

# Coda Alliance and The GoWish Card Game



# The History and Development of the GoWish Card Game



- It Began with Coda Alliance
  - A non-profit organization established in 2001
  - The primary goal; to help individuals prepare for and “live well” at the end of life, to understand choices and document their wishes, values and preferences
- The Development of the GoWish Card Game
  - Began in 2004 with an Archstone Foundation grant, primarily overseen by Dr. Elizabeth Menkin
  - Research with Assisted Living residents identified reoccurring EOL themes, values, concerns and preferences

# The Primary Objectives of Using GoWish Cards

- To facilitate the End-Of-Life “conversation”
  - The cards promote and guide the “conversation”, introducing new concepts that help individuals anticipate future challenges and choices
- To identify EOL wishes, values and preferences
  - The “conversation” replaces guessing and questions with confidence and knowledge to help patients/families identify what matters most
- To use EOL preferences to document choices and guide care
  - The ultimate goal is to ensure EOL wishes, values and preferences are understood and honored to provide quality of life at the end of life

# What is the GoWish Card Game?

- A deck of 36 cards similar to traditional playing cards in size and feel, available in English and Spanish
- Informative phrases identified as important at the end of life are on each card
- A “Wild” card encourages customized wishes, personal preferences and more “conversation”
- Basic instructions are included with free training materials, tips, scenarios and testimonials online
- Card decks are available in four different colors to prevent decks from mixing when used in groups

# Who Uses GoWish Cards?

- Families, friends, surrogates and healthcare agents
  - Anyone supporting loved ones nearing EOL, those faced with complex family dynamics and healthcare agents responsible for representing others
- Estate planners, elder law attorneys and educators
  - Professionals teaching and guiding advanced planning at any life stage
- Religious and spiritual leaders
  - Priests, Chaplains, Rabbis, Pastors, Imams, etc.
- Medical professional
  - Doctors, nurses, social workers and care staff
- Patients and residents
  - Ventilator and trauma patients, the terminally and critically ill and residents of assisted living, long term care or other such facilities



# Where Are GoWish Cards Used?

- Private homes and care facilities
- Community centers and places of worship
- Educational institutions and training centers
- Law offices and places of business
- Hospitals and clinics
- Hospices and Palliative Care centers
- Online and anywhere desired



# When Are GoWish Cards Used?

(See notes below for details)

- Before the need arises, any time
- At family meetings and gatherings with friends
- In End-Of-Life trainings and seminars
- Prior to filling out an Advance Directive or POLST form
- Upon diagnosis of life threatening illnesses
- After serious accidents

# Why GoWish Cards Work?

- Educational
  - Introduce new concepts, talking points and thought-provoking ideas for visual, auditory and kinesthetic learners
- Flexible
  - Used in many places and many ways depending on personal preferences, abilities and circumstances
- Simple and non-threatening
  - Easy to read, basic language, short phrases, concise concepts, require no skills, technology or electricity and they are not a legal document
- Wild card and open ended phrases
  - The Wild Card encourages personal wishes to be explored and expressed, phrases allow for broad interpretation and introspection
- Familiar and comforting format
  - Cards are familiar and tangible, keeping hands and eyes busy if emotions are high, can also encourage eye contact and conversation



# GoWish Sorting Options

(See notes below for details)

- Sorting cards into 3 piles
  - Least, somewhat and most important cards
    - Rank top 10 in the most important pile, discuss top 3 or more
- Most important theme
  - Pick the most important of 6 themes, rank and discuss
    - Pick the next most important theme, rank, discuss and repeat
- Most important card “Quick Pick”
  - In large groups or when time is limited
    - Pick the most important card, have participants share and discuss

# GoWish Sorting Options

## “The Guessing Game”

(See notes below for details)

- Sorting for someone who can sort for them self
  - Never assume you know what they want
- Sorting for them correctly
  - Getting it right can be so validating
- Sorting for them incorrectly
  - Getting it wrong can be so valuable



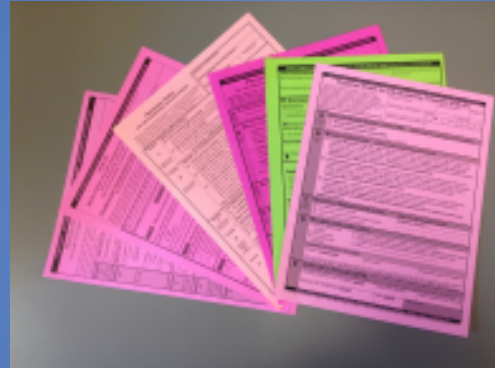
# Facilitating the Conversation

(See notes below for details)

- Active listening
  - Validate feelings, re-state or paraphrase their comments and feed back their concerns as questions
- Gentle probing
  - Ask questions to confirm understanding, encourage them to expand on their comments and clarify their meaning
- Modeling the conversation
  - Show how to sort the cards, talk about why certain cards are important to you, verbalize feelings and think out loud

# Additional Tools to Capture & Document EOL Wishes and Preferences

- Advance Directive
- POLST/DNR
- 5 Wishes
- Others



(See notes below for details)

# GoWish Online

- GoWish cards are available for purchase at:  
[www.codaalliance.org](http://www.codaalliance.org)
  - This PowerPoint presentation and other GoWish training materials are available free of charge on this site, discounts are given for quantity card purchases

- The electronic version of GoWish can be played for free online at:

[www.gowish.org](http://www.gowish.org)

- Use the online version to project on large walls for virtual use in groups and seminars