



# HOUSING & COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT OFFICE ON AGING

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## Facing the Facts:

### Things older adults need to discuss with their family before it is too late

It's easy to assume that our loved ones know what is important to us, and that they will lovingly help us to live out our later years in the way most desirable to us. In order for that to happen, three things need to be true. One, they must know what is important to us NOW (which may have changed since we were younger.) Two, they must know what resources we have or do not have. And three, they must know where to find what we need. Here are the questions a wise older adult should answer for his/her children.

#### Your personal needs and concerns

- What are your biggest worries about the future?
- What people need to be considered regarding future plans? (spouse, children, grandchildren, friends, others.)
- What thing(s) remain to be done/resolved?
- What aspects of your life are most important to you at this stage of life:  
Being near family, returning to your homeland, making beautiful art or music, re-connecting with people, communing with nature, mastering a skill, bequeathing your fortune, grieving for a loved one, practicing your religion?

#### Housing

- How important is it for you to remain in your current home?
- Where would you want to live (with whom) if you could no longer manage alone?
- If you could not have your preference above, what is an acceptable option?

#### Health

- Do you have a doctor/medical plan that you trust?
- Do you dread the prospect of a particular disability (dementia, blindness, paralysis)?  
If so, how can your family help?
- Are you able to drive without being a danger to yourself and others?  
If not, how will you get around?
- If you should need long-term care, who will be responsible: physically? financially?  
(MEDICARE does not pay for long term care.)
- Is there a point at which you would not want life-support machinery?
- If someone has to make medical decisions for you, who should it be, and what would you want him/her to know? Do you have an Advance Health Care Directive?

#### Death and funeral

- What, if anything, frightens you about dying?
- What are your religious beliefs about the end of life?
- What do you wish to become of your body: burial, cremation, donation?
- How can your descendents best honor you in death?

#### Financial and legal matters

- What are your current financial assets and liabilities? (valuable objects/collections)
- Do your loved ones know where to find your deeds, policies, and accounts?
- Do you need financial assistance now? In the foreseeable future?
- Is your insurance -- including life, health, home and auto insurance -- adequate?
- Have you executed all necessary legal papers: will, powers of attorney, trusts?  
Do you have a trusted attorney?

#### Community and home-care services

- What is available to help you and how do you find it?

**For Information and Assistance for older adults, caregivers and persons with disabilities,  
call County of Orange Office on Aging's Information and Assistance line.**

**1-800-510-2020**