

DYING AT HOME

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TO CARE WELL FOR YOUR DYING RELATIVE OR FRIEND AT HOME IS RIGHT HERE

The 8 Step Program:

By being organised to prevent your tiredness and stresses, this can be a most rewarding and emotionally satisfying time of your life. The Dying At Home program has, since 1980, enabled people in many countries to care well for the dying person in their own home.

If, after reading the appropriate booklets and the 8 step program you have any questions on how to do this special work of care you may contact us 24/7 at support@dyingathome.org and we will help you. Also, Dr Helen-Anne Manion is a palliative care physician and can give special guidance by phone, email or Skype anywhere in the world.

1. READ, DECIDE AND DOWNLOAD.

- Look at the booklets that are available on the website.
- Decide on the 2 booklets that are best for your culture, the YELLOW and BLUE Books or, the GREEN and FREE MEDICINES Books.
- Download the booklets from the website. They will be very helpful during the coming times.

2. GET HELP - THE GATHERING

- You should not do the caring alone. It is essential to accept offers of help from family, friends and neighbours, those you really want to help you, as soon as possible.
- In The YELLOW Book pages 6, 7 and 8 and in The GREEN Book pages 6, 7, 8 and 9 there is a description of what we call a Gathering. For your Gathering invite your friends and neighbours to come together to work out ways they can help spare your energies. At the same time their friendship will support you in a deep and special way.

3. MANAGING DIFFICULT DAYS

- The FREE MEDICINES Book pages 1 to 31 or The YELLOW Book pages 22 to 40 teach special ways for you to settle problems such as pain (which can be physical or emotional), breathlessness, coughing, nausea or other problems such as fear and anxiety.
- In some countries there may be Palliative Care, Community Hospice Programs, Community Nursing, Home Based Caregivers or Health Workers providing medical support that you could access to support your care.

For those people using the FREE MEDICINES Book it is good to add your own **local remedies or bush medicines**.

4. READ ABOUT CHANGES THAT HAPPEN.

- The BLUE Book all 12 pages, or the GREEN Book pages 10 to 11 will give you guidance in recognising the changes that are happening in body and mind, what is normal and how to respond. You will find information on how to recognise the signs that your loved one might be close to their time to leave you.

5. SPEND TIME TOGETHER

- Now that you have help coming from your family, friends and neighbours, this is a precious time to share living with your dying loved one, to engage appropriately according to your culture. This step is all about the importance of being together in this special time of life, talking about important things, sharing stories, wisdom and memories, singing and listening to music, relaxing together.

6. BRINGING PEACE

- We encourage you to make connections with your humanitarian, cultural, religious or spiritual traditions because it can enable emotional healing and acceptance which will give peace to the dying person.

7. CARING FOR THE CARER

- The Carer must remain physically and emotionally strong to do this work. You need to do whatever it is that regenerates your body and mind. Take care of yourself and do not get too tired. Relaxation is very helpful to settle you emotionally, physically and to lift your spirits. The *Relaxation* exercise is in the FREE MEDICINES Book on page 1.

8. RESPONSE IN FINAL TIMES

- Look again at the BLUE Book, '*Preparing for the Final Farewell*' or the GREEN Book page 10 to 11 so you are prepared as your dying loved one comes close to leaving you.
- You will want to be staying at the bedside, and this is enabled by your friends and neighbours. Your voice, which will be heard to the very last breath, and touch will calm and comfort. Some people like to sing gently, pray if that is your culture, as you wait for that last breath.
- Then, all is quiet. Stay together as long as you want, following your own culture and rituals. Through tears you will realize you have given a great gift of a good death, "to die loving and being loved".

WHAT NEXT

Waking to a life without the person near you and the need to care can be bewildering. Now those good compassionate people who came to help you and shared in this amazing experience are still together with you in the time of mourning, grieving and rebuilding. Your sadness and grief will be balanced by the deep sense of having done everything possible and with the joy of having given a precious gift.