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## Engaging families in end-of-life conversations using a board game

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We have an opportunity and an obligation to prepare and engage families in end-of-life conversations. It is time to break the stigma in our culture attached to talking about death. Health care professionals can take the lead on making a difference for patients and families experiencing end-of-life issues. If we are not prepared, experienced or comfortable to approach the topic we are unable to serve their needs. There is nothing more universal than the fact that we will all die. Although we all know this fact having conversations on the topic may be limited. The challenge and question becomes how to encourage and invite others to have these tough conversations. If the topic of death and dying elicits fear, people will still avoid the discussion. Finding a non-threatening way to engage others in end-of-life dialogue is the key to promoting conversation on the topic. People seem to have an easier time detaching from a challenging topic if the focus is on another person. The Path of Life™: The Journey of Living at the End-of-Life© board game invites participants to assume the role of a patient with a terminal illness. The attention shifts off the player to the patient in the game. Participants make decisions on care and how they want to live their life. As a result of the experience awareness of the joy of living evolves in spite of their current situation. Through group conversation personal feelings and concerns develop opening the door for deeper discussions on end-of-life issues.

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