

# Planning Ahead : Values and Choices



# Six Steps Along the Path Taking stock

- Understanding the future
- Getting specifics from the clinician
  - Identifying what matters most
  - Considering life prolongation
- Communicating / documenting wishes

# How do you view your current health?

Young and healthy

Older and healthy

Chronically ill

Seriously ill

Nearing death

None of the above but wishing you were dead

AGING is NOT for SISSIES

Understanding the Future : Likely Trajectory

**Sudden death**

**Terminal illness**

**Organ Failure/ Chronic illness**

**Frailty**

POST

### Sudden Death

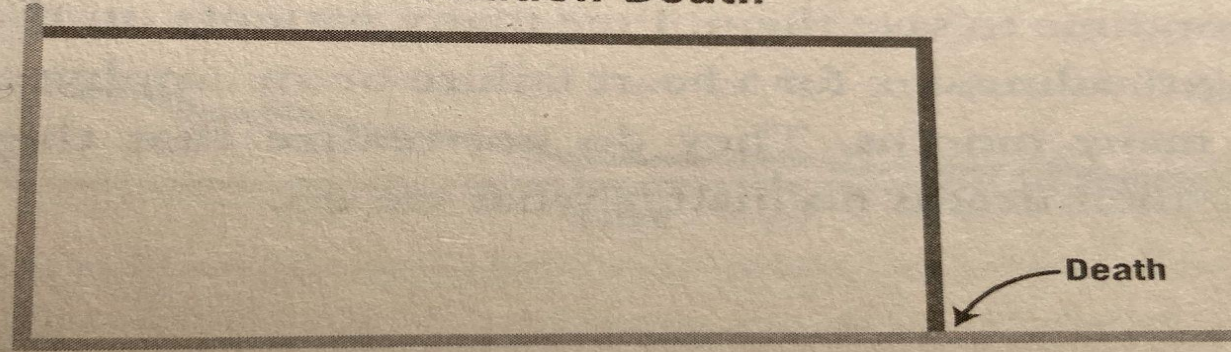
**FUNCTION**

High

Low

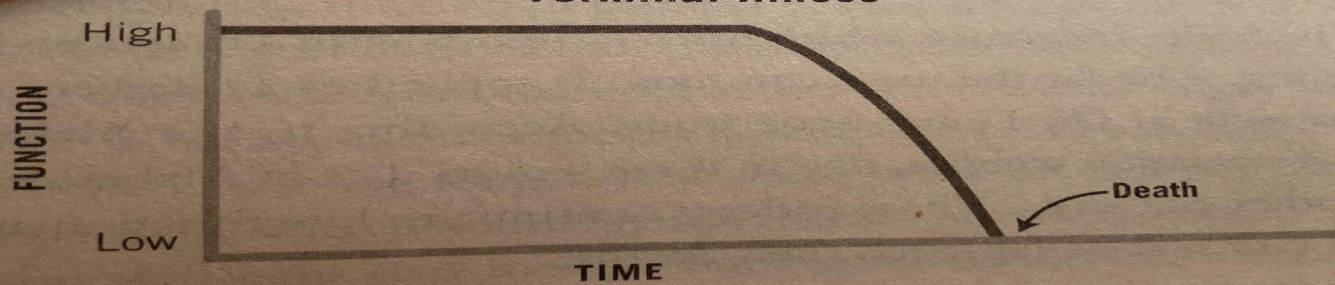
Death

**TIME**

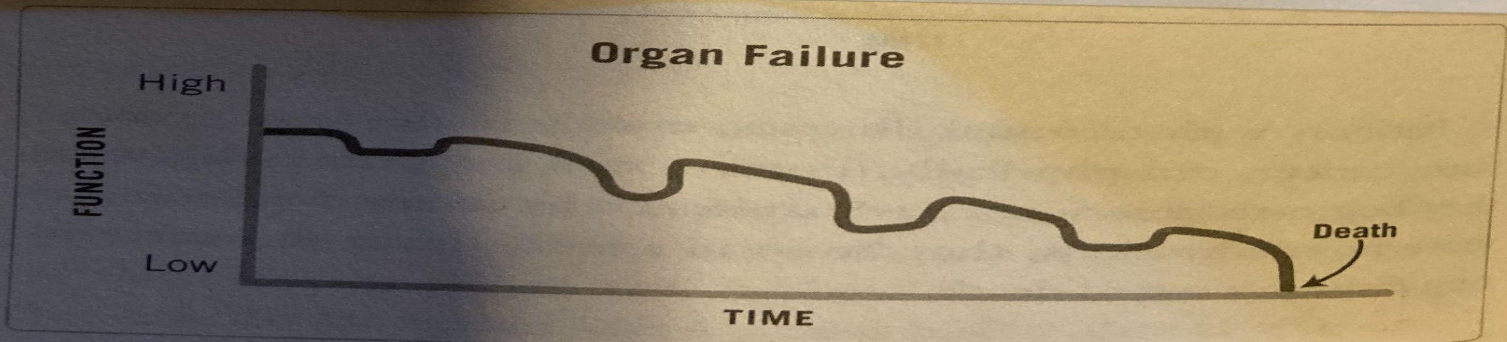




### Terminal Illness

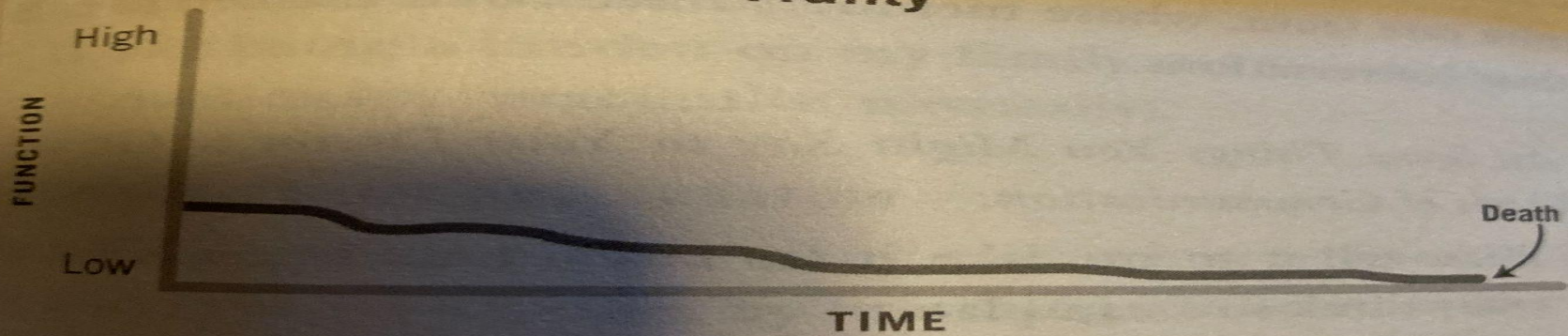


Faint, illegible text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.





# Frailty





# Get the Facts from Clinicians

Understand the patterns of medical trajectories

What treatment might offer optimal health?

What treatments potential benefits and burdens?

If living longer, how much more life to expect?

What potential symptoms will I encounter/ burdens of treatment?

Goal is **TRUTH**.

Bring a friend so the provider has a witness to help gather and retain information. Avoid going alone.

## **Here are things to ask.....**

**Please tell me like it is.. I need to know so I can plan.**

**You see a lot of patients with this disease. What is the pathway my disease is likely to take?**

**Would you be surprised if I were alive in five years? One year?  
Six months?**

**What are the benefits and burdens of the treatments you are suggesting? What are the alternatives ? What happens if we don't pursue them?**

**What would you choose to do if this were you, your partner, your parent?**

# **What MATTERS MOST to YOU**

**What is your conception of a life worth living?**

**Every second counts, no matter my condition**

**Free from pain**

**Able to engage in relationships**

**Retaining autonomy**

**Retaining mentation over comfort**

**Engaging in work, tasks meaningful to me.**

**Being able to live in my own home**

**Not being a burden to my family and friends ( financially, emotionally, practically, physically )**

# CONSIDERING LIFE PROLONGATION

## How we keep folks alive despite poor prognosis

Breathing machines

Feeding tubes

Dialysis

Transfusions

Antibiotics

