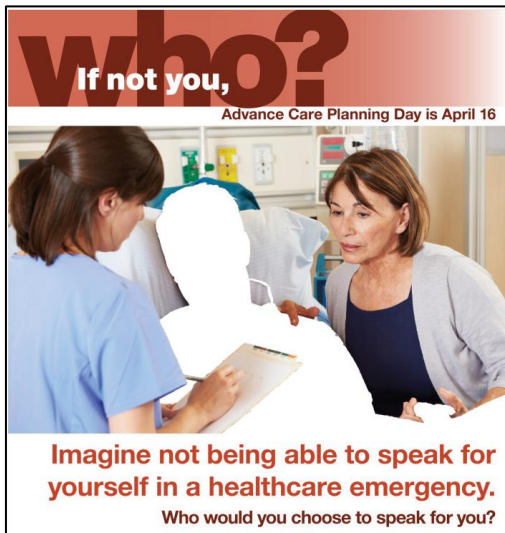


Now is the Time!

Don't leave your healthcare decisions to chance. If not you, who will make sure that your wishes are respected? Whether you are 20 years old or 102 years old, now is the time to consider **Advance Care Planning!**



Dr. David Williscroft has witnessed numerous heart-wrenching situations when end of life decisions were left to the health-care providers. He has found that, in fact, it's a common phenomenon for people not to make any decisions regarding their end-of-life care – until it's too late. Even more surprising, it's not unusual for people's family members and friends to agree that such matters don't need to be considered until a health crisis occurs. However, having these difficult conversations with someone you trust before a situation becomes dire can mean the difference between a peaceful and planned end-of-life experience or a troublesome and negative one.

As a Palliative Care preceptor at St. Paul's Hospital and an Emergency Physician at Lions Gate Hospital in Vancouver, BC, Dr. Williscroft slowly shakes his head and looks down as he recalls one devastating occurrence. "I treated one patient who was 102 years old. Neither he nor his family thought it was necessary to have any conversations about end-of-life. His family explained their loved one was obviously cheerful and feeling fine. This, even though he had recently fallen, had an infection and a rapidly growing cancer."

These kinds of challenging ordeals involve a sensitive approach and careful navigation. Physicians may need to thoughtfully assess a patient's value and belief system, including their cultural backgrounds and traditions, when delivering possible treatment and care plans. Sometimes this means outsourcing some of the patient's care plan to a cultural expert who can ensure a custom-designed approach that meets the patient's expectations.

"It's important to try to get to know the patient, and what matters to them," says Dr. Williscroft. "This takes time, and if I don't have specific knowledge in terms of their belief system, I'll invite an informed representative, such as an expert from the Indigenous community, for example, to help. Although I'm constantly learning and broadening my skillset, I need to exercise good judgement to determine when another professional should step in to offer support."

Why leave your life decisions in the hands of others? Talk about your values, beliefs and wishes to develop a plan, especially if you or your loved one is living with a life limiting illness. Be sure to inform your healthcare provider as well.

By doing so, you ensure your wishes for your future healthcare are just that – yours!

Get started with [ACP Information Booklet](#). Visit [ACP Resource Hub](#) to find resources for Chinese, Hindi, Punjabi, and English speakers.



