

Preparing for End of Life can be emotionally challenging, but having a checklist can help ensure that important matters are addressed and decisions are made in a clear and organized manner. This can provide great comfort to ensure physical, emotional, and practical support.

Consider some of these:

- ***Medical and Palliative Care Planning:***

Talk to your doctors about what to expect and how to manage symptoms.

Contact a palliative care team or hospice organization for specialized medical and emotional support for both the person who is dying and their support person.

Have an open discussion with the medical team to understand the current status of the cancer, prognosis, and expected timeline.

Create a plan for pain management, symptom control, and related side effects. Pain management medications and interventions often come with side effects which aren't necessarily symptoms from the disease. Awareness of the side effects can empower choices for care.

Continue to work closely with the primary healthcare providers, oncologists, and other specialists such as a registered Dietician for nutritional recommendations or members of the medical team to ensure proper medication management and dosages.

- ***Communication and Emotional Support:***

Share your situation with close family and friends so they can be there for you. Encourage open and honest communication.

If you're feeling overwhelmed, talk to a counselor who can help you cope.

If you have any spiritual or religious beliefs, seek support from your community.

- ***Legal and Financial Planning:***

Review and update legal documents i.e. wills, power of attorney, and advance healthcare directives.

Evaluate insurance coverage, including life insurance policies and funeral plans.

Consult with an attorney for estate planning and end-of-life matters to manage legal and financial needs.

- ***Living Arrangements and Home Care Support:***

Consider the most comfortable living arrangements for the end-of-life period, which may include home care, hospice, or palliative care facilities.

Consider hiring home care services or arranging for nursing assistance at home to help with personal care, medication management, and other daily activities.

- ***Pet Care:***

Consider how you would want your pet(s) cared for when you die. Think about who would be the best person or agency to care to take over their care.

It might be a good idea to have identified both emergency and permanent caregivers for your pets; otherwise, your pet may end up being placed in a shelter or somewhere else you wouldn't want them to be.

Entering hospice or hospitalization may create additional stress if that person doesn't have a reliable plan in place for someone to care for their pets. Check with your local end of life care professionals to inquire into what supports are available for pet care.

- **Home Medical Equipment:**

Arrange for any necessary home medical equipment, such as a hospital bed or wheelchair, to enhance comfort and safety.

- **Transportation Assistance:** If needed, seek transportation assistance for medical appointments or other necessary outings.

- **Care Team and/or Support Groups:**

Join cancer support groups to connect with others who are going through similar experiences, providing emotional support and understanding. Establish who will be present during the end-of-life journey, including close family, friends, and healthcare professionals.

Contact social services organizations to explore additional support options available in the community.

- **Counseling, Therapy, and Spiritual Support:**

Engage with spiritual or religious support networks for comfort and guidance during this difficult time.

Seek counseling or therapy services for the patient and support person to cope with the emotional challenges and stress associated with end-of-life care.

- **Advance Directives:**

Ensure that the patient has completed advance directives, such as a living will or healthcare proxy, to communicate their wishes for medical care and decision-making when they are unable to do so.

Utilize end-of-life planning guides to address essential topics and decisions related to end-of-life care.

- **End of life wishes / Funeral and Memorial Arrangements:**

Talk to your loved ones and/or write down your thoughts and messages for your family.

Discuss and document end-of-life preferences, including preferred medical interventions, resuscitation decisions, and organ donation wishes.

Consider creating a written statement of your life values, beliefs, and final messages for loved ones.

Outline funeral and memorial service preferences, including burial or cremation, location, and any specific requests such as any projects or charities you'd like to support.

Be clear on who it is you want to be sitting beside you when you die and make your choices known for who you DO NOT WANT there with you when you die. It's your final moments so you can decide how and with whom you'd like to share it.

Let your loved know any specific requests for your final moments i.e. specific music playing, favorite objects, your pet, reciting prayers or mantras, re-creating your favorite moment in life with images, clothing, or fragrances.

- **Personal Affairs:**

Organize important documents, such as identification, insurance policies, financial records, and contact information for key individuals.

Designate a trusted person to handle practical matters during your journey.

- **Legacy and Memory Preservation:**

Consider recording video or audio messages for loved ones.

Plan for any desired legacy projects or charitable contributions.

- **Family Caregiver Support:**

Arrange for support and assistance for family caregivers, providing them with opportunities for having a break for personal time as needed. Arrange for some formal respite care to give the support person some time off for self-care and rejuvenation.

- ***Comfort and Well-being:***

Focus on activities that bring comfort and joy, spending quality time with loved ones and engaging in cherished hobbies.

- ***Closure and Goodbyes:***

Allow time for meaningful goodbyes with loved ones and express feelings and emotions openly. Reach out to appropriate resources for grief and bereavement support. Often these services can be found through local Hospice services, through referral from health team or through your local church.