



## TOPIC 1

### REFLECTING ON ONE'S OWN THOUGHTS, EMOTIONS AND PERCEPTIONS (INTROSPECTION)

Witnessing somebody dying raises fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of life. It prompts people to think about what truly matters in life, their values, purpose, and goals. Seeing someone at the end of their life can prompt those involved to think about their relationships with others and their humanity. It is also possible to reflect on the importance of sustaining positive relationships between all those involved in the process and the ways in which these can be nurtured and cherished.

Engaging with an end-of-lifesituation prompts thinking about spirituality. It may also lead to questioning or reaffirming beliefs about life, death, and what lies beyond this, if anything. Self-reflection can involve seeking acceptance and making peace with oneself or the person facing death. It can enable people to come to terms with the inevitability of death. At the end-of-life people inevitably may reflect upon their legacy, the impact they have had on others, on the ways in which they contributed to the world and how they want to be remembered.

This topic provides insights and ideas on how to reflect on what death means to those involved and the emotions it raises for all parties. This can help deal with peoples' anxieties: for the person who is dying and the persons who are engaging with the process which can enable better conversations on the range of issues associated with dying.

#### TRY THIS

(a) For health professional, carer, family, friends: reflect on your approach to supporting a person approaching the end of life including your own feelings about dying or death.

- What fears, apprehensions, or concerns do you have about the person who is near end of life, you are caring for?
- What emotions and feelings do you experience during this period of caring for someone at the end of their life?
- How can you best support this person in their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs?
- What are your limits in terms of support, and how can you take care of myself during this intense period?
- What values and beliefs guide the way you accompany this person at the end of life?
- What are you learning about life, death, and the meaning of existence through this experience of care?
- Do you have access to a support network: friends, healthcare professionals, palliative care services, etc.) in case of emotional overload?
- Have you taken the time to learn about the specific needs of your care recipient at the end of life, as well as the likely progression of their illness/health?
- Are you ready to accept hearing a different perspective or one that could be challenging or hurtful?

(b) For the person in an end-of-life process.

- How do you perceive your own mortality, and how does this influence the way you live my life?
- What are your personal beliefs and values about death and what happens afterward?
- What are your greatest fears or concerns about death, and how can I address them?
- What meaning do you give to life accepting that death is inevitable?
- How can you cultivate an attitude of gratitude and appreciation for each moment of your life, knowing that it is finite?
- How do you want to be remembered or what legacy do you want to leave behind when I die?



...at the end of life



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## REFLECTIONS

- Create a quiet and contemplative space: find a peaceful environment where you can engage in introspection without distractions. Set aside dedicated time: schedule specific periods for introspection, allowing yourself to fully immerse in the process without feeling rushed.
- Embrace different perspectives: consider various philosophical, cultural, and religious viewpoints on death.
- Engage with different belief systems and perspectives to broaden your understanding and challenge your own assumptions.
- Practice self-compassion: recognise and validate your own emotions and challenges during this time.
- Take the time to research and understand the specific needs and potential developments in the health condition of your care recipient. Knowledge can empower you to provide better support.
- Engage in an ongoing introspection by regularly reflect on your own feelings, beliefs and experiences related to death and caregiving.

## TRAINER TIPS

- This activity can be conducted during a training session, but it should be allotted a minimum of 30 minutes and provide ample space for each participant to engage in introspection comfortably.
- You may wish to offer participants paper and pencils if they would like to take notes or draw during the activity.
- A group sharing session can be scheduled at the end of the activity, with participants given the choice to share their introspective thoughts.
- You can use in complement the Resource: Go wish cards by Coda Alliance. <https://codaalliance.org/go-wish-game/> Propose the online version or print the 36 descriptions of what may matter most at the end of life. You can invite participants to spend ten minutes reviewing the list and selecting the five cards that resonate most with them. Following this, a group sharing session can be organized to facilitate discussions about the topic of death.



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