



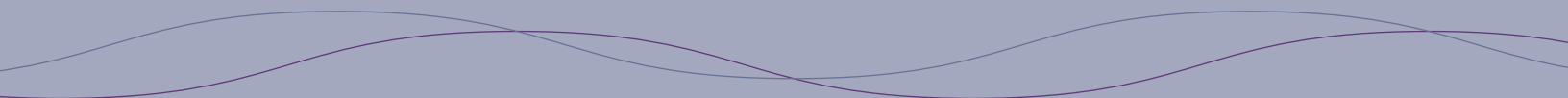
The Conversation Checklist

TALKING ABOUT END-OF-LIFE
PLANNING WITH YOUR LOVED ONES

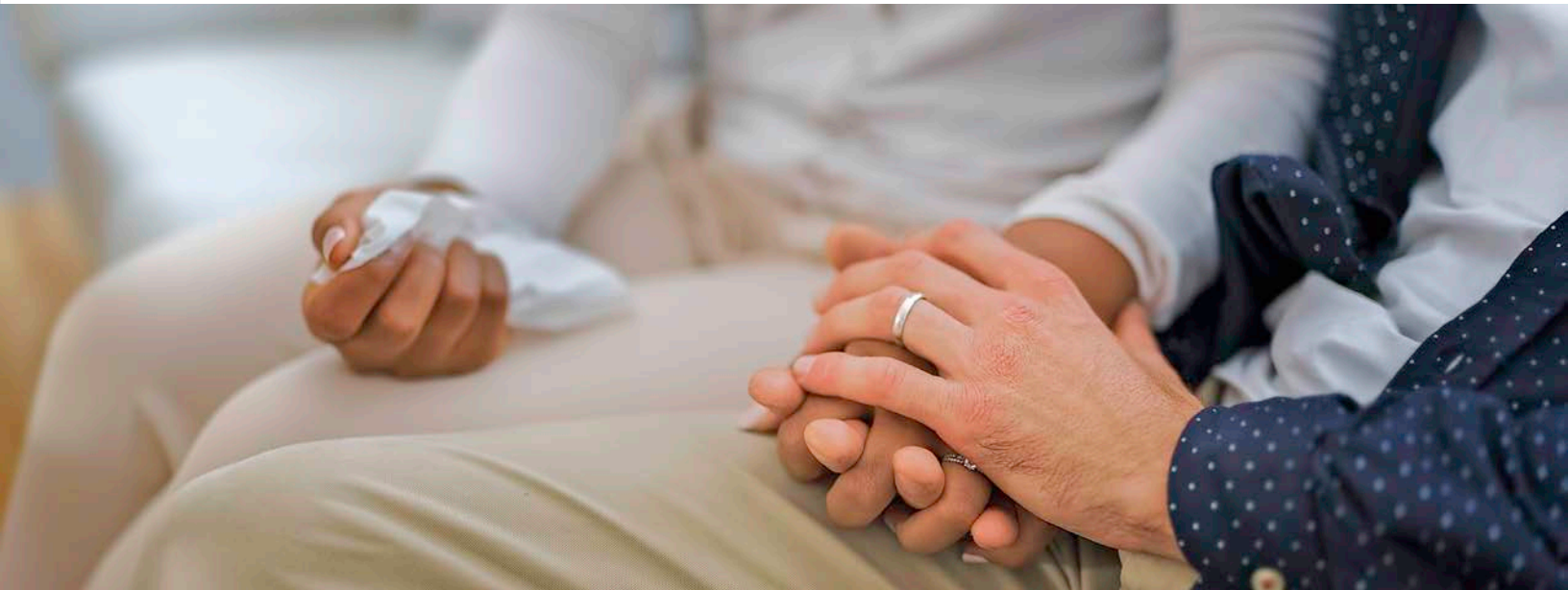


We hope you find the content helpful and encourage your feedback.

If you have questions not answered here, please call us toll-free at **1.800.NEPTUNE (1.800.637.8863)** or visit **NeptuneSociety.com**.



