Compassionate Conversations:

Helping Families Plan with Intention



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Why These Conversations Matter

Everyone of us will be a caregiver or cared for at some point in our lives.



Aging and caregiving are deeply human experiences.

Talking early gives people time to express preferences, explore options, and involve trusted supporters.

Why Have These Converations Now?

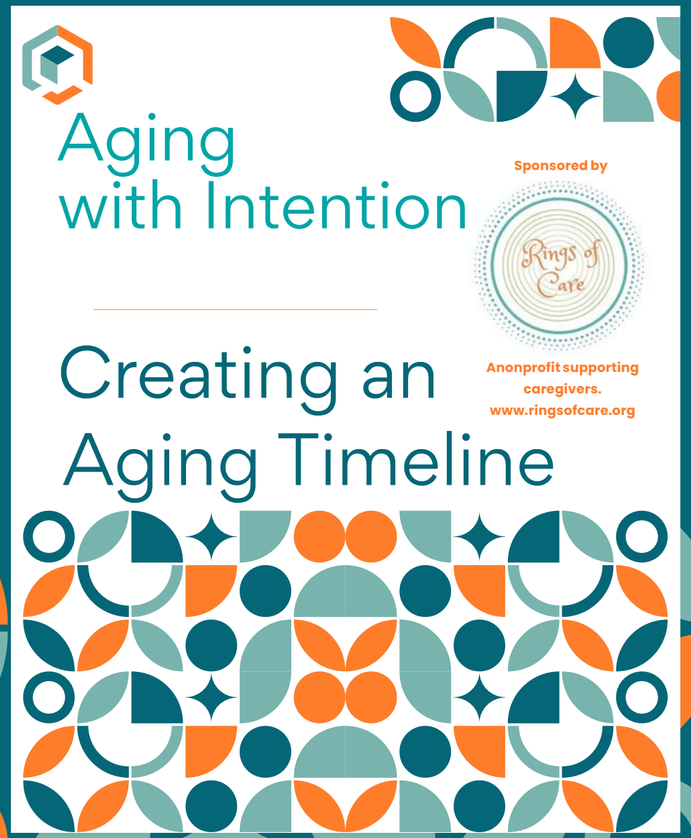
Before Crisis versus After Crisis

‘Build your village before the storm, so when the winds of crisis blow, you're already surrounded by support.’

Rings of Care's

Compassionate Conversations Program

Aging with Intention: Aging Timeline







What Matters Most to Me?

What does independence mean to me?

What does autonomy mean to me?

What supports do I feel comfortable with?

What would make me feel respected during transitions?

My Values and Pritorities

What does quality of life mean to me?

What are my fears about aging?

What matters most to me as I age?

Support Protects Autonomy

Thoughtfully chosen support often protects and extends your autonomy.

Support is not a loss of independence; it is a way of safeguarding your voice and maintaining control over your future.

Who are in My Rings of Care?



Diverse perspectives enrich problem-solving.

- **Accountability**
- **Shared responsibility**
- **Safety and security**
- **Empowerment and advocacy**

How I Want People to Talk With Me

What would help these conversations feel respectful and supportive?

☐Gentle

☐Direct

☐Collaborative

☐Multiple conversations

☐Private setting

☐Other

What I would like to avoid.

What I would like to include.

Key Aging Decisions

Independence

Driving & transportation options
Managing finances
Meal preparation
Medication management
Safety modifications A
ccepting help
Managing appointments
Fall prevention
Preventative healthcare
Memory & cognitive changes

Social & Emotional

Friendships
Isolation
Community engagement
Volunteer opportunities
Cultural & faith
communities Technology

Health & Care

Healthcare proxy
Care coordination
Hospice & palliative care
Mental health support
Pain management
Nutrition & wellness

Home & Living

Accessibility
Downsizing
Aging in place Shared living
space Meal delivery
Pet care planning
Independent living Assisted
living Skilled nursing
Home healthcare

Key Aging Decisions

Mobility & Accessibility

Cane, walker, wheelchair
Hearing aids
Extra glasses
Grab bars & ramps
Adjustable Beds
Emergency Call Devices Shower
Chairs & Raised Seats Mobility
Scooters Voice-Activated
Technology

