

Planning for a Dementia Diagnosis: A Conversation



1 in 3 Seniors Dies With Some Form of Dementia.

WHY SHOULD I PLAN NOW FOR A DEMENTIA DIAGNOSIS?

In the later stages of dementia, individuals can't always speak for themselves and may need someone to speak for them. That's why it is important for everyone to discuss their wishes with people they trust.

HOW CAN I BE SURE MY WISHES WILL BE HONORED?

The short answer is, you can't. But having documentation and conversations with trusted individuals in your life is the first step to ensuring your wishes will be honored.

I'M AFRAID OF GETTING DEMENTIA AND NOT RECOGNIZING MY LOVED ONES. I DON'T KNOW HOW TO DISCUSS THIS WITH THEM.

Having these conversations with loved ones removes some of the fear associated with this disease: everyone can move forward with more confidence in knowing what you want. The best antidote to uncertainty is preparation.

WHERE SHOULD I START?

Talk about what's important to you with loved ones and your doctor. Make sure it's an ongoing conversation, as your values and priorities evolve and change.

Fill out an advance directive, an important set of documents that outline your end-of-life priorities. It includes a living will ("what I want") and a medical durable power of attorney ("who will speak for me").

HOW DO I DOCUMENT MY WISHES?

Compassion & Choices offers free tools and resources to help you plan for a dementia diagnosis.

- » **Dementia Values and Priorities Tool:** Patients will be able to provide a set of clear-cut care instructions to their loved ones, outlining their intentions through a personalized care plan. This Dementia Healthcare Directive adds to a standard advance directive.
[Values-Tool.CompassionAndChoices.org](https://www.compassionandchoices.org/values-tool)
- » **Dementia Decoder:** Patients indicate the current status of their dementia diagnosis, specify what they hope to learn and accomplish from an upcoming clinical appointment and customize that experience using a list of helpful questions. Responses to these questions can then be printed or emailed to a provider or family member to guide important discussions during medical appointments.
[DiagnosisDecoder.org/decoder/dementia](https://www.diagnosisdecoder.org/decoder/dementia)



Truth and knowledge are power. Never stop or accept anything but the best for yourself and for your family. Advocate. Research. Expand. Explore. And do it in love and in grace. And know that the answers are there, know that the support is there.

– Dr. Sonja Richmond

