



## **making your voice heard:** **maintaining autonomy**



Family members and friends are often asked to make decisions for a loved one who is seriously ill without having a complete understanding of their wishes. To avoid this situation, we encourage everyone to discuss their long-term care wishes, including their financial situation, with trusted family members and friends well before the onset of a serious illness or an unforeseen situation. Remember, it's up to you to take the first step to express your wishes. Having this conversation now, although sometimes difficult, is the best way to protect one's independence in a multitude of unpredictable situations.



# How to Talk with Your Loved Ones: Strategies for Beginning the Conversation

- 1 To have this conversation the appropriate setting must be selected.**  
Plan for the conversation; find a quiet, comfortable place that is free from distraction to hold a one-on-one discussion. A private place is best for this.
- 2 Ask permission before you dive into this topic.**
- 3 Be aware and acknowledge the many emotions this issue can spark.**
  - Concern and sadness about the future, especially death.
  - Worry that by speaking about uncomfortable long-term care issues one increases the likelihood of such things happening.
  - Fears of being taken advantage of.
  - Fear of having to take on an overwhelming responsibility.
- 4 Talk about why you have decided to discuss these issues. For example:**
  - What is motivating you to take these actions now?
  - Did a particular event cause you to make the decision?
  - Did an article in the newspaper make you think about it?
- 5 Sometimes sharing your personal concerns and values, spiritual beliefs, or views about what makes life worth living can be as helpful as talking about specific treatments and circumstances. For example:**
  - What aspects of your life give it the most meaning?
  - How does your faith affect your attitudes toward dying and death?

No one wants to put someone they love in an impossible or uncomfortable position. By making long-term care wishes known; no one will be forced to make a difficult decision at a difficult time.

***Remember... Taking these steps keeps you in control of your life!***

alzheimer's  association

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