "Hard-Nos"

Are there treatments you would never want no matter what? Being clear about your limits is just as important as knowing what you'd welcome.

Your Definition of Quality

What makes life feel full and meaningful to you? Sharing this with your substitute decision-maker gives them the guidance they need to speak for you.

Common Barriers and Pitfalls

Most Canadians put off planning not because they don't care, but because the topic feels uncomfortable. Naming these barriers is often all it takes to move past them.



1

Avoidance

Thinking about illness or death is hard. But putting off the conversation doesn't protect you. It just leaves your wishes unknown when it matters most.

2

False Assumptions

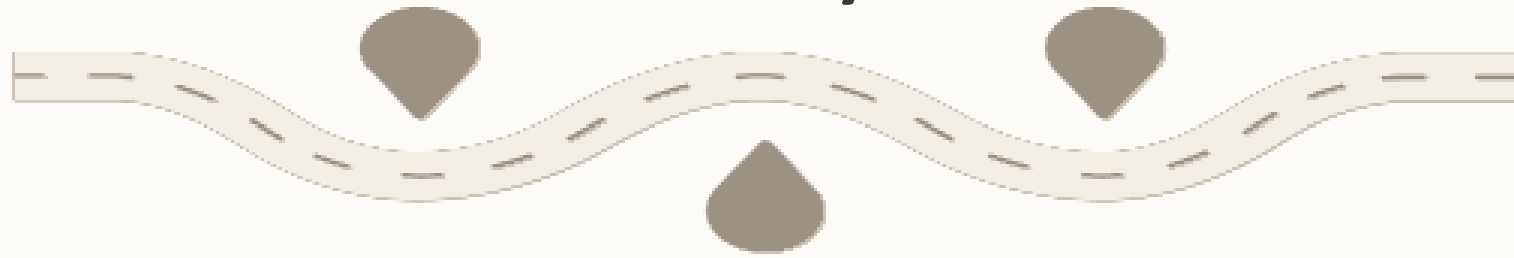
Many people believe their loved ones already know what they'd want. In reality, without an honest conversation, even those closest to you are often left guessing.

3

Crisis Planning

When planning only happens during a health emergency, decisions get made under pressure and not with the calm, clear thinking you deserve.

The Gift of Clarity



Follow these three steps to put your wishes into action — it's simpler than you think.

1. **Download Workbook:** Get your provincial workbook from SpeakUp Canada
2. **Have the Conversation:** Schedule a dedicated talk with family and your SDM
3. **Keep It Updated:** Review and revise after health or life changes

A Gift to Those You Love

When you plan ahead, you protect the people you love from having to make heartbreaking decisions alone — without knowing what you'd want.

Peace of Mind for You

There's real comfort in knowing your wishes are written down and that the right person is ready to speak up for you.

Begin Today

Visit advancecareplanning.ca or speakupcanada.ca to find your provincial workbook and take that first step.

It's simpler than you think.

