

What is an End of Life Doula?



“Doula” is of Greek origin, meaning “woman servant”.



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National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) Definition

- ▶ Non-medical companions to the dying and their families who provide a wide range of holistic support that is complimentary to hospice care.



Palliative and Hospice Care

- ▶ Simply put palliative care is a holistic approach to providing comfort to patients living with serious illness. Hospice is palliative care for the terminally ill.
- ▶ A passage from Sunita Puri's book, "That Good Night" :
"Can we strive to minimize the suffering inflicted by disease while also embracing more fully the truth that mortality is not a condition medicine should seek to cure?"
- ▶ So if mortality is not something medicine should not seek to cure how do we address it?

End of Life Doula Role

- Advance Care planning discussions
- Companion the dying and their family (presence)
- Provide spiritual, emotional, and logistical support
- In-depth conversations on life meaning, unresolved issues
- Help with legacy projects (how do you want people to remember you?)
- Education on the dying process, referrals/resources
- Advocate for end of life care wishes
- Vigil planning(what do your last moments look like?)
- Support family with grief processing

Doula Tool Kit

- ▶ **Guided Imagery:** The use of words or music to evoke positive imaginary scenarios on a subject with the hope of bringing about some beneficial effect
- ▶ **Dignity Therapy:** Evidenced-based support for ease of end-of-life distress
- ▶ **Legacy Projects**

Legacy

- ▶ **Dignity Therapy can be a legacy document**
- ▶ **Videos**
- ▶ **Pictures**
- ▶ **Quilts**
- ▶ **Book of favorite quotes**
- ▶ **Playlist**
- ▶ **Ideas are endless!**



Benefits

- **Comforting presence**
- **Non-judgmental**
- **Family-centered**
- **Whole-person care**
- **Teamwork**
- **Community resource**



Thank you!

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