



Aged To Perfection

...sharing the latest on caring for seniors

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

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Autumn is a wonderful time of year—fall colours, harvest crops, hearty comfort food, and warm

fuzzy sweaters. Long walks rustling your feet through the leaves, geese flying overhead, squirrels scurrying to collect acorns...all the sights and sounds and smells of fall time. Above all this though, fall is a time to be thankful for all of our blessings.

Celebrating Thanksgiving does not require a lavish celebration with all of the home-cooked food (although sneaking an extra slice of pie certainly sounds good!). The true essence of Thanksgiving is in being grateful.

What are you most thankful for? Who do you appreciate? Have you told your family, friends, or neighbours how much you

care for them, even if you are separated by distance? Everyone likes to know that they are appreciated, so you can never thank people too much!

One of the greatest ways to celebrate autumn



is sharing memories with those who are closest to you. You can share these memories while sitting around the dinner table, over the phone, or by email. Sharing memories lets others know that they are important to you, and that you are grateful for their involve-

ment in your life. Reminisce about the happy moments and funny stories from the past year, and tell each other about the blessings in your life. Joy and blessings seem to multiply when shared with other people!





WHAT IS ADVANCED CARE PLANNING?

When people hear the term “advanced care planning” they often think it’s about having a will or planning a funeral. While those topics are important, they are not part of Advanced Care Planning. Advanced Care Planning is all about while you’re still alive—what happens if you are unable to make a decision for yourself? Who will make a decision on your behalf?

The person to make a decision on your behalf is called a Substitute Decision Maker (SDM). The SDM should be someone you trust, and someone who knows you very well so that they can make the types of decisions that you would make yourself. It is the responsibility of the SDM to act in your best interests, and to make decisions that you would make...even if they would personally choose something different.

Did you know that you already have an SDM? Even if you haven’t selected someone, there is a hierarchy that is set out and followed, in lieu of having selected your SDM. Here is the hierarchy:

1. Guardian
2. Power of Attorney (POA) for Personal Care
3. Representative appointed by the Consent and Capacity Board
4. Spouse or partner
5. Children or parents
6. Parent with right of access (ie: custody)
7. Brother or sister
8. Any other relative by blood, marriage, or adoption
9. Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee

If a substitute decision maker is required, this list is consulted—starting at the top, if someone doesn’t have number one, they move onto number two and likewise until they find someone who can act as your substitute. The catch is that you might select someone who isn’t reflected on this list. For example, you might have a really close friend who has known you for 40 years...but friends don’t make the list. Instead, a long-lost cousin would qualify as “any other relative by blood, marriage or



adoption.” If you would like the friend to make your decisions for you, then you need to appoint that friend as your Power of Attorney for Personal Care—then they are at the top of the hierarchy should the need ever arise.

Sometimes people figure that they have lots of relatives and people who care about them, so they don’t appoint a POA. Such situations can be tricky though. For example, if someone is in their 60’s and no longer married, but they have three adult children in their 30’s as well as parents who are aged 85 and 92—all five of these people would need to agree on every single decision. Based on the hierarchy chart, parents and children have equal ranking; one does not trump the other. As long as the children are over age 16, they can be a SDM. In this example, there are three children over age 16 and two parents who are presumed capable and a unanimous decision would be required for any medical decisions. You can imagine how complicated this situation would become!

Looking at the hierarchy, you may be content with the automatic SDM. For many people, the automatic option is number four—spouse or partner. To be considered common-law for the purpose of assigning the SDM, the couple must have been living together for at least one year prior to the SDM being appointed. If a couple separates or divorces, they are no longer considered under option number four. An ex-spouse of decades would be over-



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looked as the SDM and a distant relative could be assigned instead. If a divorcing couple were amicable and still wanted to be SDM for each other, they would need to assign each other as their POA for personal care.

The safest way to ensure that your medical decisions are made as YOU would wish, is to confirm your selection for SDM or appoint a Power of Attorney for Personal Care. This eliminates possible confusion or delay as people sort through the hierarchy. Appointing a SDM or POA gives you the opportunity to discuss in advance what your wishes would be. Don't assume that someone else would know your preferences—tell them what you would like for your own personal care.