Legal & Financial

Power of Attorney (POA)
Advanced directives
Estate planning
Will or trust
Long-term care insurance
Banking access
Fraud and scam protection
Funeral and burial
planning Digital assets &
passwords

Government Programs

A Benefits
HealthNet Services
Social Security Benefits
Disability Benefits
SNAP/Food Assistance Prescription
Assistance
Transportation Assistance Utility
Assistance
Housing Assistance
Caregiver Support Programs State
Aging Services
Adult Day Programs
Low-Income Subsidy Programs
Community Resource Navigation
Long-Term Care Waivers
Senior Center Programs

Aging Timeline

1. Living Independently
2. Beginning Support
3. Home & Living Decisions
4. Increasing Support Needs
5. Health & Care Decisions
6. Staying Connected & Engaged
7. End-of-Life Preferences

Living Independently and Beginning Supports

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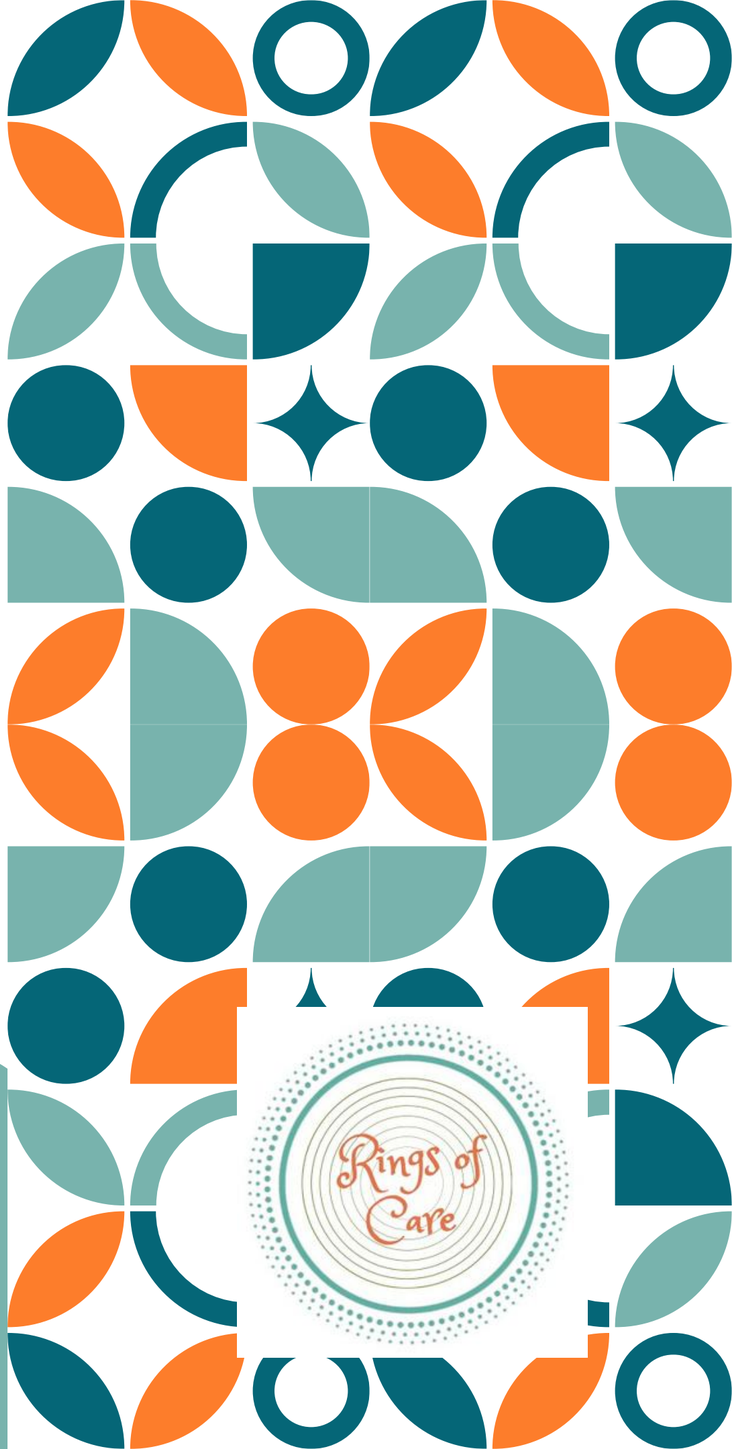
Conversations on
intrusive vs acceptable supports



Planning Ahead for Living Options: Protecting Your Choices

Planning ahead helps ensure that future decisions reflect your voice.

