

Taking Care of Dying Time: Stage 1 - Advance Care Planning (video)

Discussions about end-of-life care can be challenging given spiritual, cultural and community sensitivities about dying. Generally speaking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members are the most appropriate people to begin advance care planning discussions. Providing a culturally safe environment in which to have a conversation about advance care planning is important, as well as the use of culturally appropriate resources such as the use of art, music and storytelling. A scan of advance care planning audio-visual resources identified a gap in our ability to promote advance care planning in local communities.

A local Aboriginal health worker experienced the death of an important family and community member. The family decision making at the time of this persons dying highlighted the importance of advance care planning.

The video aims to promote advance care planning specifically within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences in health professional training, to produce a local advance care planning resource with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander relevance and to provide an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective for consideration in advance care planning policies and procedures.

The local Aboriginal worker talks about his recent experience and explains advance care planning is of very real benefit and encourages everyone – young and old – to talk with their family and write down an advance care plan, so people will know their wishes if they become seriously ill or injured and cannot speak for themselves.

The Aboriginal health worker identified a trusted film maker and chose to tell the story of his lived experience to another person whilst sitting together at the Benalla Aboriginal Gardens.

The video footage was reviewed by the Aboriginal health worker, a local Elder and other Aboriginal health workers to produce a 'short version' (4 minutes) and 'longer version' (10 minutes) video including relevant advance care planning websites, documents, acknowledgements and credits.

The video is being used by local Aboriginal health workers, the regional advance care planning training providers and has been viewed at community forums throughout the Ovens Murray catchment. The video has had a great impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, as well as non-indigenous communities.

The video has also been recognised at a National level and the Western Australian Department of Health have asked to co badge and use this resource with Aboriginal Communities in Western Australia. The St Vincent Health Network in Sydney have also asked permission to utilise this video on their website.