Surveys show that most people including clinicians do NOT want heroic measures and YET.....



# **Treatments and Technology at END OF LIFE**

**Palliative / compassionate extubation**

**Palliative sedation**

**Palliative radiation or chemotherapy**

**Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillators ICDs**

**VSED ( Voluntary Stopping Eating / Drinking)**

**Stopping or starting dialysis**

**Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation ECMO**

**Medical aid in dying**

**If you can not achieve the lowest quality of life that would be acceptable, where would you fall on this line**

**Keep me comfortable**

**and allow me to die naturally\_\_\_\_\_Keep me alive at all costs**

# Communicate and Document

No one can read YOUR mind

You may have the best plans but unless communicated and documented, chaos and suffering

Even when we know folks do not want to be dependent on machines, the immediate response is to try is temporarily, or short term. It becomes too difficult to remove them.

Case Story

# **Tools to communicate**

**Advanced Directives**

**MOLST /POLST**

**Hospital DNR**

**Medical Alert bracelet**



# Personal preferences made easy

**PREPARE** [prepareforyourcare.org](http://prepareforyourcare.org)

**THE CONVERSATION PROJECT** [theconversationproject.org](http://theconversationproject.org)

**GO WISH CARD GAME** [gowish.org](http://gowish.org)

**DEATH CAFE** [deathcafe.org](http://deathcafe.org)

**DEATH OVER DINNER** [deathoverdinner.org](http://deathoverdinner.org)

**FIVE WISHES** [agingwithdignity.org/fivewishes](http://agingwithdignity.org/fivewishes)

**ADVANCED DIRECTIVES** [caringinfo.org](http://caringinfo.org)

**MY DIRECTIVES** [mydirectives.com](http://mydirectives.com)

**NATIONAL HEALTHCARE DECISIONS DAY** [nhdd.org/public-resouces](http://nhdd.org/public-resouces)

**VITAL TALK** [vitaltalk.org](http://vitaltalk.org)

**GET PALLIATIVE CARE** [getpalliativecare.org](http://getpalliativecare.org)

# **Compassion and Choices.Org**

## **MY END OF LIFE DECISION:**

### **An Advanced Planning Guide and Toolkit**

**Order FREE copy**

**Wendy Minor**

**[wminor@compassionandchoices.org](mailto:wminor@compassionandchoices.org)**

Inside every older lady



is a young woman wondering  
what the hell happened.\*

”

# Thoughts to share

**You are not alone.  
There are resources  
and people who can  
help you navigate  
the path of aging.  
The power of  
community is real.**

