



Appalachian Regional Healthcare

## CHAPLAINCY SERVICES

Director Sam Stacy

***ARH Chaplaincy Services-  
Connecting Patients and Staff  
with the God of Grace, Mercy  
and Peace!***

# Dealing With Death & Dying



# Death and Dying

- As Healthcare Chaplains our job and goal is to provide words of encouragement, a listening ear and hope for the hereafter to those that are facing death.

# Death and Dying

- Our aim is to provide comfort and support during a time when the patient or a friend is dealing with this battle at the end of life.

# Death and Dying

- Knowing what to say to someone who is dying and when to say it, can be difficult.



# Death and Dying

- The following ideas may be useful at any point during a serious illness, but especially when the person is not expected to live more than a few weeks or days.



# Follow the Dying Person's Lead

- It is normal to feel anxious when talking about dying with someone who is nearing end of life, especially if the person is someone you love.

# Follow the Dying Person's Lead

- Some people handle this anxiety by being clear and blunt. Others say little or nothing about the situation for fear they may appear to be giving up hope.
- One way or another, we tend to try to protect each other at this difficult time.

# Follow the Dying Person's Lead

- Let the dying person lead the conversation, if they want to talk about dying, do not say everything is going to be OK or deny the inevitable. **BE HONEST!!!**
- Let them share their thoughts. Listen and encourage, be slow to speak, yet be empathetic and compassionate.

# Follow the Dying Person's Lead

- Some people who know they are dying avoid talking about it right up until the moment of death, or may never speak of it
- It's important to recognize that this is a valid choice and to respect it. More often, however, people who are dying feel respected and supported by openness and honesty in conversations.

# Follow the Dying Person's Lead

- They may wonder what to expect when death is near. Rather than avoiding these concerns, acknowledge them.
- Ask them if they would like to know more about this from their doctor, or if you can help them draft some questions about what to expect.

# Follow the Dying Person's Lead

- Share scripture about heaven, if they are believers.
- If not- ask them if they feel that they are ready to meet the Lord. Gently lead them to a saving knowledge of Christ. If they prefer not to talk about this- so be it.

# Avoid Empty Reassurances

- Don't say, "Everything happens for a reason," or, "I'm sure you'll feel fine after you start the new medicine."
- If you don't know what to say, focus on listening instead. Ask the patient if they want to talk about how they're feeling.



# Avoid Empty Reassurances

- Don't say, "I know how you feel"
- This can come across as unsupportive and make the patient feel worse.

# Understand that they may say things they don't mean!

- They are going thru a frightening, time, they may say some strange things because of the meds, the stress, the unknown.
- This may also need to be shared with the family

# Legacy Wishes

- Ask them if they would like you to write some things down for the family.
- They may not have the energy to write their own story, let them dictate it for it and record for the family.

# Legacy Wishes

- Ask them if they would like you to record anything special that could be shared at the funeral, or an intimate letter to their family.

# Legacy Wishes

- Would they like to share some stories from their childhood, or express their love in a special way.
- Ask them if they would like any special songs or messages shared at their memorial service

# Comfort the Family

- Let the family know that during this most difficult time you are praying for them.
- Ask them how you can serve them.
- Be with the family for the viewing of the body, if asked, but wait on permission from the hospital staff.

# Comfort the Family

- Pray with the family right there.
- Answer questions for the family Ex.  
What happens to their loved ones  
body after they pass.
- Listen intently to their questions and  
concerns whatever they may be.



# Comfort the Family

- Read scripture, share your thoughts, but don't preach a 30 minute sermon.
- Give Heaven Scripture Cards
- Dealing With Grief brochures

# QUESTIONS???

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