

PLANNING FOR THE DEATH OF ANOTHER

You may have been asked to assist, or might have been put in charge of the end-of-life planning for another. That person may be a loved one or a friend. It is a great honor and responsibility to assist with, or handle that planning. Preparing in advance will help relieve the burden on both yourself and for the one you are helping. Thank you for helping to create the opportunity for a peace-filled end of life.

Health Care Issues, Opinions and Options

- Has your loved one or friend been told you have a **terminal illness**? If so, have they gotten a **second opinion** about the diagnosis?
- What are the treatment options? Ask their doctor to explain the risks and benefits of each option. What **alternative treatments** are available?
- Ask their healthcare provider to explain the typical course of your illness including **how and when they might die** from this condition. *How much time do they have left?*
- Ask about symptom control and management (example: pain control—**“palliative care”**) in advance. Find out if there are local palliative care services which provide in-home visits and care.
- Ask about options and timing for **hospice and end-of-life care** in advance. What hospice providers are available in your community? Choose one in advance. What are your loved one’s or friend’s **“goals of care”**? Ask their doctor to help them select medical therapies which will help them to accomplish the goals they have for their life.
- Ask them about **where/how they would like to die**; in what surroundings; with what things (music? videos?); with which people present?
- Would they rather die at home? Is it acceptable that they die in a **nursing home, hospital or dedicated hospice unit**? If so, select the provider in advance.
- Prepare their **Advance Directive** form (go to **“Resource Page”** on the OKtoDie.com website).

- Fill out a **Personal Self-Assessment Scale** PSAS (include in their Living Will)—available for free on the “Resource Page” of the website). The PSAS will help them answer questions such as: “Are there situations in which they would ever want artificial nutrition by feeding tube? When would they ever want to be on an artificial respirator? When would they want CPR or to allow natural death to occur?” Their family, surrogate medical decision-maker, and physician should all have updated copies of your PSAS.

Required End-of-Life Paperwork (Medical and Legal)

- Do they have an **advanced directive(s)** included in their living will? Is it legal for their state? (Include a PSAS to help their healthcare provider and proxy/family to know at what stage of illness they choose to forgo certain medical interventions.)
- Have they selected a **Health Care Proxy** and executed a **Health Care Power of Attorney**? Please specify 1 or 2 alternative proxies as well. (Health Care Proxy is a legal term for surrogate medical decision-maker, the person who will make medical decisions for them should they become unable to make them for themselves).
- Have they set up a **POLST (Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment)**, if the POLST program is legal in their state? Or, if the POLST is unavailable, have they asked their physician to sign a state-approved Do Not Resuscitate/Allow Natural Death order, if desired? Go to the Resource Page and click on POLST to learn more.
- Have they executed a legal **DNR (Do Not Resuscitate) Order**? The DNR is a medical order signed by a physician instructing health care workers not to perform CPR on them, but instead to allow them to die naturally and in comfort.
- Have they executed a legal **DNI (Do Not Intubate) Order**? The DNI is a medical order signed by a physician instructing health care workers not to intubate them or place them on an artificial ventilator if their breathing is failing.
- Have they executed a legal **DNH (Do Not Hospitalize) Order**? The DNH is a medical order signed by a physician instructing health care workers to not send them to a hospital from their home or nursing home facility unless needed for comfort.

- Does their Health Care Proxy have a copy of their **Living Will** containing their **advance directives** such as POLST, PSAS, DNR, etc.? Make certain to keep handy their copy of these documents. Tell family members where they keep the originals and their handy copy. Family members, surrogate medical decision-makers and your physicians should all have copies of these items as well.
- Does he/she need to update my **trust**? (Contact an Estate Attorney.)
- Have they set up their **estate plan**? (Contact an Estate Attorney.)
- Is their **will** up to date?
- Have they executed a **Financial Power of Attorney**?

Personal Communications with Their Family and Friends

- Has he/she **discussed their condition** with their family/friends in complete honesty?
- Have they told their loved ones EXACTLY what **medical interventions** that they want and do not want? Do they know at what stage of illness she/she would choose to forgo certain therapies or artificial life support ? Share their PSAS and/or POLST, DNR, DNI, DNH papers with them.
- Their family needs to know who they have put in charge of their medical decisions when they can no longer make them. There **health care proxy or surrogate medical decision-maker** needs to understand and agree to carry out their wishes and desires regarding their end-of-life care.
- Does he/she need a **private discussion** with anyone, if it would help them to accept their decision(s)? (If he/she is OK to Die, are they?)

