

If your loved one had characteristics similar to those described below and had not registered as a donor, this information may help you with your decision on your loved one's behalf.

**Characteristics of individuals who donate as described by their family and Substitute Decision Makers:**

- Giving person
- A willingness to help others
- Wanting to leave a legacy
- Wanting a part of themselves to live on in others
- Feeling deep sympathy and empathy for the suffering and misfortune of others
- A desire to impact the world in a positive way
- Doing what they can to try to make the world a better place
- Strong moral principles and core values

Your willingness to consider the gift of donation at this time is deeply and gratefully appreciated.

Please speak with your Trillium Gift of Life Network Coordinator to discuss further. Use the space below to write the contact information of the Coordinator.

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Trillium  
Gift of Life  
Network

# Understanding your Role as Substitute Decision Maker in Organ & Tissue Donation

Coping with loss is a deeply personal experience. You may be feeling a variety of emotions, all of which are normal. Grief is individual because every love is different. Every life and every death is a unique path to travel. If you are reading this pamphlet, you and your loved one may have the opportunity to begin a journey that will give the gift of life. This is a rare opportunity in which you, as a Substitute Decision Maker (SDM), have an important role. This pamphlet will help you understand your role in the decision making process.

### Role of Substitute Decision Maker

As a Substitute Decision Maker, your responsibility is to make or affirm decisions for your loved one who is unable to make their own. Key to these decisions are the wishes your loved one has already made known, their values and their beliefs. If your loved one has already made a decision to donate, it is your responsibility as their Substitute Decision Maker to follow through with this decision. If your loved one has not made their wishes known, it is your responsibility to consider your loved one's values and beliefs to determine if donation is in keeping with these.

### If You Have Been Informed That: Your Loved One Registered as a Donor

A person has the right to make their decision to be an organ and tissue donor known by either, telling friends and family, or by registering to be a donor. This may be something you did not discuss. Sometimes, registered donors forget to share this decision with family/friends. Your loved ones' registered decision is important because it is their choice.

*Family and friends will support this decision to donate, even if they do not agree with it, because they understand this was expressed when their loved one was able to speak for themselves.*

Your loved one's decision to donate can guide other decisions you may have to make on their behalf. Although you might make other choices for yourself, you can proceed with donation knowing that you are honoring your loved one's decision to give the gift of organ and tissue donation.

### If You Have Been Informed That: Your Loved One Did Not Register as a Donor

Speaking on behalf of your loved is one of the most difficult things we ask families to do. Even though your loved one may not have talked about donation, it does not mean they did not want to be a donor. People tend not to openly talk about organ and tissue donation.

Often we have to look past our own beliefs and emotions in making this decision. At this time, it is important to focus on your loved one's values and beliefs. We know this is difficult. To help, on the back panel, we have provided a list of characteristics of patients who have chosen to be organ donors in the past.

*The most  
important question to  
ask at this time is:*

***What would my loved one want  
if he or she could decide for him  
or herself?***

***What would they say if they  
were here right now?***

Carrying out their decision is your responsibility. Acting on your loved one's behalf can empower a lasting decision in keeping with your loved one's life.