

**A Documentary Film Written and Directed by**  
ED KUCERAK and DANIELLE ROLFE

**Produced by KUBLACOM PICTURES IN**  
ASSOCIATION WITH OTTAWA INNER CITY HEALTH

**Original Photography by ALEX BROWNLEE**  
**Sound Editing by SOUND SHIELD STUDIOS**



# The Challenge:

## PLANNING WITHOUT TOMORROW

Ottawa Inner City Health Clients, peer support workers,  
and health care providers explore what advance  
careplanning means for people who face poverty,  
substance use, and mental health issues.

“One thing that we forget, especially working with marginalized folks, is not everyone has that same sense of agency that, ‘I deserve this, and I’m willing to put up with whatever challenges may come up to get what I need.’”

**Catherine Hacksel, Peer Support Worker**

“As a palliative care doctor, my job is to relieve suffering and to support you in living the remaining days of your life in the way that you want to live.”

**Dr. Andrew Douglas, Palliative Care Physician**

“I’m not sure if there’s space here for advance care planning. ...The way we live and from what I see, people going from sick to death like pretty quick, ... I’m not sure where that would fit in or how it would fit in.”

**Robert Jamison (Bobby J), Peer Support Worker**



## ONE-LINER

**The Challenge: Planning Without Tomorrow** is a short documentary film about the struggle to plan for illness (advance care planning) in the context of a daily struggle for survival among individuals experiencing precarious housing or homelessness in Ottawa.

## SYNOPSIS

Peer support workers, Robert Jamison and Catherine Hacksel, engage street-entrenched individuals by ‘meeting them where they’re at’ and providing compassionate care to community members and hospice patients, Judy, Joe and Stan. In a unique hospice created to care for people experiencing homelessness, Dr. Andrew Douglas offers meaningful medical care that is relevant to his patients’ needs, but not typical of mainstream healthcare providers. Although these conversations can be uncomfortable, or seem pointless in the context of a daily struggle to survive, this film explores how collaboration between healthcare providers and people with lived experience can offer a compassionate approach to advance care planning that respects individuals’ values and wishes in the face of critical illness.



## MAIN CREDITS

### Directors/Writers

Ed Kucerak  
Danielle Rolfe

### Producers

Ed Kucerak  
Danielle Rolfe

**Produced in Association with**  
Ottawa Inner City Health

### Camera

Ed Kucerak  
Danielle Rolfe

### Original Photography

Alex Brownlee

### Editors

Ed Kucerak  
Danielle Rolfe

### Audio Editing

Sound Shield Studios

## FILM'S MAIN SUBJECTS

*(in order of appearance)*

### Robert Jamison (Bobby J)

Peer Support Worker

### Dr. Andrew Douglas

Palliative Care Physician

### Catherine Hacksel

Peer Support Worker

### Judy

Diane Morrison Hospice Client

### Joe

Diane Morrison Hospice Client

### Stan

Community Member

## SCREENINGS

Canadian Hospice  
Palliative Care Conference 2023,

Ottawa Marriott Hotel,  
Ottawa, ON, October 12, 2023

## TRAILER

[https://youtu.be/q\\_k9ltzpPeU](https://youtu.be/q_k9ltzpPeU)

## TECHNICAL INFO

21 minutes/English/2023/HD



## BACKGROUND INFO

How do you plan for tomorrow when you face a daily struggle to just survive? Advance care planning involves having important conversations with loved ones and healthcare providers about care during life-changing illness. For street-entrenched community members, however, these conversations rarely occur, because of a lack of social supports, stigma and a healthcare system that is not designed to meet their needs.

In addition to addressing the social inequities that lead to homelessness, substance use and mental health issues, starting a conversation about what matters to individuals, and their values, wishes and beliefs related to living and dying, may be a helpful beginning.



## ADVANCE CARE PLANNING FOR STREET-ENTRENCHED PEOPLE



Discussing advance care planning with street-entrenched individuals can feel out of touch with their reality due to several factors related to their experiences and challenges:

**Immediate Survival Concerns:** Street-entrenched individuals often face daily struggles for basic needs such as food, shelter, and safety. In this context,

discussions about future healthcare decisions might seem irrelevant when their primary focus is on surviving the present.

**Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs:** Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs suggests that individuals prioritize physiological and safety needs before addressing higher-level needs like self-esteem, relationships, and self-actualization. For street-entrenched individuals, advance care planning may be perceived as addressing a need that falls higher up on the hierarchy, which may not be immediately relevant to their current situation.

**Trust and Distrust:** Street-entrenched individuals may have experienced systemic neglect, discrimination, or mistreatment from institutions or authorities. This history of mistrust can create barriers to open conversations

about their healthcare preferences and may lead them to view such discussions with skepticism.

**Lack of Access to Healthcare:** Many street-entrenched individuals lack consistent access to healthcare services. When basic medical needs are unmet, discussions about advance care planning can feel premature or inaccessible, as they may not have had adequate exposure to routine healthcare.



**Stigma and Marginalization:** Street-entrenched individuals often face societal stigma and are marginalized. Conversations about advance care planning may inadvertently highlight their marginalized status, making them feel even more disconnected from mainstream society.

