



TOPIC 1 CARE WHEN NEARING THE END

Many practical tasks need to be done when a person is nearing the end of life – both as relief for the person who is dying and to support the caregiver. A person who is dying might be worried about who will take care of things when they are gone.

Everyday tasks can also be a source of worry for someone who is dying and can overwhelm a caregiver. A family member or friend can provide the caregiver with a much-needed break by helping with small daily chores around the house such as picking up the mail, writing down phone messages, doing a load of laundry, feeding the family pet, or picking up medicine from the pharmacy.

Finally, remember to take care of yourself as a care giver or support person. Witnessing the end of life can be emotionally and physically draining, so be sure to seek support from colleagues, friends, or professional counsellors as needed.

Module 3:

Hold my hand at the end

TRY THIS

As you are either at end of life or as a caregiver you may want to make a list of things that are important for you.

The below are a small list of things to consider:

- What practical palliative care is needed?
- Writing obituaries
- Liaising with medical staff
- Proving dignity and last wishes
- Arranging death certificates
- Arranging where the body is kept.
- How to contact authorities if it is at home, how to contact undertakers and when.



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...at the end of life



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REFLECTIONS

Remember that everyone's journey at the end of life is unique, and it's essential to do what feels right for your loved ones and your family.

As you go through some of the practical things you should consider:

- Practical palliative care – ensure pain and symptom management is appropriate. Create a comfortable and calming environment.
- Personal preferences – discuss and document your loved one's wishes regarding funeral arrangement, organ donation, and any specific religious or cultural practices.
- Obituaries – plan and write obituaries or death announcements. Notify close family friends of the impending passing.
- Practical arrangements – arrange for a funeral or memorial service and discuss any specific preferences your loved one may have.
- Death certificates – ensure that you can easily access and provide the necessary documents for the death certificate.
- Disposition of the body – coordinate with undertakers or funeral directors to make transportation arrangements.
- Contacts and emergency procedures – understand the legal requirements for reporting a death to the authorities and the procedures for obtaining a death certificate.

TRAINER TIPS

- This activity can be conducted over one session, or each heading can be done as a standalone.
- Note each situation is unique, so adapt the list to the specific circumstances and preferences. Having a well organised plan can help reduce stress during a challenging and emotional time.
- It is important to be able to connect caregivers and person dying with local and national resources, support groups, and organisations that can provide additional guidance and assistance. It is important to remember clinical problems subjectively experienced or observed by health care professionals during the last three months of life and one needs to be able to support in minimising these:
 - Pain
 - Loss of vitality: fatigue, deterioration of condition
 - Respiratory problems: breathlessness, pulmonary rattles, cough
 - Waste elimination: urinary incontinence, nausea or vomiting, constipation, diarrhoea
 - Problems of nutrition: eating disturbances, weight loss, swallowing disturbances
 - Skin problems: peripheral oedema, impaired skin integrity
 - Disturbances of mood, behaviour, and rhythm: anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances.
- Offer guidance on practical aspects of end-of-life care, such as managing daily routines, arranging for medical equipment and supplies, and creating a comfortable and peaceful environment for the person unwell.



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