

Comforting a Loved One at End-of-Life

Facing the death of a loved one is an incomparable emotional challenge. When your loved one's End-of-Life is imminent, allow yourself to be present with them. Focus on the time you have together. This can enrich your relationship and provide meaning, peace and comfort to both of you at this important, inevitable time.

Gather Close Support Resources

Help your loved one gather those who are closest to them. Remember to reach out for support for yourself and your own family too.

Consider gathering these people when a loved one's End-of-Life is near:

- Close family and friends
- Healthcare proxy and/or Will executor
- Hospice or palliative care providers
- Religious or spiritual advisors
- Therapists, counselors or psychologists

Offer Reassurance and Emotional Support

Each person's emotional needs differ in the final stages of life. Many worry about loss of control and dignity as their physical abilities decline. Some fear being a burden to their loved ones yet also fear being alone.

Your loved one's physical strength and cognitive functions may diminish, yet their capacity to feel peaceful and secure may remain. They may no longer recognize you, but may draw comfort from your companionship, touch or the sound of your voice.

Late-stage caregivers can offer emotional comfort in the following ways:

- Provide company
Talk to your loved one, read to them or simply sit and hold their hand

- Promote a calm environment
Create a soothing atmosphere; communicating through sensory experiences such as touch or singing
- Bring small pets
Small pets or trained therapy animals may bring comfort to even very frail patients
- Offer familiar remembrances
Surround your loved one with pictures and mementos, reading treasured books and playing favorite music
- Remain attentive
Avoid burdening your loved one with your feelings of fear and sadness; discuss your grief with a supportive, appropriate listener instead
- Listen without interruption
Let your loved one express their fears about death; communicating their thoughts may help them accept the reality of their End-of-Life
- Allow them to reminisce
Remembering life experiences provide perspective. Recalling positive life stories may help promote dignity and comfort.
- Provide information
If they are still able to comprehend, most patients prefer to be included in discussions that concern them or their care
- Honor their wishes
Reassure your loved one that you will faithfully honor their wishes, including ADs and wills
- Respect their requests and privacy
For most, End-of-Life is about preserving dignity and ending their life as comfortably as possible

Please visit: www.passare.com for expert resources and information on a variety of End-of-Life topics.