

Elder Abuse: Let's Talk

Getting Past Resistance

- › Every adult should plan in advance.
- › Planning in advance is the only way to maintain control over end-of-life decisions.
- › Planning for the future does not take decision-making power out of our hands in the present.
- › You can change your mind at any time.
- › You can always say, "My lawyer suggested I talk to you."

The Single Most Important Step in Advanced Planning: Talking!

Why?

- › Others may not fully understand your wishes after you lose capacity to express them.
- › It will help you think about what you want.
- › It will help your loved ones make difficult decisions.
- › It will save money.
- › It will save insecurity and grief.
- › It may even bring your family closer together.

Before beginning the conversation:

- › Ask permission to discuss the topic.
- › Know the legal tools and options.
- › Select an appropriate time and setting.
- › Be prepared for difficult moments.
- › Agree on an attendance list.
- › Agree on an agenda.

Beginning the Conversation

Communication principles:

- › One person needs to take the lead in the conversation.
- › Be good listeners and be patient.
- › Value each conversation participant and each contribution to the discussion.
- › Value each elder.

Suggested agenda:

1. Identify current advisors.
2. Describe current health status.
3. Identify current documentation.
4. Describe current financial picture and plan.
5. Identify difficult or complicated issues.
6. Planning ahead: Power of Attorney; Personal Directive; supported-decision-making, co-decision-making, informal trusteeships; Will.
7. Determine a shared understanding for post-capacity.
8. Next steps: What follow-up is necessary and who is responsible for it?