Increasing Support Needs

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Understanding where a person feels ready to accept support, while recognizing the strengths and abilities they still have.

Understanding concerns allows families to introduce changes thoughtfully, offer choices, and take smaller steps when possible.

Exploring options early gives the person more opportunity to participate, consider costs, and revisit preferences as circumstances change.

Needing assistance does not erase a person’s voice, identity, or right to participate in decisions.

Turning the broad idea of respectful care into specific actions caregivers can follow.

Health & Care Decisions

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Advocacy helps ensure our client's values, preferences, and needs guide health and care decisions.

- **Ask questions**
- **Speak up**
- **Choose a trusted advocate**
- **Request clarity and time**
- **Stay involved**

Your voice matters. A good advocate supports your choices without taking over.

Stay Connected and Engaged 6

- Start with their interests
- Explore barriers
- Offer small steps
- Create opportunities to contribute
- Build consistent connections
- Honor their preferences

The goal is meaningful connection, not a full calendar.

End-of-Life Preferences

What do I want to see?

I want plants near me

I want to be near a window

I want certain people there and others not

I want my trinkets or photos nearby

What do I want to smell?

I want aromatherapy

Please no strong scents

I would love fresh flowers nearby

I want my my favorite lotion used

What kind of touch do I prefer?

Please don’t touch my face

I would like light massage

I would like warm blankets / favorite pillow

Keep a fan nearby

Mouth / taste preferences

I would like coconut oil to coat my mouth

Please use aquaphor when my are lips dry

Please use mouth swabs frequently

I would prefer cold/warm water

Hearing

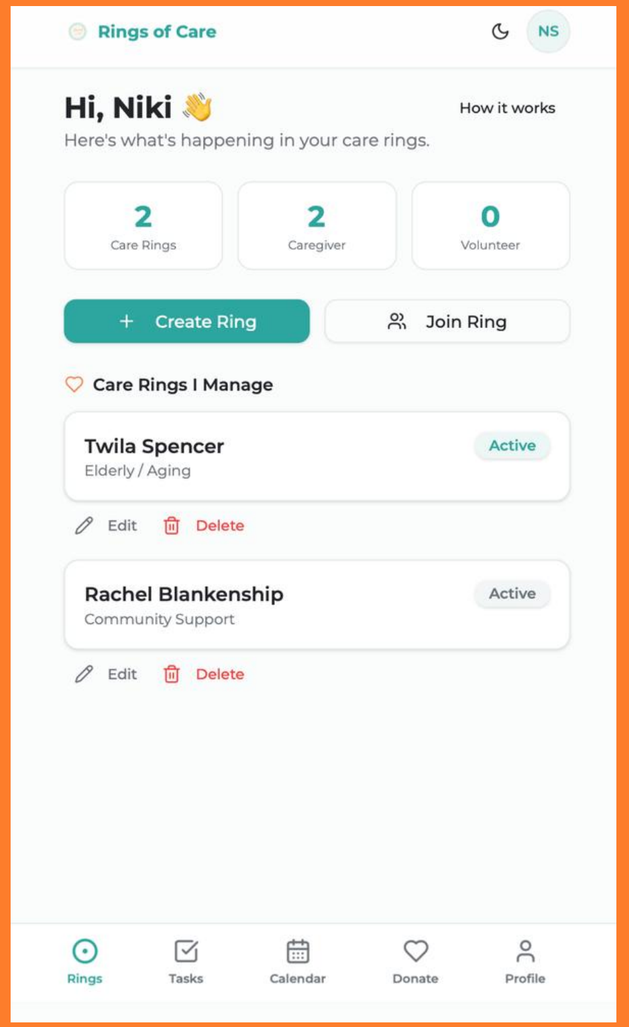
I would like to for people to tell stories