**Survival Mindset:** The constant need to find shelter, food, and safety can result in a survival-focused mindset. Thinking about long-term healthcare decisions might be seen as a luxury when they are constantly preoccupied with immediate survival.

**Complexity and Lack of Awareness:** Advance care planning can involve complex legal, medical, and ethical concepts. Street-entrenched individuals might not have the awareness or understanding of these topics, making the conversation seem abstract and unrelatable.

**Trauma and Mental Health:** Many street-entrenched individuals have experienced trauma and struggle with mental health challenges. Engaging in discussions about advance care planning may trigger distressing memories or emotions, making it difficult for them to fully participate in the conversation.

**Cultural and Personal Beliefs:** Cultural and personal beliefs play a significant role in healthcare decisions. Street-entrenched individuals may have different cultural perspectives on illness, death, and decision-making, which might not align with conventional advance care planning approaches.

To address these challenges, it's important to approach discussions about advance care planning with sensitivity, empathy, and a deep understanding of the lived experiences of street entrenched individuals.

Building trust, meeting immediate needs, providing accessible healthcare, and incorporating their cultural values can help make these conversations more relevant and respectful of their realities.







## PRODUCTION CREDITS

**Kublacom Pictures** is an Ottawa-based independent film and television production company devoted to documentary storytelling with a purpose. Ed Kucerak, Danielle Rolfe and Jane Gurr strive to make films that entertain, inform, captivate, and move viewers to action.

Recent production titles include: A Necessary Conversation: Racism on the Frontlines, Welcome to the Bridge, Culturally Safe Cancer Care for Inuit, A First Nation's Cancer Care Journey, Blue Roses, You Are Not Alone, Falling Through the Cracks, Who Needs Church?, Seeking Wadad, Partners for Peace, How Can a Boy, This is My Witness, One of the Last and The Secret Lives of Butterflies.

**Ottawa Inner City Health Inc. (OICH)** started in 2001 as a response to local healthcare providers struggling to meet the needs of people who were homeless and had complex health needs.

Over 20 years later, OICH operates a Consumption and Treatment Service for people who use drugs, special shelter based health care services, supportive housing and outreach programs to help people with their health concerns. All OICH programs are operated in partnership with shelters, housing providers, hospitals, and community health providers.

For more information: <https://ottawainnercityhealth.ca/>

**Ed Kucerak****ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS**

Ed's career in film and video production spans more than two decades. He brings considerable creativity and dedication to his work as an executive producer, producer, writer and director of documentaries and has established a reputation as an innovative and hardworking professional. He is recipient of the Rob Thompson Award for Mentorship from the Ottawa Independent Video Awards and the Award for Excellent in Local Media from the Federation of Citizens' Association. As well Ed is a member of the Documentary Organization of Canada, co-founder of Ottawa Canadian Film Festival and an avid photographer with his photos published in numerous publications. His film credits including Blue Roses, You Are Not Alone, How Can a Boy, Partners for Peace, This is My Witness and One of the Last.

**Danielle Rolfe**

Danielle is an Ottawa-based documentary film director/producer/writer. As a mixed-race woman from the diverse streets of Toronto, Danielle is compelled by the potential for documentary film to increase viewers' awareness about various social justice issues. Her training as a health services researcher is reflected in her films that focus on topics related to equity and access to health and social services for underserved communities. Danielle is co-founder and program director of Soul Space Ottawa, a community-based non-profit to support the wellbeing of street health, harm reduction, community and social service workers in Ottawa. Her film credits include Blue Roses and Falling Through the Cracks about the need for palliative care for people living in rooming houses, A Necessary Conversation: Racism on the Frontlines, You Are Not Alone (supporting Inuit in making health care decisions), A First Nation's Cancer Care Journey (exploring culturally-safe cancer care from the perspective of community members and healthcare providers from Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation), Welcome to the Bridge, and Who Needs Church? (exploring the relevance and future of churches in society).



## MEDIA REQUEST / HOST A SCREENING

**The Challenge: Planning Without Tomorrow**, a 21-minute documentary film, is available for screenings along with promotional/information support materials.

To request an online screener, interviews with subjects or experts, high resolution photos, and promotional materials, please contact us at [tv@kublacom.ca](mailto:tv@kublacom.ca).

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### Kublacom Pictures

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION

### Advance Care Planning

- [Advance Care Planning Canada](#)
- [Conversation Starters](#)
- [Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association](#)
- [Compassionate Ottawa](#)

### Palliative Care and Marginalized Populations

- [www.bluerosesdocumentary.ca](http://www.bluerosesdocumentary.ca)
- [Ottawa Inner City Health](#)
- [Diane Morrison Hospice at The Ottawa Mission](#)
- [PEACH – Palliative Education and Care for the Homeless](#)
- [PEACH COVID-19 Palliative Care Resources for Physicians and Frontline Workers](#)

### Dr. Kelli Stajduhar

<https://compassionate-communitiesuk.co.uk/podcast/103-dr-kelli-stajduhar-combating-marginalisation/>

