

Journal #4:

Health Care Proxy and Five Wishes

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Invite to World of Aging

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While filling out the Five Wishes questionnaire I found it particularly difficult to answer the questions about, "what I want my loved ones to know". This was difficult because it made me think of me losing someone close to me. Even though this questionnaire was focused on me, it made me think of losing my parents. This questionnaire got me thinking of not only my death, but the death of the people closest to me. While filling out this questionnaire I learned that I am a very selfless person. I just want the people around me to be as happy as possible. Fortunately, I have not experienced much death in my life. Ultimately, through this experience I have learned that death can be a confusing and hard time in ones life and making your wishes known to your loved ones prior to your death can make this difficult time easier for them.

On the other hand, while filling out the Health Care Proxy I found a sense of happiness. Not the happiness you find when you do something good or the sense of happiness you find when you are with the people you love, but a sense of happiness you find when you are in control and are at ease with yourself. This questionnaire gave me a sense of security because it involved assigning the people who would be in control of me in the case where I do not have the ability to be in control. Putting my mother and father in that position puts me at ease because I trust them and they know what is best for me in any situation.

The Health Care Proxy questionnaire differs from the Five Wishes questionnaire because the Five Wishes form has you write your wishes and feelings, while the Health Care Proxy focuses more on who would be in control during a time when you are unable to have the control yourself. There are parts in the Health Care Proxy that do focus on your wishes, but overall the Health Care proxy is not very personal, while the Fives

Wishes are much more personal to your wishes. I feel this makes filling out the Five Wishes much more difficult than filling out the Health Care Proxy.

If I were to ask the questions from the Five Wishes questionnaire to someone that is close to me I would feel uncomfortable and sad. I believe it could lead to a bias towards you, because they may be answering the questions in ways that you would want to hear, and not in ways that they would truly want. I believe the same to be true while filling out the Health Care Proxy; however, the bias may not be as strong due to how general this questionnaire is. Overall, asking these questions in the Five Wishes questionnaire and the Health Care Proxy questionnaire of someone close to you could lead to unwanted results, and ultimately make death an even more feared time, as well as making it a more difficult time for your family or friends involved with the death process. My advice in handling this difficult situation would be to either have the person fill it out themselves; however, if they are incapable of filling out the form themselves, have a social worker fill the form out with them.

As a social worker, I would feel completely comfortable asking these questions to an older client. These two forms, the Five Wishes questionnaire and the Health Care Proxy questionnaire are used to make the death process easier. It helps ease the mind of the person dying as well as the family members involved. Not having these two forms filled out could lead to many problems, such as keeping a person on life-support against their wishes or family members fighting over who has control over the situation. As an older adult, having these forms completed would bring a sense of ease because you know that your family will have less stress due to your death. Death of a family member is a

horrible time in ones life but with some planning in advance, everyone over the age of eighteen have the ability to make this difficult time a little more bearable for their family.

In conclusion, everyone over the age of eighteen should have the Five Wishes questionnaire and the Health Care Proxy questionnaire filled out because you never know which day will be your last. I know I want the process of my death to cause the least amount of stress possible for my family, and filling out these forms can accomplish this. Having these forms completed step by step will allow your family to know your wishes. Also, writing down on paper what your wishes are and knowing the person you trust the most in this world will follow these wishes gives you a feeling of relief. I know that even if I am unresponsive or in a coma my wishes will still be played out.