# How We Talk About Hospice, Palliative Care and Advance Care Planning Matters

**A three-year-grant from The John A. Harford Foundation and Cambia Health Foundation that engaged stakeholder organizations has led to creation of a toolkit to promote better messaging about end of life, advance care planning, palliative care, and hospice.** Via a literature review, stakeholder input, focus groups, and collaborations with research projects, the final deliverable is a toolkit.

**The toolkit includes a section on how to use the resource, the five principles of the project’s efforts, steps to better messaging, and additional resources.** The toolkit is useful to all who work with the public on these concerns, to journalists, and to the general public. The research made it clear that there are messaging problems with advance planning, palliative care, and hospice. And the toolkit addresses these issues by “giving each of these services its own identity.”

**The problem with the hospice message, “We’ll give you a good death,” says the report, is that most people don’t want to talk about death.** Instead, the toolkit focuses on reaching out to hesitant persons in a way that successfully markets to them. A theme repeated throughout the report is that the toolkit will help “start your messaging with concerns that every person has when they’re in a tough place. . . ” The toolkit shares outdated assumptions about hospices and encourages updating our perspectives. One example of such an assumption is, “People love hospice, and regard it positively.” Research shows, however, that, “A significant minority of people have had negative personal experiences with hospice.”

**The toolkit offers five principles—identified, designed, and tested. The principles are: 1) Talk up the benefits. 2) Present choices for every step. 3) Use positive stories. 4) Invite dialogue, and not just once. 5) Invoke a new team**. The toolkit, available online at the link below, elaborates on each of these five principles for each of the three areas – advance care planning, palliative care, and hospice. It also provides examples of good messaging in a section called “Steal These Messages.” The toolkit also provides messaging principles and suggestions to assist in creating good messages.

The toolkit also offers additional resources, downloads, a research appendix, and a glossary. The link below leads to the toolkit information and a link to the toolkit is offered within. Sections of the toolkit can be downloaded for use. (Serious Illness Messaging, [https://link.edgepilot.com/s/0634bc21/7z\_BBofw7EyBySMXxnAOUA?u=https://seriousillnessmessaging.org/using-the-toolkit/](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.edgepilot.com%2Fs%2Fd76af35d%2FYAWVFhCeoEqsj7UEClpFWw%3Fu%3Dhttps%3A%2F%2Fgcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com%2F%3Furl%3Dhttps%25253A%25252F%25252Fwshpco.us9.list-manage.com%25252Ftrack%25252Fclick%25253Fu%25253Dd7c55c9d4ac5475955fe4c035%252526id%25253Df491df8e53%252526e%25253D78884d2057%2526data%3D05%25257C01%25257CPatricia.Justis%252540DOH.WA.GOV%25257Ceb1f3ae2a19e471ba55f08dab90fd7e1%25257C11d0e217264e400a8ba057dcc127d72d%25257C0%25257C0%25257C638025775439181356%25257CUnknown%25257CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%25253D%25257C3000%25257C%25257C%25257C%2526sdata%3D2VIYKgy0XtkB61mISO%25252BxYjvZF%25252B3lj1w1m8IiA8fJvvw%25253D%2526reserved%3D0&data=05%7C01%7Cpatricia.justis%40doh.wa.gov%7C6a96ae0f744047a0e6d808dab930865b%7C11d0e217264e400a8ba057dcc127d72d%7C0%7C0%7C638025915305633135%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=ccRm%2B%2FYnXyAxuwurjYc83NMeBPyZoR1qqG6OiLeybAA%3D&reserved=0))