

Now you are a Substitute Decision-Maker

# Conversation starters to understand someone's wishes

When you are being appointed to the role of substitute decision-maker, it is important that you talk to the Appointer about their views on their accommodation, health care, end-of-life decisions, values, wishes, preferences and what is important to them about their lifestyle.

Ideally, the Appointer and their substitute decision-maker(s) should discuss these topics before the Advance Care Directive is signed—just in case there are differences or issues that cannot be resolved.

Through conversation, you may find you hold different beliefs to the Appointer. If you have doubts about taking on the role of upholding the Appointer's wishes, you must tell them you feel this way. You don't have to accept being appointed as a substitute decision-maker.

These conversations should continue after the document is signed, especially while the Appointer has full decision-making capacity. You should revisit them if circumstances change a lot—for example, if the Appointer is diagnosed with a serious illness. Over time, these conversations can continue to deepen your understanding about the Appointer's values, preferences and beliefs.

**These are some questions you and your Appointer can discuss.**



## LIFESTYLE

If you were going to have a great day, what would you do?

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What do you cherish the most about your life?

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What is your favourite daily activity?

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Who in your life is most important to you?

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What do you value: a longer life with less quality or quality of life over quantity?

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What does quality of life mean to you? What is most important to you?

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What special events, ceremonies or rituals would you want to continue? What special things would you not want to miss?

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Whom would you like to stay in contact with?

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What is on your bucket list?

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## ACCOMMODATION

Where is home to you? What does home mean to you?

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If you couldn't live at home, what is your second preference? What is your next best option?

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What would you like me to consider if I have to make a decision about where you live?

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Do you have a pet or companion animal that is important to you?

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## HEALTH

What do you think about the idea of organ donation? Have you ever discussed this with your family or friends?

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Can I share information with your family or friends about the decisions I make? Whom are you comfortable for me to share with?

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Is there anything you would like me to keep private?

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Towards the end of your life, do you have specific preferences or wishes about treatment or health care?

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What outcomes do you want to avoid?

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Do you have specific wishes that apply if you become terminally ill or not able to recognise family and friends?

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Whom would you like to visit you? Is there anyone you would not like to visit you?

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How do you feel about the use of pain medication? What about pain relief at the end of your life?

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How do you feel about Voluntary Assisted Dying, and in what circumstances would this be acceptable (if at all)?

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Do you have any spiritual, religious or cultural beliefs you would like me to consider when I make decisions for you?

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Do your beliefs affect how you feel about medication, pain or the end of your life?

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Have you ever had any treatment or medication that you would not want again?

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Who would you like me to share your wishes with? Is there anyone you would not like me to share your wishes with?

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