



GeriCare **Advance Care Planning**

What happens if you can no longer make decisions? What is most important to you? Who would speak for you if you could not speak for yourself? In this video, we learn about Advance Care Planning (ACP). Regardless of your health status, it is never too early to think about these questions.

ACP is the process of planning for your future healthcare options through a series of voluntary, non-legally binding conversations. It can be conducted by any trained ACP facilitators.

There are 3 types of ACP. General ACP is suited for adults who are generally healthy or with stable medical conditions. Disease Specific ACP is catered for those with progressive and life-limiting illnesses with frequent complications such as organ failures. It accounts for the trajectory of disease of the patient and discusses the specific circumstances that the patient may encounter in the future. Preferred Plan of Care (PPC) is for patients with less than 12 months of prognosis and takes into account end of life preferences

Now, let's follow John and his family as they discuss about John's PPC. During the discussion, he is invited to share about his life, values beliefs, as well as his fears with his family and his healthcare team. This is important so that they know what matters to him.

He is also invited to share about his health conditions and his experiences when he was sick. This guides them to provide medical care that is in line with his goals and values when he is no longer able to communicate these wishes.

John is then guided in discussing his medical preferences. What would John prefer his healthcare team to do if he is not able to make his own decisions? Would he prefer the medical team to attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), mechanical ventilation, intravenous antibiotics etc. or would he prefer to let nature takes its course and for the team to optimise his comfort?

Having recounted his prior experiences in the intensive care unit and his personal value of being independent, John chose for the team to prioritize comfort and minimize medical intervention that will cause pain and suffering.

John is also prompted to think about where he would like to receive treatment in the event of deterioration. Where would he like to pass away should he have days to live?

It is important for John to nominate his loved one as his Nominated Healthcare Spokesperson (NHS). When he can no longer make decisions for himself, the NHS knows what is important to him and can then act in his best interest.

ACP promotes a holistic healthcare that is aligned with John's values and goals. More importantly, John has the opportunity to express the quality of life he wants for himself. It is an act of love for his family who can be his voice when the time comes, knowing how he feels and what he wants.

References

1. Agency for integrated care. *All About ACP*. Retrieved from <https://www.aic.sg/care-services/all-about-acp>



2. “Stepped-approach Advance Care Planning (ACP) framework that is adapted from Respecting Choices[®], Gundersen Health System. Information extracted from Living Matters General ACP Facilitator training slides (Master) on 19 Nov 2020.”