



Sharing the Experience

A conversation with Sue Schettle,
Executive Director Honoring Choices Minnesota

Sharing the Experience: Health Care Planning Conversations in Community Groups

“So many people from every walk of life have a story to tell,” says Sue Schettle, Executive Director of Honoring Choices Minnesota, when asked why community-based care planning conversations have been so successful for a wide diversity of community groups. The community group discussion model is being implemented by hundreds of faith-based, cultural, community and health care groups in the Minneapolis- St. Paul area. “It offers adults the opportunity to tell their personal stories in a comfortable trusting environment and to listen to the stories of others. The group shares the experience and learns from one another.”

“Not only is the group experience personally empowering”, says Ms. Schettle, but it can give each participant “a vision of what he or she wants or does not want for care.” In sharing stories, we can better understand “real life situations that helped a loved one die peacefully, and situations where families have a much more difficult story to tell.”

People consistently report that the group experience generates a meaningful discussion and results in a positive supportive feeling. “There seems to be a motivation to go and tell their families and friends what they learned in sharing this experience, which often leads to further conversations and making written care plans.”

The Honoring Choices movement, started in Minnesota in 2008, has now become the largest metropolitan based advance care planning collaboration in the country. Honoring Choices Minnesota’s mission is simple: “to inspire and support many community-based conversations regarding end-of-life care planning.” In five short years, it has achieved remarkable success as a wide diversity of over 1000 community groups, 21 hospitals, 6 health care systems and many others have joined the movement. To date, the Honoring Choices model has resulted in over 16,000 advance care planning conversations and 14,000 advance directives.

Read more about Honoring Choices Minnesota at www.honoringchoices.org