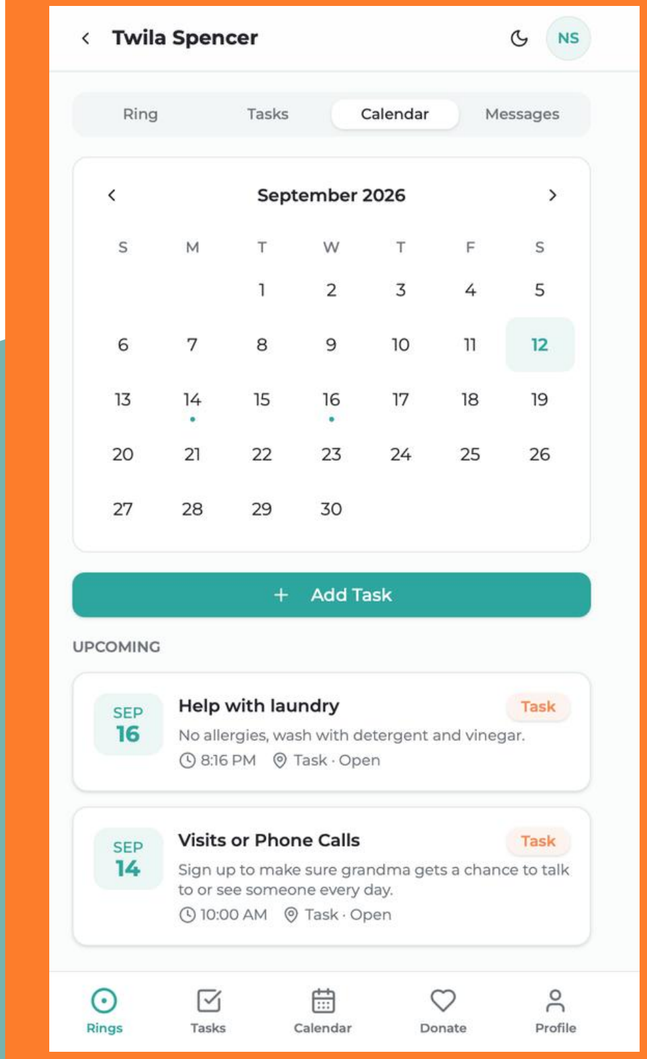
I would like gospel music

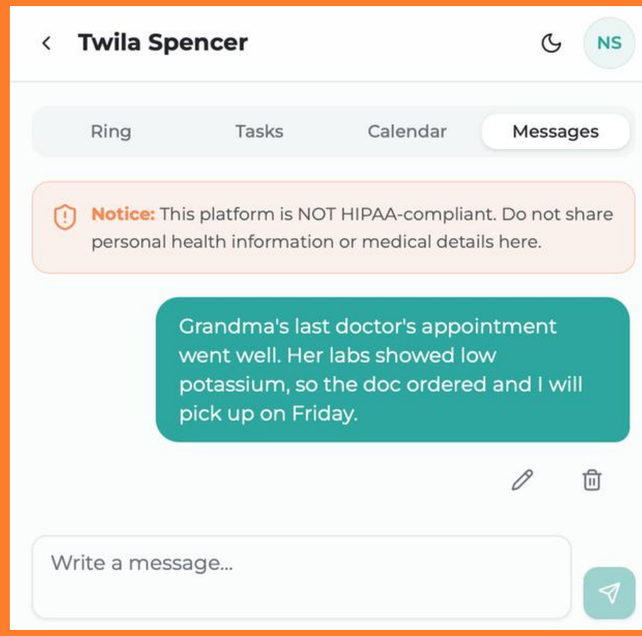
Keep a fan on for ambient noise

I would like if someone read to me

How Else Can Rings of Care Help?







app.ringsofcare.org

RINGS OF CARE IMPACT

NORTHLAND PROFESSIONALS IN AGING

AGING WITH DIGNITY
Missouri's Master Plan on Aging

MARC
MID-AMERICA REGIONAL COUNCIL

Kansas City Public Library

HELPING FAMILIES DECIDE WHAT WORKS BEST FOR THEM
MEDIATION SERVICES

sage | Advocacy & Services for LGBTQ+ Elders
We refuse to be invisible®

compassion & choices

Saint Luke's

NEDA

Jackson County PROFESSIONALS IN AGING

KC End of Life
Doula Network

Terrace Park
Funeral Home & Cemetery

lgbt

MID-AMERICA CHAMBER of COMMERCE