



“AN EARTHEN TREASURE  
IN TRANSITION”

“To everything there is a season, and a time to every  
purpose under the heaven: a time to be born and a time  
to die”

## Chaplain- Hospice Care

### ◦ **Serving as Chaplain**

- One of the greatest needs for patients and families who are facing the end of life is for someone who can listen to their concerns, fears and regrets without judgment. As a chaplain, you should understand the need for listening and not necessarily offering advice or solutions but rather simply holding space for various emotions and challenges that may arise.

## **Chaplains bring calm presence to the room**

- Chaplains should remain calm during crisis and chaos and focus on what is most important in the moment. By listening and asking the right questions, you can help families heal their conflict and find peace with one another.
- Some visits may require just spending time in silence with the individual when there are no more words to say, simply being present and bringing calm compassion to the situation.
- As a chaplain, you do not preach or agitate. You learn to relate to all individuals without bringing your own religion or spiritual beliefs into the situation. You should be able to work with patients or individuals of any religion or those with no religion, because you don't focus on doctrine or specific teaching. Chaplains help everyone find personal meaning in life and death.

Cont.

- Many times, chaplains serve family members in addition to patients or individuals by offering an ear to listen and a shoulder to lean on. This support can be helpful should you become the caregiver to a family member or friend. It will remind you to focus on what really matters and not get lost in all the details if caring for another person.
- Good chaplains learn to not make judgments on behalf of the people being helped. Although you may have your own values, these should not be imposed on patients or individuals, and you must maintain the ability to listen to accept their views.

## How do Chaplain help?

- First and foremost, chaplains provide patients with care and spiritual counsel that meets the patients' needs and is in accordance with their wishes. If patients do not wish to engage with a hospice chaplain or any form of spiritual care, they do not have to. It is entirely optional, and patients can change their mind at any time.
- Chaplains do not seek to convert patients or bring them into the fold of a specific religion. Instead, they meet patients where they are on their spiritual journey and help them discover renewed meaning and spiritual peace. Regardless of religion, creed or culture, chaplains provide patients with compassionate spiritual support and counsel.

# What is the last moment before death like?

- The following symptoms are often a sign that the person is about to transition/die:
  - They might close their eyes frequently or they might be half open
  - Facial muscles may relax, and the jaw can drop
  - Skin can become very pale
  - Breathing can alternate between loud rasping breaths and quiet breathing

There are three main stages of dying: **early, middle and last**. These are marked by various changes in responsiveness and functioning. However, it is important to keep in mind that the timing of each stage and the symptoms experienced can vary from person to person.

## How do you say goodbye to someone dying/transitioning?

- Don't wait ....
- Be honest about the situation...
- Offer reassurance....
- Keep talking...
- It's okay to laugh...

## **Six things not to say to a dying/transitioning person:**

- “How are you feeling?”
- According to the Doctor...
- “Everything happens for a reason” ...
- “I’m sure you’ll get better” ...
- “You don’t look very sick” ...
- “You’re going to a better place/ you’ll be with God soon” ...



**Examples of words of comfort for someone dying/transitioning (if something need to be said)**

- “I’m praying for you to feel at peace and to know how much you’re loved.”
- “I’m sad, of course, but I’m glad you’re in a place where you don’t have to fight so hard anymore.” (Sometimes it will appear as if there is a fight to stay or a fight to leave.)
- “While I am here with you, we’re going to do our best to share this time together.”

QUESTIONS?

COMMENTS