

Fairfield University Kanarek Center for Palliative Care

FAQs for Spiritual Aspects of Advanced Care Planning

- Could I be spiritual if I am not religious? *Yes! According to the [Fetzer Institute](#) (2020), "Spirituality is a complex, diverse, and nuanced phenomenon that people of all spiritual and religious self-identifications experience."*
- How would my spirituality or religion play a role in my advance care planning? *See page 2 and 3.*
- Aren't advance directives against some religious beliefs? *See page 2 and 3.*
- Isn't the Catholic Church in support of maintaining life at all costs? *See page 2 and 3.*
- Are there spiritual or religious beliefs that should be taken into consideration when making medical decisions on your behalf?
 - What would make you comfortable as you near death? Do you prefer the company of friends and loved ones or would you prefer privacy and quiet?
 - Would you want to pray with a member of the clergy?
 - What important needs would you want to be addressed if you were dying?
 - What fears or concerns do you have about the end of your life?

Resources: *Links to information and videos that will explain more about advanced directives and spirituality*

Talking About What
Matters: Advance Directives
and Planning



Preparing for Death:
Discern Moral, Medical
Issues Ahead of Time



Advance Directives PBS
Video



CodaAlliance Go Wish™ Online Game



Common Practice Hi! and Hello Games



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Information on Faith & Spirituality Based Ethical Advanced Directives

Advanced Care planning can be simultaneously a theological, medical, and legal process in addition to considering family, cultural, and philosophical issues.

What are my Religious, Spiritual and/or Philosophical (non religious or non spiritual) concerns?

- What is important in my life?
- What are my religious or spiritual beliefs that should guide doctors and others responsible for making decisions about my care?
- What are my most important beliefs and values?
- How does my beliefs affect me decisions about end-of-life-issues?
- What religious and / or spirituality practices are most important to me?
- Where are my significant relationships?
- What values are most important to me?
- What gives me strength in challenging times?

In particular what does my faith tradition recommend regarding advanced directives and care of the dying?

Jewish

The Rabbinical Assembly

<https://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/>

- Rabbinical Council of America (Orthodox)
The Halachic Medical Directive

https://www.chayimaruchim.com/uploads/medical_directives/Connecticut%20Halachic%20Medical%20Directive.pdf

- Rabbinical Assembly (Conservative)
Jewish Medical Directives for Health Care

<https://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/assets/public/publications/medical%20directives.pdf>

Union for Reform Judaism

<https://urj.org/union-reform-judaism>

Roman Catholic

Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholics & Catholic Health Care Services

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/health-care/upload/Ethical-Religious-Directives-Catholic-Health-Care-Services-fifth-edition-2009.pdf>

- **Example: Ethical Directives of the Roman Catholic Faith**

The Ethical & Religious Directives distinguish between “ordinary or proportionate” means of preserving life, and “extraordinary or disproportionate” means. It expressly forbid euthanasia; individuals are required to preserve life using proportionate means, which, in the judgment of the patient, “offer a reasonable hope of benefit and do not entail an excessive burden or impose excessive expense on the family or the community.” A particular medical treatment, such as the use of a ventilator, can be either ordinary or extraordinary, depending on the circumstances. Persons may forgo disproportionate means.

Christians

United Methodist Church

The Book of Resolutions “Faithful Care for Dying Persons”

<http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/faithful-care-for-persons-suffering-and-dying>

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/End_Life_DecisionsSM.pdf

Congregational Health Network

<https://fivewishes.org/>

Presbyterian

<https://fivewishes.org/>

Islam

Islamic Medical Association of North America

<https://imana.org/>

Religious Teachings and Reflections on Advance Directive: An Islamic Perspective

<http://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1858&context=ulj>