

Your Voice, Your Choices: Advance Care Planning

Advance Care Planning After Stroke

Living with the effects of stroke can bring many changes, some expected, some sudden. Advance Care Planning is one way to make sure your values and wishes would continue to guide your care, even if there comes a time when you cannot speak or decide for yourself.

Advance Care Planning means:

- Thinking about what matters most to you in your life and health care
- Talking with people you trust about your wishes
- Choosing someone to speak for you if needed (called a Substitute Decision Maker in Ontario)

This planning is not just about end-of-life care. It's about living well, with dignity and respect, at every stage of life.

Why this matters for people living with stroke

Stroke can affect communication, thinking, memory, or energy. In stressful situations, others may make assumptions about what you would want.

Advance Care Planning helps reduce that risk by clearly sharing:

- What quality of life means to you
- The kind of care you would want or not want when experiencing serious illness
- Who understands you best and can speak on your behalf

Many people say these conversations bring relief to themselves and to their families because loved ones don't have to guess.

This is about choice, not giving up

Advance Care Planning does not take away hope. It does not lock you into decisions. Your wishes can change as your health or life changes.

You stay in control.

Your voice still matters

If you have trouble speaking, reading, or writing, you still have the right to take part in Advance Care Planning. Conversations can happen slowly, with support, and using methods that work for you such as visual aids, supported communication, or help from a trusted person.

Even small steps, one conversation, one note written down can make a big difference.

Helpful Resources (Canada & Ontario)

- **Advance Care Planning Canada**
National, plain-language tools and conversation guides
<http://www.advancecareplanning.ca>
- **Advance Care Planning Ontario**
Ontario-specific information on wishes, Substitute Decision Makers, and the law
www.advancecareplanningontario.ca