This guide will help you learn about the role of the healthcare agent.

**What is a healthcare agent?**
A healthcare agent is a person who makes healthcare decisions for someone who can’t make their own choices. An agent may be needed if the person is very sick, injured or is nearing the end of their life. Choose a healthcare agent *before* a crisis.

**When does a healthcare agent start to make choices?**
An agent makes choices *only* if the person is not able to. Two doctors (or a doctor and a psychologist) have to agree that the person is not able to make his or her own choices.

**What are some of the decisions that a healthcare agent may need to make:**
A healthcare agent makes decisions *based upon the person’s wishes and values*. An agent may make the following choices for the person:
- Decide on tests, surgery and medicine
- Choose the patient’s doctor(s)
- Choose the location(s) where the person may receive care
- Decide to stop treatment
- Decide whether to share the patient’s medical records

**How do I know if I am ready to be a healthcare agent?**
You should be able to answer “yes” to all of these questions:
- Am I willing?
- Have I spoken with the person about what he or she values?
- Can I follow the person’s wishes even if I do not agree with them?
- Am I able to make choices in difficult moments?

**For more information:**
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