



Hospice of Southern Maine  
Anne L. Hunter Memorial  
**Thresholds**  
CONFERENCE

## End-of-Life Conversations: What to Say and Do



### How to Start a Conversation with Family about End-of-Life Wishes

Each of us has the right to make important decisions about the kind of care we would or would not want at the end of life. Having meaningful conversations with those closest to us—before the time of crisis—can help ensure a better dying experience for both patient and family. This conversation might begin by saying something like, *“I’m learning how important clear communication is at the end of life. I know it can be difficult to talk about these things, but I think it’s an important conversation to have. I’d feel a lot better if you knew what my end-of-life healthcare wishes are so you don’t have to make difficult decisions for me. When the time comes, I’ll need you to advocate for me and support my choices. I’d also like to know your wishes, so I can do the same for you. Would you be willing to talk about this with me?”*

**Some important points to discuss:**

**How do you feel about life-sustaining treatment when you are in the end stages of a final illness?**

**What would it mean to you to live well at the end of your life?**

**What would you like your death to look like?**

**Are there relationships you would like to heal before you die?**

**Would you like to be buried or cremated?**

**How would you like to be remembered?**

Talking about your end-of-life wishes won’t make death come any sooner, but it will deepen the bond between you and the people you love. The conversations you have now will help ensure a more meaningful and peaceful experience at the end of life.

**For more information, call Hospice of Southern Maine — (207) 289-3640.**



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