The Conversation



What is the Conversation?

According to a National Survey by The Conversation Project, 90% of people say that talking with their loved ones about end-of-life care is important but only 27% have actually done so.

“The Conversation” in terms of this guide pertains to the discussion that takes place regarding end-of-life planning and decisions.

We at Neptune Society® understand that it can be extremely difficult to think of your own mortality, much less talk about it. However, as difficult as it may be to find the courage to talk to your loved ones about your final wishes, we have found that making your wishes known in advance is much easier than leaving the decision up to your family and friends at the time of need.

90% SAY TALKING TO
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CARE IS IMPORTANT

27% HAVE
ACTUALLY DONE SO

Why have the Conversation?

There are many benefits to having the Conversation. Awareness of your personal choices regarding end-of-life arrangements gives you and your loved ones a better perspective. By discussing your wishes in advance, your loved ones can be saved from making difficult choices in a time of crisis, when emotions are likely to cloud their decision-making abilities. Having the Conversation can also save you money if you choose to make funeral or cremation arrangements in advance. Additionally, many families find that sharing their wishes with their loved ones actually strengthens their relationships and brings peace of mind.

Who should be involved in the Conversation?

Because this Conversation covers a very sensitive and personal subject, we recommend keeping the number of people initially involved in the Conversation to a minimum. Start small, with a few people that you trust, so you won't be overwhelmed by this emotional topic.

After the initial Conversation with your loved ones, it may be helpful to reach out to your religious or spiritual leaders, friends, doctors, caregivers or any additional persons whom you would like to know your final wishes.

Additionally, during the Conversation, it is beneficial to establish a next of kin, if you haven't already done so. This person should be present during the Conversation and will help ensure that your final wishes are carried out according to your instructions.

If teens or children are involved in the discussion, be sure to talk about matters in a calm, honest and reassuring way, and in terms that they can understand. There is no need for them to make assumptions about your health. In many cases, having the Conversation can be a good opportunity to teach lessons in communication and responsible planning for the future.

✓ Checklist: Who do you want involved in the Conversation?