Is He/She OK to Die?

- He/She needs to say the “6 Things” they need to say to their loved ones, friends and enemies. It is never too early to say these things. (See Chapter 17 in *It's OK to Die.*)

“I’m sorry” I forgive you” “Thank You”

“I Love You” “It’s OK to die” “Goodbye”

- What are their beliefs about death? Do they need to make peace with themselves or a Higher Power?
- Do they need psychological, emotional, spiritual care, counseling or support?
- Have they left a legacy? Identify life lessons, advice, hopes and dreams that they would like to pass on to their family and friends. Write or record these. Identify a person who can pass these along to the people to those whom they wish to receive their legacy. (See Dignity Therapy on the Resource Page.)
- Have they written their personal history? They/you can write it down, or record on audio or video tape, etc. Who is to get their personal history?

Personal Clean-up

- Do they have anything amiss with their family/friends to fix? Can they fix them now?
- Do they have letters to write? Calls to make? Make a list of all old grudges, enemies, etc., and attempt to settle those affairs. They/You may use the “6 things” as a guide.
- Have they created their “**bucket list**”? What are they able to accomplish with the time they have left? Use this list to help create your “goals of medical care. ”

Insurance Issues

- In order to prepare, they need to buy **life insurance**--at least a **death benefit policy** to pay for funeral/burial if they don't have the money for it.
- If they have life insurance, are their policies all in order? Have they placed original policies with their important papers in a **safe place** where their family and/or executor knows where to find them?
- Do they have/need **long-term care policy, disability policy, life policy**?
- Contact their life insurance company--sometimes they pay out in **advance of death** for a terminal disease, so I can pay for arrangements/details or maybe even a last fling!!!

Financial Issues

- Complete their **financial checklist**. (A complete financial checklist is too long to be included here. They/You should consult with an accountant or lawyer to create and complete such a checklist.) Check out our Resource Page on the website for a sample.

- Who will pay their bills during the immediate time after their death? Spouse? Accountant? Lawyer? Estate Manager? Executor? Who will be in charge of discontinuing services no longer needed which are in their name?

Business Arrangements

- Complete a “business survival” plan.

- Do they need “**key man**” insurance? (This insurance covers the loss of a business owner or partner so that the business can continue.)

- Do they need to sell or transfer their business interests?

Personal Effects

- Who do they give their **personal belongings** to? If they are married, most likely all of their belongings will **transfer to their spouse or family**. If they are single, then they must specify what they want done with these items

- Who gets their special items, such as photos, mementos, etc.?

- Have they labeled (ID'd) the people in their photos? Who do their photos (pictures, negatives, discs, etc.) go to?

- If they are single and have kids, have they set up a **guardian for my children** for the immediate time after their death? Short-term money for them?

- Have they set up the paperwork for where their children will go permanently?

- What should they **sell before my death**? House? Car? Furniture? Land?

- Have they made arrangements for the care of their **pets**?
- What **unfinished projects** around the house, at work, or in the community would they like to complete?
- If they have young children, **have they left letters** or **videos** to them?
- Are all their digital photos/videos in one place? What about their computer(s)?

Funeral Planning and Logistics

- Where do they want their body to be taken? Which **funeral home/mortuary**?
- Do they want to be **embalmed? Buried? Cremated?**
- What are their **Burial/Casket** preferences?
- Who do they want notified** of their death?
- Do they want to **write their own obituary**?
- Do they have **burial plot**? If cremated, where should their ashes **be scattered** or **interred**?
- Do they want/need a **headstone/grave marker**? Have they written out what they want inscribed on it? Design?
- Do they want a **Funeral** service? Program?
- Do they have special needs for their ceremony? Military? Religious?
- Who will deliver the **eulogy**? Ask him or her in advance.
- Should they **pre-pay** funeral expenses?
- Do they want to identify a charity **"in lieu of flowers"**?
- Do they want a **wake or memorial party** instead of a funeral?
- Who needs to be made aware of their death? Make a **contact list** for their funeral or memorial notices.

Planning for the death of a loved one or friend—whether expected or not—takes a lot of time and energy to complete. It is much better to take the time now, while they have it, to lay out their plans, wishes, directions and desires, so their passing will be peaceful, for both them, their family and friends.

If you have additions or suggestions for this checklist, please contact us via the website OKtoDie.com OR email us at Info@oktodie.com.

******This checklist contains suggestions. You will need to consult with your own professional financial, legal, medical, etc. advisors.***