



Frequently Asked Questions

The game offers a great tool to facilitate discussions, getting people to think and talk about positive values and goals for having the best end of life possible.

“These cards are wildly successful. When used in small or large groups, the room reliably erupts in lively conversations. Just about every group I have presented this exercise to have wanted to have the cards to keep, and many have now ordered them. Invariably someone in the room asks to keep a set for a friend, patient, elderly or family member they are seeing that evening!”

–Mary Matthiesen, Director, the Conversations for Life Programme

Who can benefit from using the game?

- **Social workers, health educators, and care home staff** and anyone meeting with patients and their loved ones to start conversations about end of life care
- **Hospice workers** to stimulate discussions about what the patient may hope for
- **Physicians** can use the game with a **patient** who doesn't have anyone to act on their behalf, to give them a chance to understand what goals and values are guiding the treatment decisions the patient is making
- A **Patient** to help them articulate their priorities and concerns
- A Mother, daughter, father, sister, brother (healthy or ill) who wants to open the conversation with partner, parent, family member or friend
- In **health education classes** on advance care planning to help patients and their potential advocate compare and discuss priorities that they hold in common, and to discover where their priorities differ
- **Community members** in community meetings, at family gatherings and in **religious discussion groups**
- **Individuals** with **elderly parents** or **young adult children** to help prepare for their possible role as health care spokesperson

Individuals who have mild dementia or those with **poor eyesight** can participate in the game by expressing how much they agree with the statement on each card when they are read aloud.

Those with higher intellectual capability use the statements on the cards as **discussion starters** on the various meanings and implications of the statements and when they might agree or disagree.

How do I order a set?

The Conversations for Life programme is selling the cards to the general public and to health and social care professionals individually and as part of our public and professional facilitator workshops and community awareness initiatives. **Proceeds from sales support the Conversations for Life public and professional education programs.**

To order cards please return the order form attached, or order on-line at: www.conversationsforlife.co.uk



How does the game work?

The game is a set of 36 cards, each card with a short statement of things people often cite as being important to them in the last weeks or months of life.

To play the game (in the 'solitaire' mode) the individual sorts the cards and ranks priorities about what's important to them, and then discusses or explains to a friend or family member why they sorted them the way they did.

The instruction leaflet for the game gives other ways to play it in pairs or groups.

The point of the game is not to create a written list of "what I want," but to stimulate conversations about what is important and why.

Many people remark that when they play the game several times, the way they sort the cards changes a bit, but that this helps them refine their thinking about what their values are and how those values would apply in different situations.

Where did the game come from?

Originally, the game was developed and called 'Go-Wish', as part of a grant-funded project by Coda Alliance in the US, to fill a need for a way to stimulate discussion that would focus in a positive way on values and wishes about end-of-life care. The project was to develop and test a program to educate assisted living residents, their family members, and assisted living facility staff about end-of-life care options and advance care planning. It was also developed as an effective tool for elderly people with limited cognition, and for people with limited literacy and limited skills in the English language, without seeming too simplistic for those with higher education.

The items on the cards were derived in part from results of a survey reported by Steinhauser, K. E. et al. "Factors Considered Important at the End of Life by Patients, Family, Physicians, and Other Care Providers." JAMA. 2000;284:2476-2482

After seeing the effectiveness of these cards in the U.S., our programme director integrated their use into the Conversations for Life workshops in the US. In 2010, the Conversation Game was approved as a trademarked product of the Conversations for Life programme, with license for reprinting and distribution by agreement between Coda Alliance and the Conversations for Life Programme.

Where have the cards been field tested?

In the UK, the cards have been used with medical students, specialist palliative care staff, administrative staff, carers, voluntary staff, patients and family members attending our workshops. They were found to be a very useful tool in our Cumbria-wide pilot programme in collaboration with NHS Cumbria, with participants consistently stating they'd like a pack of their own or to use in their organisation. They have been reviewed and language made relevant for UK audiences by volunteers from the Lancaster University Peer Educators Programme in 2010 and have now been used in training reaching more than 2000 health and social care staff across the UK and thousands more internationally.