While it is always preferable to discuss your wishes with your POA, you might be surprised to know that it is possible to appoint someone as POA without their knowledge! There is no paperwork requiring a POA to accept the position. Theoretically, someone can be appointed as a POA and never be informed...they are just called upon to act as SDM when the need arises.

However, there is no requirement that someone accepts the role of Substitute Decision Maker (SDM) at any time. A spouse who is highest on the hierarchy, can refuse to act as the SDM and have the responsibility roll over to the next level. Even a POA can refuse the responsibility of the SDM and decline being involved. For this reason, it is often advised that you select a SDM or POA as well as a back up—in case your first SDM is unavailable or unwilling to act as SDM.

There are a few requirements for who is eligible to be a SDM:

1. they must be capable (mentally competent)
2. 16 years of age or older
3. Have no court orders (ie: restraining order) or separation agreements in place
4. Be available (reachable by phone, skype, etc)
5. Be willing to act as SDM

Beyond these basic criteria, you want to select someone who will act in your best interests, so what other criteria can you use? Here are a few important elements to consider:

- Do you trust this person to make all your decisions for you?
- How well does this person react in stressful times? How well do they handle emergencies?
- Is this person willing to be your SDM? (remember—just because you appoint them, doesn't make them willing to act as SDM!)
- Express your wishes to them; communicate your health care goals and preferences so they can be confident in making decisions on your behalf.

If there is ever a situation when you are unable to make your own health care decisions, you want to be certain that you have the right person in place who will make decisions that you would make for yourself—this is what Advance Care Planning is all about.

The quick synopsis of what to do for Advanced Care Planning:

- Select and confirm in writing your selection of SDM or legally appoint a POA;
- ensure that person/those people are informed that they have been listed;
- provide them with information about your wishes so they can confidently decide on your behalf.



With information from Jessica Hutchison, Community Engagement Lead from Advanced Care Planning: Conversations Worth Having



*...a mother & her daughters
providing meaningful
assistance to seniors*

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Warm Embrace Elder Care is owned and operated by a mother-daughter team, Brenda Hamilton and her daughters, Chloe and Avery Hamilton. Their goal is to assist seniors to remain independent for as long as possible through offering various services such as homecare, memory therapy, and one-on-one home exercise for seniors. Inspired by personal experience with family caregiving for Brenda’s mother, this mother-daughter team understands firsthand the benefits of enlisting help while caring for a loved one. Warm Embrace believes that independence does not mean that you can do everything by yourself, but rather that you get to choose how everything is done—we grant our seniors the respect and dignity they deserve by helping them to live as they desire.

A CIRCLE OF MUSIC

Have you ever wanted to be part of a choir? This just might be your opportunity!

A Circle of Music is a new intergenerational choir for those living with dementia, their care partners, and students from regional high schools. This choir provides an opportunity to sing, connect with each other and with the students.

Each adult participant is paired with a student from Cameron Heights Collegiate who is truly excited to have this chance to make music. Participants do not need to have any musical experience; this is a learning choir that is open to everyone. Enthusiasm is the most important element!

Date: Thursday afternoons (starting October 6th)
Time: 3:00pm
Location: downtown Kitchener (free, on-site parking)
Cost: Free!
More Info: please contact Sasha Judelson at 519 342 4764 or circleofmusickw@gmail.com

A CHANGING MELODY

This forum was created by those who are living with dementia and is intended to inspire others to live their life fully—regardless of diagnosis. Rather than strictly viewing dementia through a clinical lens, this forum will show the human side of dementia and help families and professional caregivers recognize their vital role in supporting those with dementia to continue living well. Highlights include:

- a panel of people living with dementia and their care partners
- tips for living positively with dementia and moving on after diagnosis
- live musical and interactive performances
- exhibition of art created by artists with dementia

Date: Wednesday, November 2nd, 2016
Time: 8:30am–3:15pm
Location: Bingeman's Conference Centre (425 Bingeman's Centre Dr. Kitchener)
Cost: \$30 for people living with dementia and their care partners; \$70 for health care professionals
Registration: <http://acm2016.ticketfi.com>
More Info: please call the Alzheimer Society Waterloo Wellington 1-866-317-6737