

the conversation project

Hosting and Organizing College/Campus events

The Conversation Project is a national campaign dedicated to helping people talk about their wishes for health care through the end-of-life. Their goal is that everyone's wishes for care will be understood and respected. The Conversation Project (TCP) is for all of us, even those who are in college. The reality is that some people die before they should and college students frequently deal with the deaths of loved ones — at any given time, 22 to 30 percent of college undergraduates are in the first twelve months of grieving the death of a family member or friend.¹ The death of friends or peers can cause college students to reflect on what they might want for their own care through the end-of-life. TCP events can be extremely successful on college campuses to inspire students to start thinking about health care wishes through the end-of-life, early and often. To support student leaders, or others who want to host a TCP event on their campus, TCP has provided sample event materials.

Document Aim: This document is designed to provide a sample agenda and sample discussion questions for student events, with answers or resources for the facilitator.

Sample Agenda for College/Campus events for a 1-hour event

- Begin with a discussion
 - Do you know what a health care proxy is?
 - Do you have a health care proxy?
 - If not, why not?
- Introduction and Overview of The Conversation Project
- Choosing a Health Care Proxy – what makes someone a good, or bad, choice
- How do you designate a proxy and have a conversation with them about your wishes?

Discussion Questions for College/Campus events

- **On The Conversation Project**
 - Q: What is The Conversation Project?
 - *A: TCP is a grass-roots social campaign dedicated to helping people talk about their wishes for care through the end-of-life. Too many people are dying in a way they wouldn't choose, and too many of those that cared for them are left feeling bereaved, guilty, and uncertain. It's time to transform our culture so we shift from not talking about dying to talking about it. It's time to share the way we want to live at the end of our lives. And it's time to communicate about the kind of care we want and don't want for ourselves.*
 - Consider showing [this clip](#) from ABC World News Tonight explaining what The Conversation Project is.
- **On Health Care Proxies**
 - Q: Do you know what a health care proxy is?

¹ Balk, D. E. (2008). Grieving: 22 to 30 percent of all college students. In Servaty-Seib, H. L., & Taub, D. J. (Eds.). (2008). Assisting bereaved college students (pp. 5-14). San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

- *A: A health care proxy (also called a health care or surrogate) is the person you choose to make health care decisions for you if you're too sick to make them for yourself. Your proxy can talk with your doctors, consult your medical records, and make decisions about test, procedures, and other treatment.*
 - *Note for facilitators: Each state uses their own term for 'health care proxy'. Find out what your state calls it and use that!*
 - Q: Do you have a health care proxy, surrogate, or decision-maker already?
 - Q: If you do not have a health care proxy, surrogate, or decision-maker, what is stopping you from selecting one?
 - Q: Who would you select as your health care proxy, surrogate, or decision-maker? Why would they be a good fit?
 - *Follow Up Prompts: Remember, your proxy is the person who will speak for you if you're unable to speak for yourself. Being a proxy is not for everyone. Your proxy may have to make tough, quick, decisions on your behalf. Some more questions to think about are:*
 - *Will the person make decisions that are in line with your wishes?*
 - *Will the person be comfortable speaking up on your behalf?*
 - *Will the person be good at making decisions in changing circumstances?*
 - Consider showing the [Who Will Speak for You](#) video as a humorous way to illustrate the considerations for picking a health care proxy.
- **On End-of-Life Care Wishes**
 - Q: What would you want your end-of-life to be like?
 - Q: What matters to you in your health and health care?
 - *Follow Up Prompts: What's most important to you as you think about how you want to live at the end of your life? What do you value most?*
 - *Some examples could be: being able to recognize my children, being in a hospital with excellent care, being able to say goodbye to the ones I love.*
 - Q: What would you want your care takers to use as a 'north star' for your care if you were unable to speak for yourself?
 - *Follow Up Prompts: What are the three most important things that you want your friends, family, and/or doctors to know about your wishes?*
- **On Starting the Conversation**
 - Q: How would you break the ice to have this conversation with someone that matters to you about your own wishes?
 - *Follow Up Prompts: Some examples are:*
 - *I need your help with something*
 - *Even though I'm okay right now, I'm worried about _____, and I want to be prepared.*
 - *I need to think about my future will you help?*
 - Q: How would you break the ice to have this conversation with someone that matters to you about their wishes?
 - *Follow Up Prompts: Some examples are:*

- *Remembers when ____ died? Do you think their wishes and priorities were known and respected toward the end of their life? How will yours be different?*
 - *I was thinking about ____ and it made me realize....*
 - *I just answered some questions about how I want the end of my life to be. I want you to see my answers, and I'm wondering what your answers will be.*
- Consider showing the [Practice Makes Perfect](#) video on how to start the conversation!

For more prompts and resources, see The Conversation Project's [Conversation Starter Guide](#), [Choosing a Health Care Proxy](#), and [Being a Health Care Proxy](#) documents.