



Sharing Your End-of-Life Experience

(Patient Version)

You had an end-of-life experience (ELE) and want to share it with your family, friends, or care provider, but you're not quite sure how to start. Below are some suggestions and guiding questions that may help you prepare for this conversation.

Getting Ready – Know Thyself

Before sharing your ELE, reflect on what you experienced. How did it make you feel? Take the time to process what has happened.

It may also be helpful to understand your intentions for this conversation. Do you want to share how you're feeling or what the ELE was about? Did the ELE bring up other things you would like to discuss? Do you have any particular concerns you want to talk about?

Consider who you want to share with and what you need for this conversation to take place. Do you want to share with individual family members separately or as a group? Do you want to share with your healthcare provider? Your friend? Your faith leader? Where would you feel comfortable talking?

What do you feel are the important things for your family or friends to take away from this conversation?

Remember:

- ELEs are very common and are normal.
- Share if and when you feel ready.

Understanding Others

After deciding whom you're going to share your ELE with, consider what you know about the person. How do you think they might react?

Sharing this ELE may reveal that you and the person you shared with may disagree. When that happens, you can acknowledge the difference in opinion respectfully without having to feel defensive of what you are feeling. The important thing is to keep open communication. Now finish this sentence:

Even though we do not share the same opinion about ELEs, it is important to me that you know...

Having the ELDV Conversation

Here are some suggested ways to initiate the conversation:

- “I would like to share with you these dreams/visions I’ve been having lately...”
- “Remember when _____ was really sick, they were seeing _____. I’ve been having a similar experience. Can I tell you about it please?”
- “I had a dream/vision about _____ and it got me thinking. Can we talk about this a little bit more?”

Here are some suggested things to talk about when sharing the experience:

- The dream or vision experience content — what happened and when it happened
- How the ELE made you feel
- What you have been thinking about or feeling since having the ELE
- Connections to a previous experience of another person you may have known to have ELEs
- Any concerns you may have as a result of your ELEs
- How the ELE makes them feel and what they think about it

Remember:

- Exercise patience. You may be excited about your ELE and have thought a lot about it, but this is the first time the other person has heard it. Some people may need a little bit more time to think about and process what you are sharing.
- People may react differently than you did when having and thinking about the ELE. This is okay. You may want to refer your loved one or healthcare provider to the ELE resources on this website. Some people may find it helpful to know the research that has been conducted on this subject matter.
- You ultimately know how the experience was for you and what it meant for you. This is what is most important.

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