

HOW YOU CAN HELP YOURSELF

Keeping up your strength is vital for your physical and mental health. You need to look after yourself if you are to continue looking after your loved one.

Allow friends and family to help.

Accept offers for assistance. Let your support system know that **healthy meals** would be appreciated. If you prepare food, prepare double portions so that you can easily re-heat meals.

When grocery shopping, pick up **healthy snacks** such as fruit, nuts, cheese and whole grain crackers for those times you are very busy.

Schedule time to **exercise**, go for a walk or to the gym.

Listen to **music**. Engage in social activities. Take time to relax.

Be **patient** with yourself.

Seek **counselling** or join a **support group**. Bereavement groups provide an opportunity to share grief with others who have experienced similar loss.

Confide in someone you trust to tell your story of loss. Talk to family and friends, seek spiritual support. Use a journal to write down your feelings.

Ensure you schedule and **keep** regular dental and medical **appointments for yourself**.

Sleep when you can. Caregivers often suggest sleeping when your loved one sleeps. Ask a friend or family member to provide respite while you sleep.

Let yourself feel grief. Acknowledge and accept all feelings, positive and negative. Crying is a good release.

Hire a housecleaner so that you can **receive assistance with household chores**.

You and your loved one may qualify for **formal respite** or **homemaking services**. It is recommended to plan ahead, ask your health professional today about the referral process

If you are still employed outside of the home, consider taking a **leave of absence**. There is also the option of applying for Employment Insurance Compassionate Care Benefits: For more information on Compassionate Care Benefits, contact: **1-800-206-7218** or www.servicecanada.gc.ca

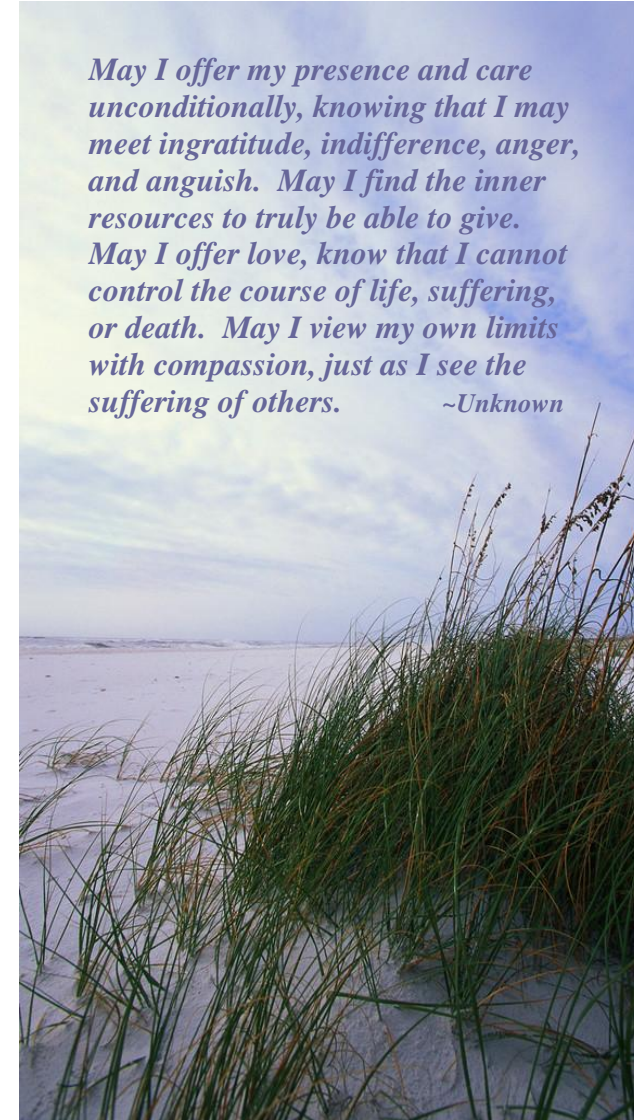


Lakehead
UNIVERSITY



End-Of-Life Care

May I offer my presence and care unconditionally, knowing that I may meet ingratitude, indifference, anger, and anguish. May I find the inner resources to truly be able to give. May I offer love, know that I cannot control the course of life, suffering, or death. May I view my own limits with compassion, just as I see the suffering of others. ~Unknown



**SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVERS,
FAMILIES AND FRIENDS,
CARING FOR A LOVED ONE**

What is End-of-Life Care?

End-of-life care focuses on providing holistic care to maximize the quality of life for individuals and families who are living with life threatening illnesses. End-of-life is considered the final stage of life's journey.

End-of-life care touches people of all ages and addresses both the individual and their family's physical, emotional, spiritual, mental and financial needs.

It engages all parts of the health care system; from hospitals, hospices and long-term care facilities, to communities, and the home environment.

At the final stages of a person's life, a team of professionals is usually involved in delivering end-of-life care to ensure that all of the patient's and family's needs are addressed. This team may include:

Physicians, Case Managers or Care Co-ordinators, Community Nurses, Therapists, Social Workers or Counsellors, Spiritual Care Providers, Pharmacists, Nutritionists, Hospice Volunteers, Homemakers Hospital & Long Term Care Home Nurses

The focus of the care team is on achieving comfort and respect for the person nearing death and ensuring the best possible quality of life for the patient and family. -

Northwestern Ontario End-of-Life Care Network 2008

6 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO SUPPORT YOUR LOVED ONE

1. Help **include your loved one** in activities outside the home, family events and keeping in contact with friends as much as possible.
2. Just **spend time together**, sitting, talking, listening to music, watching television.
3. **Reminisce**. Share memories through pictures, videos and stories. Share thoughts and feelings through laughter and tears.
4. **Remember the important things** in your lives and enjoy the days that your loved one is well. **Make the best of your time** together, smile, laugh and create special memories
5. **Offer to help** your loved one with unresolved conflicts or unfinished business. Help your loved one with finalizing their affairs. Settling the estate can bring ease to you both.
6. If providing support becomes too difficult, **seek assistance** from a social worker or a counsellor.

Family Stressors During the Dying Process

It is typical for anyone caring for loved one to feel some, all and perhaps none of the following stresses:

- Intense feelings
- Anticipatory mourning
- Uncertainty
- Physical or cognitive changes
- Stress on family life
- Changes in family roles
- Old family conflicts
- Concerns about quality of care

Talk to your support system, family physician or community/hospital social worker.

TIPS TO REMEMBER

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| Be a good listener | Ask about their loss |
| Just sit with them | Remember the loss |
| Let them feel sad | Make telephone calls |
| Acknowledge the pain | |
| Do not minimize grief | |
| Be available when you can | |
| Ask them about their feelings | |