

# The Caregiver Toolbox

## *Planning Ahead—Having the Conversation*

**As people age**, they may have new healthcare challenges, different housing needs, or look to others to assist with some aspects of their day to day life. Older individuals and their families may be unfamiliar with all of the resources which are available to assist them. **In addition**, families often do not discuss these issues ahead of time. It is important to clarify your areas of concern and to become familiar with the services and providers in your area. This can help families have an easier time making difficult decisions when the time comes.

### Planning Ahead-What Is It?

**An organized approach** to starting a discussion about a person's:

- Current State of Health
- Goals and Values
- Financial Resources Available
- Preferences For Future Care, Treatment and Living Arrangements



**Not just a one-time event**-should be an ongoing process in families as needs and situations change

### WHY Do People Delay?

- Uncomfortable Topic; easy to delay
- Confusing Topic—in terms of legal documents and what they mean
- Denial and Lack of Recognition of What is Happening or COULD Happen
- Don't want to burden others
- People in families often disagree and this can lead to conflict

### WHAT Topics to Discuss?

- Changes in Living Environment/Housing
- Needs for More Care
- Health Diagnosis/Prognosis
- Treatment options: medicine, surgery
- End of life interventions: hydration, nutrition, other life sustaining treatments
- Pain management
- Money—Financial Realities
- Funeral or after death plans

## WHEN Could Conversations Happen?

- The Next Holiday
- AFTER an illness or a medical treatment
- BEFORE the next illness or medical treatment
- The next planned visit
- The next family gathering
- When people are NOT too tired!!

## SUGGESTIONS for Getting the Conversation Started

- ✓ Do your own planning
- ✓ Explain why you are bringing the subject up
- ✓ Prepare your questions in advance
- ✓ Prepare information
- ✓ Consider holding a family meeting

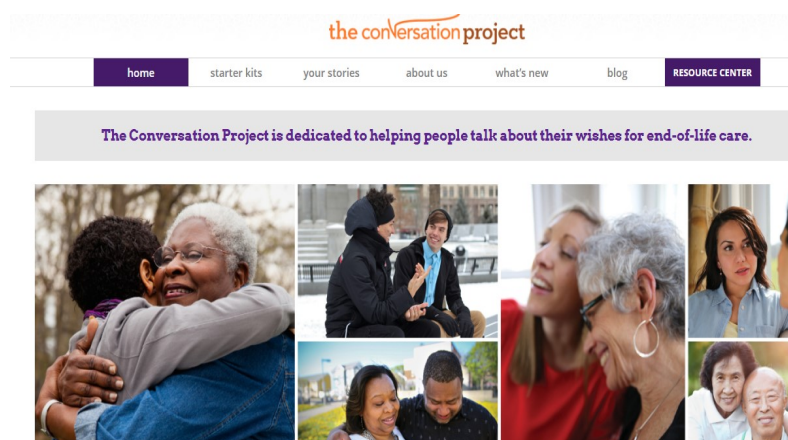


## Consider Holding a Family Meeting:

- **Don't forget** to include as many people as possible including long-distance family/caregivers.
- **Include adult 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> generation family** members if available. They often bring a productive dynamic to the discussion and a current knowledge of technology.
- **Set ground rules** for the meeting so that **only** issues that apply to the current concerns are brought into the discussion (i.e. leaving out old arguments, past issues etc.)
- **Appoint a mediator** who will move the discussion along. This can be someone from the family, a close friend or it can also be appropriate to hire someone who specializes in these issues. **Everyone should have a chance to share and listen to the others.**

# The Conversations Project

- ✓ Started in 2012 by Journalist Ellen Goodman—her TED Talk in 2014 is on YOU Tube
- ✓ 6 Different Discussion Guiding Documents
- ✓ Started the *Conversation Sabbath Movement* Which is an initiative in Churches in October-November



## Documents From: The Conversations Project

1. Your Conversation Starter Kit
2. Your Conversation Starter Kit for Dementia
3. Your Conversation Starter Kit for Pediatrics
4. How to Choose/Be a Health Care Proxy
5. How to Talk to Your Doctor/Health Care Provider
6. What Matters to Me Workbook

**Download from**  
**[www.conversationsproject.org](http://www.conversationsproject.org)**

## Other Helpful Websites

- [www.coaaa.org](http://www.coaaa.org)(Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging)
- [www.aging.ohio.gov](http://www.aging.ohio.gov)(Ohio Department of Aging)
- [www.proseniors.org](http://www.proseniors.org)
- [www.disabilityrightsohio.org](http://www.disabilityrightsohio.org)
- [www.eldercarelocator.acl.gov](http://www.eldercarelocator.acl.gov)

## **This information is provided by: The National Family Caregiver Support Program**



This is a nationally funded program operated in Central Ohio by the Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging (COAAA). It offers caregiver workshops and funds services designed to assist caregivers on a short term basis. The services include: information and assistance, counseling, respite, and other supplemental services.

### **Request a copy or download our other guides:**

- Central Ohio Older Adults Resource Guide
- The Caregiver Toolbox
- Central Ohio Long Term Care & Hospice Guide
- Central Ohio Housing & Home Repair Guide
- Central Ohio Private Homecare Guide
- Central Ohio Utility Guide
- Central Ohio Prescription Guide
- Central Ohio Transportation Guide
- Central Ohio Support Group Guide
- Central Ohio Respite Guide
- Central Ohio Moving & Transitions Guide
- Books, Videos, and Websites for Family Caregivers.
- Central Ohio Kinship Care Guide (New)
- Central Ohio Hiring Guide for In Home Caregivers ( New)
- Central Ohio Pet Care Guide (New)

**The COAAA also provides monthly Caregiver Support Groups & Information Sessions. For more information, call 1-800-589-7277 or visit [www.coaaa.org](http://www.coaaa.org).**

### **Or in your county, call one of these agencies:**

- **Delaware**-SourcePoint 740-363-6677
- **Fairfield**-Meals on Wheels Older of Fairfield County 740-681-5050
- **Fayette**-Community Action Commission of Fayette Co. 740-335-7282
- **Franklin**-Franklin Co. Office on Aging 614-525-6200
- **Licking**-Licking Co. Aging Program 740-345-0821 or 1-800-452-0097
- **Madison**-Madison Co. Senior Center 740-852-3001
- **Pickaway**-Pickaway County Senior Center 740-474-8831
- **Union**-Union County Senior Services 937-644-1010