

# Fact Sheet 1

## ADVANCE CARE PLANNING



### KEY MESSAGES

- **What is an Advance care directive:**  
An advance healthcare directive, also known as living will, personal directive, advance directive, medical directive or advance decision, it is a legal document in which a person specifies what actions should be taken for their health if they are no longer able to make decisions for themselves. An Advance Care Directive allows the client to make known their wishes and preferences for their future health care, end of life care, living arrangements and personal matters.
- **What is an Advance care plan:** An advance care plan can simply be a conversation or it can be written down. A written care plan is the best way to make sure that a person's preferences will be respected and followed. Advance care planning is a process to help you plan your medical care in advance. ... Doctors will refer to your advance care plan if you can no longer communicate or make decisions.
- An Advance Care Directive includes the option to appoint a "substitute decision-maker", who will make decisions for the client if they are not able to make decisions. It is important to know and communicate effectively with the substitute decision-maker if the client is unable to make choices for themselves.
- As a Care Worker you follow directives on the care plan but it is not your role to help clients make decisions on treatment and health concerns. Please refer the matter to your coordinator or team leader.
- There are many choices a client will need to make. Seeing the choices from their perspective will assist you in caring holistically for their needs and the needs of their loved ones.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Talk to the client, their carer and family about the client's quality of life, pain level and comfort and report the information to the coordinator or team lead.
- Build trust and a supporting relationship by showing empathy. Empowering the client and the carer to make their own choices enhances their dignity and self-respect.
- Know the client's wishes and preferences. This helps create a supportive environment that encourages the continuity of care and respect for how they want to live.
- Understanding that the client's culture, religion and spirituality are very much a part of who they are. These aspects will inform their decision making.
- Knowing your own work role boundaries, responsibilities and limitations will assist in delivering the service using a palliative approach.

### WHY IT WORKS

- Advance care planning benefits everyone: the person, their family, carers, health professionals and health care organisations.
  - Helps to ensure people receive the care they want.
  - Improves ongoing and end-of-life care, along with personal and family satisfaction with care they received.
  - Families who have discussed advance care planning may have less anxiety, depression, stress and are more satisfied with the care provided.
  - For healthcare professionals and organisations, it may reduce unnecessary transfers to acute care and unwanted treatment.

### REFERENCES

[www.advancetcareplanning.org.au](http://www.advancetcareplanning.org.au)

[www.bemyvoice.com.au](http://www.bemyvoice.com.au)

[http://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/pubs/rp/RP9697/97rp4\\_Residential\\_Aged\\_Care](http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/RP9697/97rp4_Residential_Aged_Care)

Palliative Approach Toolkit – [www.caresearch.com.au/PAToolkit](http://www.caresearch.com.au/PAToolkit)

[http://www.aacqa.gov.au/providers/home-care/processes-and-resources/resources-specifically-for-home-care/fact-sheets/homecarecommonstandardsv14\\_0.pdf](http://www.aacqa.gov.au/providers/home-care/processes-and-resources/resources-specifically-for-home-care/fact-sheets/homecarecommonstandardsv14_0.pdf)