

Starting the conversation

It's always too early until it's too late: talking about the end-of-life planning.

Most of us are not used to having conversations about the end of life. Many people put it off until it's too late, despite most of us believing it's important and useful.

Here are some tips and ideas for having this big conversation.

Timing

- Find a time when everyone involved is calm and has time.
- You may want to think about what you want to discuss – for example what areas of end-of-life planning you want to focus on. (The resource '9 ways document...[use full title] is a useful prompt.)
- This kind of conversation A big conversation usually cannot be had in one go. A start might simply be raising that this is something you'd like to discuss at an appropriate time.
- Don't force or rush the conversation – if it's not been discussed previously, many people will need space to digest the idea.

Ways to raise the issue

- Provide a statistic or some data that's relevant – for example '90% of people report that having a conversation about the end of life is important, but only 27% have done so'.
- Watch a film or TV series that touches on the issue you want to discuss.
- Link the issue with a topic of interest or activity. If someone is interested in technology or has social media sites, you might ask whether they've heard about the impact of AI on people's social media after they die.
- Relate it to cultural background or travel and the rites and rituals they have experienced.

Practicalities

- If you're an executor or named in the will or advanced care plan, check that you're clear about what they would like and check whether the documents need updating due to changes in their circumstances or the options available.
- Use health issues or medical appointments to gently seek additional information and affirm you'd like to support them but need to be clear about their wishes.
- Raise document storage and location to ensure that whoever is responsible can access the correct documents in a timely way.

Useful things to remember

- This conversation is like a dance, you want to be able to move together in a secure and safe way.
- Silence and sadness are a likely part of this process. Allow for the silence and don't try to fix it the sadness – accept and acknowledge it.

This document has a few suggestions for raising and discussing the end-of-life and planning with a loved one. If you would like the complete document: **Starting the Conversation**, please click [here](#).