

## HOW TO START THE CONVERSATION WITH YOUR LOVED ONES

***Death can be a difficult topic to bring up, but the time to talk is now. Decide whether you want to have your first conversation with just one person or whether a group family discussion would work best. Perhaps you can begin by giving family members and loved ones a copy of your Advance Health Care Directive.***

### **Here are some ways you could break the ice:**

"It's important for me to be able to talk honestly with you about my concerns and wishes if I ever become seriously ill and unable to speak for myself..."

"If you are ever in a position where you need to make healthcare decisions for me, it will be helpful for you to know what I really want...."

"I'd like you to be my health care agent. That means you would be the one who would make medical decisions for me if I'm unable to speak for myself. Is this something you would be comfortable taking on?"

"I attended this interesting workshop last week and completed my Advance Health Care Directive. I was hoping we could go over things together so you can understand why I'm making these choices."

"My doctor/attorney suggested we go over my advance directive together."

"Remember how when Uncle Kalani died...that was hard. There was so much pilikia...I don't want that to happen to us. "

"I was thinking about what happened when Uncle Kalani died and it made me realize...."

"I just answered some questions about how I want the end of my life to be. Would you please review them with me? What are your thoughts on these matters?"

"I want to make sure that I get the best care possible and the type of care that I want. To make it easier for you, let's discuss these issues together. Are you willing to speak on my behalf?"

If your loved ones say, "No, Mom, I don't want to talk about this" or "No, Dad, we aren't going to let you die" you might say: "I realize this may be uncomfortable for you but I would like to share with you what I'm thinking. I understand if you are unable to help me. I can ask Aunty Pua to be my Agent."

***If you anticipate that other family members may strongly disagree with your wishes, communicate directly---verbally and in writing---with them, and be clear that if they cannot support your wishes, you do not want them involved in your healthcare decision-making. Keep in mind that if physicians hear of disagreement among loved ones, they could be justified in continuing unwanted treatment to avoid a possible lawsuit or licensing complaint.***

Adapted from: Compassion & Choices' booklet My End-of-Life Decisions: [CompassionAndChoices.org/end-of-life-decisions-toolkit](https://CompassionAndChoices.org/end-of-life-decisions-toolkit) and The Conversation Project Starter Kit: <https://theconversationproject.org/starter-kits/> More information available at: [CommunityFirstHawaii.org](https://CommunityFirstHawaii.org) and [kokuamau.org](https://kokuamau.org)