

SENIOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

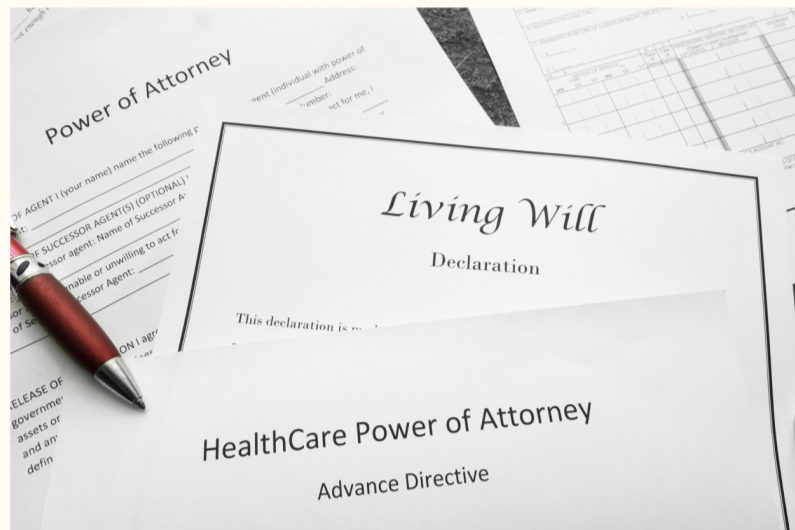
Monthly Newsletter

we're so glad you're here!

THE IMPORTANCE OF ADVANCE CARE PLANNING FOR OLDER ADULTS

Advance care planning is a crucial step for older adults, yet it's often overlooked. This process involves making decisions about the care you would want to receive if you become unable to speak for yourself due to illness or incapacity. By outlining your wishes in advance, you ensure that your healthcare preferences are respected and reduce the burden on your loved ones during difficult times.

A key component of advance care planning is creating a Living Will, also known as an Advance Directive. This document allows you to specify the types of medical treatment you do or do not want in certain situations. For instance, you can state whether you would want life-sustaining treatments, such as mechanical ventilation or feeding tubes if you are in a terminal condition or permanently unconscious. By having a Living Will, your healthcare providers and loved ones can make decisions that align with your values and preferences, even when you cannot communicate them.



Equally important is designating a Durable Power of Attorney (DPOA) for healthcare. If you cannot, this person will make medical decisions on your behalf. Without a DPOA, family members may face significant challenges, including legal complications, delays in care, and disputes among family members about the best course of action.



Caregivers are left in a difficult position when advance care planning hasn't been done. They may struggle to make decisions without knowing their loved one's preferences, leading to stress and guilt. Without a DPOA, they might also encounter legal hurdles when accessing medical records or making critical healthcare decisions. This can delay treatment, leading to potential harm or discomfort for the older adult.

In conclusion, advance care planning, including Living Wills and a DPOA designation, is essential for older adults. These steps ensure that healthcare wishes are honored and alleviate the burden on caregivers. Taking the time to plan now can prevent unnecessary stress and complications in the future, allowing both the individual and their loved ones to navigate challenging situations with greater ease and confidence.



A minute with Mike

MIKE WILLIS, OUTREACH COORDINATOR, THERAPIST

In our Inpatient Senior Behavioral Health Unit, one of the most significant challenges we encounter is admitting patients who do not have a Dual Power of Attorney (POA) in place. Without a designated POA, it becomes difficult to make critical decisions regarding the patient's care, especially when they are unable to advocate for themselves due to mental health issues. This can delay the admission process and hinder timely access to the care and support they urgently need. Establishing a POA ensures that decisions can be made swiftly and in the best interest of the patient, facilitating smoother transitions into our care. For more information about POA and Living Wills visit our website [here](#).