

Text Transcript of Keep Control's video: 'Decision-making at critical life events'

[Mike visits Frank in hospital. Frank is in a hospital bed.]

Frank: The doctor came in yesterday. He reckons it's only a matter of months. I just can't believe it

Mike: Oh God... it must be an awful shock.

Frank: Yeah. It's downhill from now on... hospitals, drugs and I suppose the mind will go too...

Mike: I can't believe it. It's a lot to take in.

Frank: The social worker came around this morning. She said that I need to start thinking about things, getting this sorted out.

Mike: Like what?

Frank: Well you know... getting somebody to look after my affairs if... you know... in case... so then she mentioned something about getting the Will... you know getting all that done...

Mike: Oh Frank, that sound like a very good idea.

Frank: I don't know Mike, I can't handle all this at the moment... I really can't... sorry

Frank: I have been diagnosed with a terminal illness. I have two options here. I can start planning and making decisions for my end of life. Or I take each day as it comes, rather than plan ahead.

Option 1 - Take each day as it comes and don't plan ahead

[Mike visits Frank at home a few weeks later]

Mike: And how did your appointment with the solicitor go?

Frank: Oh, well I didn't go in the end. I mean, it's absolutely crazy around here, what with the hospital appointments; I haven't had a minute to spare!

Mike: But you made another appointment with the solicitor?

Frank: Not yet. But sure I will do when things settle down.

Mike: Look, if there's anything I can do to help you out, you've only to ask

Frank: I know I know!

Mike: And then there's that niece of yours as well. She's around here a good bit isn't she?

Frank: She is, she's great Sarah... she's been helping out a good bit, yeah.

Mike: Have you talked to her about things yet? I mean arrangements for after...you know?

Frank: God Mike, there's time for that yet... sure you me dead and buried already!

Mike: Ah no I just mean... you know...

Frank: I know... look you'll stay for a cuppa won't you, before you go?

Mike: Ah yeah. I'll boil the kettle.

Frank: Good man, that's great.

[A few months later, Mike arrives at the hospital. Sarah is already there, and Frank has been readmitted]

Mike: How is he?

Sarah: Well, they're just trying to keep him comfortable, you know?

Mike: I can't believe how fast this has gone...

I know... like sure, I haven't even had a chance to talk to him about his affairs...

Mike: I tried to talk to him but he just didn't want to think about it...

I have no idea what to do now. I mean I don't even know if he has a Will is or where it is... I just don't know what he wanted... has he got a Will do you know?

Mike: Well not that I know of. To be honest, I think he let it go in the end. I'm not sure if he even made one?

Well he certainly never mentioned it to me.

Option 2 - Make some decisions and start planning for end of life

[Mike visits Frank at home a few weeks later]

Mike: How did your appointment with the solicitor go?

Frank: Oh well it was fine. I updated my Will so at least that's sorted out. To be honest, I felt much better after it.

Mike: Oh yeah?

Frank: Just that I have one less thing to worry about. I mean there's a whole lot more to tidy up... financial things and all the rest... but at least it's a start.

Mike: You must have a lot on your plate at the moment. If there's ever anything I can do to help?

Frank: Well that's very good of you. But you know, I have my niece... you know Sarah? And she's been a great help. In fact I was thinking of making her my attorney... the solicitor said it was important to have an enduring power of attorney in place...just in case...you know... to look after my financials and things if I'm not able to.

Mike: That sounds like a good idea. Less for you to worry about.

Frank: Oh it is. But the solicitor, he also said that I should have two attorneys. Just in case something happens to one of them... and I'd need to know that I could have somebody who I could trust, that would be important, to help Sarah out.

Mike: Oh yeah ok... that makes sense.

Frank: It does... actually, I was wondering... I know it's a big ask... but I was wondering if you might be my second attorney? Because I need somebody to help Sarah, in case...

Mike: Oh sure that would be no bother at all... if you think I'm the right person I'd be happy to do it.

Frank: That's great Mike, that's a load off my mind, I really appreciate that... look why don't we have a cuppa and I'll tell you more about it?

Mike: Grand! I'll get the kettle on...

Frank: Oh you're marvellous. Thanks a lot.

Frank: Being faced with a terminal illness can be very scary and may feel overwhelming at times. I wish I had started to plan for my illness before it actually happened. It would have made things a lot easier. The best advice I could give you is to think ahead. Think about your wishes for your care and make end of life arrangements as early as possible. Think about your legal and financial affairs. Make a Will, put an enduring power of attorney in place and sort out your financial affairs. The Think Ahead Form produced by the hospice foundation can help you to make a start.