

How to run a future planning conversation



1 in 6 people over 65 years experience elder abuse.

We can combat elder abuse by having open, honest conversations about future planning.

Thank you for your interest in bringing together your friends, family, and community to have future planning conversations.

This kit is designed to provide the information and resources you need to facilitate a future planning conversation with the individuals or groups you support.

What's included in this kit?

- **Why have a future planning conversation?**
- **What is a future planning conversation?**
- **How can I get started?**
- **Frequently asked questions.**



Why have a future planning conversation?

We know that if a person has future planning documents in place, such as an Enduring Power of Attorney and Medical Treatment Decision Maker Form, they are less likely to experience elder abuse.

However, only 10-20% of Australians have these documents in place.

A key barrier to future planning is that many people don't know how to have conversations about ageing.

Through a future planning conversation, you can encourage people to start thinking about their older age, and consider what future planning documents they might like to put in place.



What is a future planning conversation?

Future planning is a 4-step process:

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| STEP 1. Thinking about what you want your older age to be like | STEP 2. Talking to people you trust about what you want for your older age |
| STEP 3. Writing down what you want so that there is a record of your wishes and decisions | STEP 4. Formalising your arrangements in legal documents |

A future planning conversation is designed to help people consider what their wishes and interests are as they age.

This can allow people to make informed choices about what legal documents they may like to put in place, to empower and protect them as they get older.

How can I get started?

You can use our Conversation Guide resource to navigate a future planning conversation with individuals or groups in your community.

All you need is the Conversation Guide in its appropriate language. If the language of the people you're working with is not available, you can work with an interpreter.

Our Conversation Guides can help people:

- Understand what elder abuse is
- Understand the importance of future planning
- Think about how they want their life to look when they get older, including:
 - Everyday life
 - Managing finances
 - End of life healthcare



IMPORTANT: The Conversation Guide is not a legal document. Once the Guide is completed, people will need to organise future planning documents separately to formalise their wishes.

Starting prompts for individuals or groups

We know there are many barriers to having conversations about future planning, including:

- Social isolation
- Capacity
- Health related issues and frailty
- Dilemmas of loyalty
- Fear of placement
- Stigma and shame

To help start a conversation about future planning, we've put together some suggested wording you can use:



For individuals

"I went to a workshop this week and was given this Conversation Guide. I thought you might be interested in reading through it too – it talks about how to plan for the future you want to have. Then we can talk more about it next time we catch up, if you'd like to."

"I've brought this Conversation Guide along today which has lots of good information about how to set yourself up to live the life you want to live as you get older. I am happy to talk to you about what you want your life to be like over the next few years. If you want to read through the Guide, and even make some notes in it if you want, we can talk more about it when we catch up next."

For groups

"Are you happy with the way you are living your life at the moment? Have you thought about how you want your life to be like as you get older? For example, where you will live, what activities you want to continue doing, who you want to live near?"

"Have you thought about how you want your life to be over the next few years? For example, what you like to do? Who you like to spend time with? Let's take a look at this Conversation Guide I've brought along, so we can think about what matters to us as we get older."

Frequently asked questions

General questions
Why would I appoint an Enduring Power of Attorney or Medical Treatment Decision Maker?
So you have control over who makes these important decisions in your future at any time when you aren't able to make the decisions for yourself – someone who knows you well and who you trust.
What happens if I haven't appointed a Medical Treatment Decision Maker, and at some time in the future I can't make my own decisions?
The law has a list of people who can make these decisions for you, in the following order of priority: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guardian appointed by VCAT• Spouse or partner• Carer (not a paid carer, but the person can receive the Centrelink carer benefit)• Parent• Child (if more than one, the oldest)• Sibling (if more than one, the oldest)
Can I have different people as my Enduring Power of Attorney and my Medical Treatment Decision Maker?
Yes.
Does an Enduring Power of Attorney or Medical Treatment Decision Maker Form expire?
No.
Can I change my mind about who I appoint as my Enduring Power of Attorney or Medical Treatment Decision Maker?
Yes.
Do I need to appoint an Enduring Power of Attorney And Medical Treatment Decision Maker when I already have a Will?
Yes. These documents do different things – an Enduring Power of Attorney and Medical Treatment Decision Maker can make decisions on your behalf if at any time you are unable to make those decisions for yourself. These documents are all about you taking control of your important decisions, so you can live the life you want to live. While a Will is only effective after the person who made it dies – not while they are alive.

Frequently asked questions

Enduring Powers of Attorney

What is an Enduring Power of Attorney?

An Enduring Power of Attorney nominates the person(s) you would like to make your personal decisions (such as which services you will receive and who can visit you) and/or your financial decisions (such as accessing your bank account and paying your bills), in the event you can't make those decisions at the time.

What happens if I haven't appointed an Enduring Power of Attorney and at some time in the future I can't make my own decisions?

No one else can automatically make your personal or financial decisions for you. An application must be made to VCAT (the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal) to appoint a person(s) to make these decisions for you.

Can I appoint more than one person as my Enduring Power of Attorney?

Yes.

How do multiple Enduring Power of Attorneys make a decision for me?

You can decide whether decisions need to be made unanimously, by a majority, or severally (i.e. any attorney can act, even if the others don't agree).

Medical Treatment Decision Maker

What is a Medical Treatment Decision Maker Form?

A Medical Treatment Decision Maker form nominates the person you want to make your medical decisions for you in the event you can't make those decisions at the time.

Can I appoint more than one person as my Medical Treatment Decision Maker?

No. You can only have one Medical Treatment Decision Maker at a time, though you can appoint an alternative person(s) in case the first person can't or won't make your medical decisions.

Contact us

If you have any further questions about facilitating a future planning conversation, or you would like Justice Connect to run a session with your community, please contact our team:

seniorslaw@justiceconnect.org.au

