

Planning ahead for what matters to you

April 5 is known as "Conversations That Count" day - raising awareness of advance care planning.

Advance care planning is all about exploring what matters to you when you are unwell and near the end of your life.

This information is shared with your loved ones and your health care team so treatment and care plans can support your wishes – even if



You can write your own Advance Care Plan here:

www.advancecareplanning.org.nz

you're too unwell to express them yourself.

It's an important gift for your loved ones as it can relieve the burden of them having to make decisions on your behalf.

It may be a conversation that you need to start having with older parents, but it is also possible for any adult to do an advance care plan for themselves now.

You may not need it for many years but you will be glad you did.

Join us on Facebook

www.facebook.com/HuttValleyDHB



Having a conversation with parents and loved ones



Lower Hutt resident Sheryl Bodda says talking to her parents about their wishes for their advance care plan was not easy at times, but it did open up a discussion about what was important to them.

"Initially I was dreading having this discussion with my parents but once we started it was fine. I felt it was a relief to them, and certainly to me, that their

wishes had been uttered and written down," Sheryl explains.

"Everyone has their own feelings about what they would prefer to happen at the end of their life and what is important to them about the care they receive. It is important that families, doctors and care facilities are aware of what a person feels and what they would prefer to happen."

Getting the legal stuff in order



In addition to an advance care plan, it is also important to have your legal documents in order.

Why is it important to have a Will?

According to Tom Mahony, Principal Mahony Burrowes Horner Lawyers, people put off making a Will for a variety of reasons but it can be more difficult to sort matters out if someone dies without leaving a Will.

What is an Enduring Power of Attorney?

In addition to a Will, an Enduring Power of Attorney allows someone to authorise another person to

act on their behalf. This may include authorising another person to make decisions on their behalf in terms of their personal care and welfare, including decisions around their medical treatment or admission into a residential care or rest home.

What is an Advance Directive?

This is a document which sets out a person's wishes in the event that they are unable to give instructions personally because for instance, they are unconscious/in a coma/ suffering severe mental

illness or terminal illness.

"Everyone over 18 should put a Will and EPA in place. While you are still mentally capable you should do it now," Tom Mahony says.

"None of us can predict what is around the corner as far as unexpected events are concerned and anyone's life can change dramatically without warning."

"People tend to think only the elderly are likely to need someone to manage their affairs but anyone can become mentally incapable at any age."

Sheryl's tips for working through an advance care plan with parents:

1. Have a list of suggestions to offer for each question – this opens up discussion rather than putting the person on the spot to come up with something.
2. Do the care plan within days of an appointment with the person who will be signing it off (your GP or Older Persons rehab nurse practitioner).
3. Ask for advice from medical professionals who know your parents well and can be specific about the types of care and treatment available.
4. If the person goes into a rest home ensure the home is given a copy for their file; also a copy if a new doctor will be taking care of them at this stage.

Hutt Valley District Health Board - members



Andrew Blair



John Terris



David Ogden



Lisa Bridson



Ken Laban



Wayne Guppy



Prue Lamason



Yvette Grace



Tim Ngan Kee



Peter Douglas

Hutt Valley DHB Board meetings are open to the public
See our website for information