



"How to" E-book Series by Susan Sandys

HOW TO:

HANDLE END-OF-LIFE ISSUES



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How To Get Hospice Involved

1. There are about 60 different hospice organizations in Arizona. Most are not-for-profit. There are hospice rooms in hospitals, care centers and actual hospice homes.
2. A doctor needs to certify that a patient has an illness with an estimated life expectancy of 6 months or less if it runs its course. A patient does not necessarily have to be bed-bound or critically ill.
3. Hospice can provide:
 - Several hours of nursing care
 - Counseling for your loved one and family members
 - Musicians
 - Chaplains
 - Trained volunteers to assist
 - A strong focus on pain control and emotional support for the patient and his/her family
4. Insurance companies typically contract with certain hospice providers.

5. Too often, hospice gets involved too late. Many families do not get the full benefit of hospice's services. Consult with your loved one's doctor, when your loved one's condition starts to worsen, to determine if hospice is an option.

Stopping Life Support

1. How To Use A Living Will/Advance Medical Directive.

If your loved one is in the hospital, then the doctors and your loved one's health care decision maker (agent), decide if the time has come. If yes, then the health care decision maker will sign a Do Not Resuscitate Order and all life support will be stopped.

2. Prehospital Medical Care Directive. If your loved one is at home, then your loved one's health care decision maker may have signed a Prehospital Medical Care Directive. It is a bright orange piece of paper that basically incorporates a Do Not Resuscitate Order.

If your loved one goes into cardiac arrest at home, and the EMS are called, the Prehospital Medical Care Directive states that the paramedics are not required to resuscitate; they can just evaluate the situation or determine that a death has occurred.

3. Death In A Hospital. If your loved one dies in the hospital, the hospital will make arrangements for your loved one's body to be taken either to the medical examiner, (if

needed), or to a funeral home, (chosen by the family or predetermined by your loved one).

When the family is ready to leave the hospital, someone should stay behind to gather your loved one's personal possessions.

4. Death At Home. If your loved one dies at home, and hospice has been involved, then the hospice nurse will come to the home and make all of the immediately necessary calls and arrangements. The nurse will call the funeral home chosen by the family.

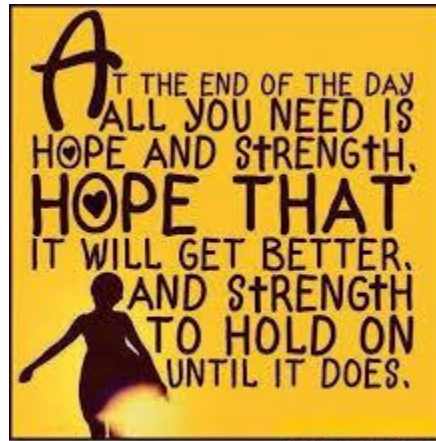
If hospice has not been involved, then call the Coroner's office (602-506-3322), OR 9-1-1 if you want emergency personnel, (who will attempt to resuscitate unless there is a Prehospital Medical Directive, (see above)), or call your loved one's doctor. He/she can issue a medical certificate of death if he/she has seen your loved one recently.

Additional Information

Please see my blogs for more information on dying with dignity and end of life issues.

Here's an excellent website and publication to download for additional information:

http://www.nia.nih.gov/sites/default/files/end_of_life_helping_with_comfort_care_0.pdf



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