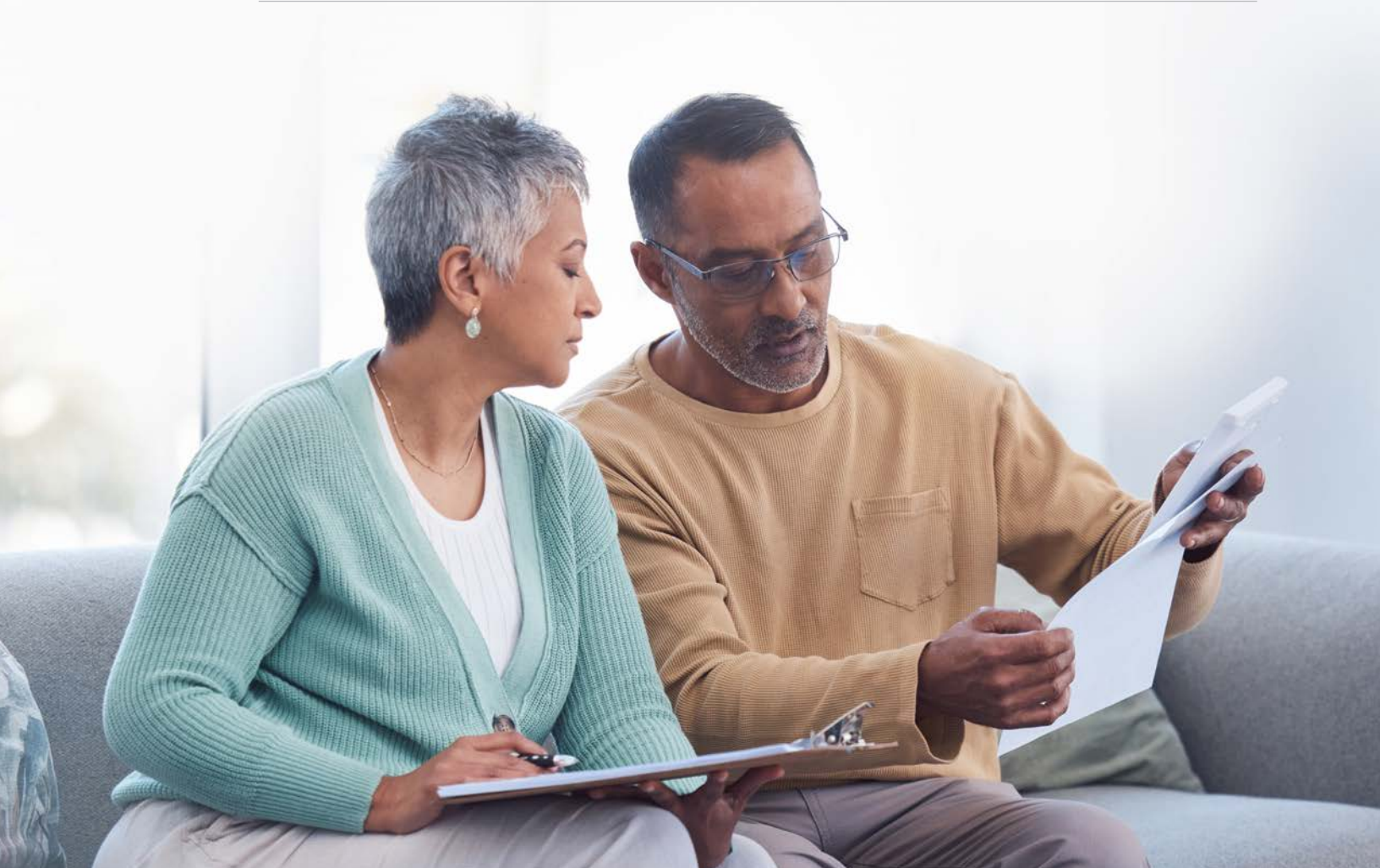
- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child/Children | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Partner/Spouse | <input type="checkbox"/> Doctor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Siblings | <input type="checkbox"/> Caregiver |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Religious/Spiritual Leaders | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

When should you have the Conversation?

The best time to have the Conversation with your loved ones is as soon as you are psychologically and emotionally ready. While this Conversation may cause emotional stress at first, it will ultimately save your family from making difficult decisions at the time of need. If possible, it can be easier to have the Conversation while you are in good health. Declining health conditions can make the Conversation more difficult emotionally and physically.

✓ Checklist: When do you want to have the Conversation?

- In the morning In the afternoon In the evening
- Other _____





Where should you have the Conversation?

Find a comfortable and relaxing place to have a conversation. It could be in your own home at the kitchen table, at your favorite restaurant, in your car, during a walk, while sitting in a park or at your place of worship. It is important that the space you choose allows you to calmly and confidently communicate your wishes to your loved ones.

✓ Checklist: When do you want to have the Conversation?

- At the dining room table
- At a restaurant
- In the car
- On a walk
- Sitting in a park
- At a place of worship
- Other _____

What should you talk about during the Conversation?

Prior to having the Conversation, it can be helpful to create a written checklist of the goals you'd like to accomplish during your discussion. For example, your goals might include letting your loved ones know your final wishes in terms of burial or cremation options, discussing the creation of a living will, or memorial choices. Another goal might be to provide resources for surviving friends and loved ones that will assist with healing during the time of need. To assist you during what can be a difficult and emotional conversation, we've put together a checklist of topics that you may want to cover during your Conversation.

✓ Checklist: What would you like to discuss during the Conversation?

- Creation of a living will
- Creation of a will or trust
- Appointing legal professionals to discuss estate plans and property matters
- Planning how finances will be handled at the time of need
- Memorialization choices
- Next of kin and power of attorney
- Traditional burial or cremation with a memorial/funeral service
- Other _____

How do you start the conversation?

