

### **Panel Discussion Format Questions**

*Consider the Conversation: A Documentary on a Taboo Subject*

(Questions for a doctor, nurse, social worker, chaplain and elder law attorney)

Describe the typical end-of-life experience in 21<sup>st</sup> century America. What can most of us expect in terms of *where* and *how* we will die and how has that changed over time?

We're all going to die, yet – as the subtitle of *Consider the Conversation* implies – end-of-life is a taboo subject in this country. Why is that and to what extent has American medicine's success at fighting disease and extending life contributed to the problem?

As a social worker, what are some of the things you see patients and families struggling with at end-of-life? How well prepared are they?

You've worked for many years as a nurse. In your experience, what matters most to most people as end-of-life nears?

America calls itself the "great melting pot", yet we seem to be fixated on our differences (i.e., we're either rich or poor, black or white, rural or urban, gay or straight, Catholic or Protestant, Republican or Democrat). From your perspective, is there anything *universally human* about end-of-life, something that transcends what makes us different?

One of the central figures in *Consider the Conversation* is Dr. Martin Welsh, a retired family practitioner from northern California who has since died from Lou Gehrig's disease. What does Marty's story teach us about quality of life and the importance of communicating and honoring one's end-of-life wishes?

At the beginning of the film, we heard people on the streets of New York City answer a simple question, "When it's your time to die, where would you like to be and with whom?" Not surprisingly, most people replied "At home, surrounded by family." Easier said than done, right? What is *advance care planning* and how can that process help someone achieve their goals, whatever they might be? And, what's more important in that process – the *forms* or the *conversations*?

What is hospice care and how does it help terminally ill patients and their families?

What is palliative care and how is that different from hospice care?

Modern day Americans lack roles models for good end-of-life communication. That is, we haven't seen our parents and grandparents have these conversations and the people one thinks should be leading us (our medical professionals) often don't have the time, training, and support to adequately serve in that capacity. That being said, what can the clergy do to help us create communities in which conversations about dying are normalized, operationalized, and thrive?

Of all things you learned while watching *Consider the Conversation*, what stands out the most?