

Let's Be **Direct.**

# 5 REASONS

Completing your own advance directives mirrors a role-playing exercise, with the added benefit of having completed the documents that will allow your healthcare wishes to be known.

This minimizes the burden that too many families face: having to make these decisions without knowing your preferences.

## You Need to Complete Your Own **Advance Directives** Before Assisting Others

The truth is that those who assist others with completing advance directives have no higher completion rate than the public. Why is that and why is it imperative to change that statistic? Do not be a statistic; instead, be at the forefront of advance care planning and be an example: start with your own.

**1**

### **You are perpetuating a misconception about these documents.**

It's a myth that these documents should only be completed by those of a certain age or diagnosis. Anyone can become incapacitated and lose the ability to make basic healthcare decisions. Not completing your own documents can perpetuate this myth and potentially increase the chance of you missing opportunities to have crucial conversations with your patients.

**2**

### **You have not experienced the challenges of communicating your priorities and values on paper.**

It's much easier to talk about your healthcare choices than to document them on paper. Completing your own advance directives forces you to acknowledge your own mortality and express what you want for your healthcare in the event you cannot communicate. Going through the process helps ensure you can relate with your patients' difficulty in exploring these same challenges.

**3**

### **You cannot answer honestly when they ask if you have completed your own documents.**

Patients often ask healthcare providers if they have completed their own advance directives. It's a legitimate concern; if these documents are important for patients to complete, then why haven't their providers? It can diminish the need and leave the patients questioning their validity. When you ask yourself why, your answer may surprise you, but it will offer clues to areas you may want to gain more knowledge in before working with others on their forms.

**4**

### **You will not know what information or questions you needed to complete the documents.**

Until you have had to go through the advance directive forms as a user, it is more difficult to explain them as an instructor. Identifying what questions you needed follow-up guidance on from your own healthcare providers allows you to offer your own patients a list of follow-up questions to explore.

**5**

### **When you have not had to choose your own health care power of attorney, you can't understand why it's so hard for others to do the same.**

One reason clients do not complete their advance directives is they don't know who to name as their healthcare agent. Many feel they will hurt a family member's feelings if they do not choose that person. Having to face this yourself helps you to work through this stressful area with clients.



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