Whether we are lucky enough to live a long life or pass unexpectedly, death is a certainty. Preparing for our own death gives us the opportunity to make our final wishes known and spares loved ones the stress and chaos of making arrangements during an already difficult time. Because it can be difficult to discuss our own mortality, Neptune Society® has gathered a list of icebreakers to help get the conversation started.

How can I start the Conversation with my spouse/partner?

“I need your help with something.”

“You know how I like to plan things—vacations, dinners, date nights—I’d like to talk about planning something that may be difficult to talk about, but is very important for our future.”

“Something has been weighing on my mind, and I would really like to talk to you about it.”

How can I start the Conversation with my children?

“I know that you won’t want to talk about it, but I’d like to have a discussion about my final wishes. I don’t want my passing to be any more difficult than it has to be, and that’s why we need to talk about it now.”

“Although my health is okay right now, I’m worried that one day it may not be, and I want to be prepared if that happens.”

How can I start the Conversation with my siblings?

“Do you remember when mom/dad passed away? It was such a difficult time in our lives, but I was so grateful that she/he had a plan in place so we didn’t have to guess what she/he would have wanted. I’d like to do the same for my children by putting a plan together now.”

Tips for Having the Conversation

It can be very difficult to bring ourselves to discuss our own mortality, but it can be even harder for our loved ones to imagine a world without us. You may experience some resistance from your family and friends when trying to convey your feelings, so we've put together a short list of tips to help assist you in carrying out the Conversation.

Have Patience and Be Persistent

Be patient with your family and friends. This is a difficult subject for many people to talk about. You may need to try several times before they are truly ready to have a discussion.

Let Others Speak

There is a reason this is called "The Conversation" and not "Your Monologue." It is a discussion that should involve the opinions of your family and friends. Don't try to dictate where the conversation goes, just let it happen organically.

Practice

It can be helpful to start thinking about the Conversation by filling out this guide, writing a letter or having a hypothetical discussion with an open-minded friend. If you're afraid you might not get it right the first time, a bit of practice can help make you more confident in your decision and reaffirm your need to talk.

It's Your Choice

When having the Conversation with your loved ones, remember that there are no right or wrong opinions. What you may consider an ideal situation might not be the same as another person. That's okay. The only mistake you can make is to not have the Conversation at all, and leave your loved ones guessing as to what you may or may not have wanted.





What's next?

While the Conversation is an incredibly important step for you and your loved ones, it is only the beginning. Once you've made your opinion clear, it is important to continue planning by putting your wishes into writing and reaching out to the appropriate parties to ensure that your final arrangements are carried out as you desire. Below is a short list of professionals you can reach out to that can assist you in planning your arrangements.

Attorneys

It can be helpful to reach out to an attorney to put your wishes into writing. A lawyer can assist in creating a Last Will and Testament, Living Trust, Living Will, and Power of Attorney. Additionally, an attorney can help with establishing Advance Care Planning, Advance Directive, a Living Will, Healthcare Surrogate and a Health Care Proxy.

Doctors

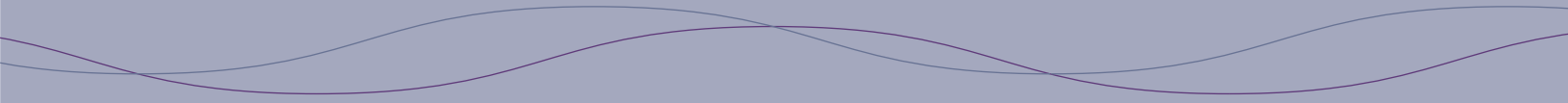
It is important to ensure that your health care team of doctors, nurses, specialists, therapists, etc. understand your wishes.

Cremation Services and Funeral Homes

To make sure your final wishes are carried out according to your requests, it is wise to prearrange and prepay for cremation or burial services with a professional cremation or funeral service.

Disclaimer

Information contained in this pamphlet is for the general education and knowledge of our readers. It is not designed to be, and should not be used as, the sole source of information when analyzing and resolving a legal problem. Moreover, the laws of each jurisdiction are different and are constantly changing. If you have specific questions regarding a particular fact situation, we urge you to consult competent legal counsel.





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