



The Conversation Project Fact Sheet

WHAT

The Conversation Project, co-founded by Pulitzer Prize-winner Ellen Goodman and launched in collaboration with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), is a public engagement campaign with a goal that is both simple and transformative: to have every person's wishes for end-of-life care expressed and respected. Too many people die in a manner they would not choose, and too many of their loved ones are left feeling bereaved, guilty, and uncertain. The Conversation Project offers people the tools, guidance, and resources they need to begin talking with their loved ones about their wishes and preferences, before a medical crisis – “at the kitchen table,” not in the intensive care unit.

WHY

Ellen created the organization after having been her mother's caregiver and health care decision-maker. Had Ellen had conversations with her mother before dementia impaired her ability to share her desires, she might have felt more comforted about the choices she faced. Unfortunately, Ellen's experience is not unique. While 90 percent of Americans say it's important to discuss their own and their loved ones' wishes for end-of-life care, only 30 percent actually do. Similarly, 70 percent of people say they want to die at home, but in reality, 70 percent die in hospitals or institutions. The goal of The Conversation Project is to help loved ones die in the way they would choose, honoring their wishes in death the same way we do in life – with dignity, respect, and deep compassion. Studies show that when there is a meaningful conversation about end-of-life choices, survivors report feeling less guilt, less depression, and an easier process of grieving.

WHO

More than 200,000 people, from all 50 states and 175 countries, have downloaded The Conversation Project's starter kit and it is available in English, Spanish, French, Hebrew, Korean and Mandarin. More than 290,000 people have visited The Conversation Project website since its 2012 launch.

HOW

The Conversation Project created a downloadable guide, the [Conversation Starter Kit](#), which helps people have “the conversation” about their preferences for end-of-life care. The guide is designed to be used by families, or by individuals, as a way to help them think about and communicate important end-of-life decisions. From how much information the doctor should share with the family, to which family member is to be the primary decision maker, the starter kit helps people think about situations and how they might address them. The process enables family members to understand the values held by their loved ones so that if faced with having to make decisions on their behalf, they can do so based on knowing what matters to them most, rather than guessing. The Conversation Project encourages people have the conversations before there is a crisis. These discussions can be among the richest and most intimate that friends and family members can have. By engaging with corporations, communities, and religious organizations, The Conversation Project is reaching people where they work, live, and pray. For more information about The Conversation Project, visit www.theconversationproject.org.

MEDIA CONTACT: Katie Stinchon, katie@teakmedia.com, 617-269-7171