

## When a Relative or Partner is Terminally Ill

It can be difficult to bring up the subject of dying and death, but if it is at all possible do try to discuss it so that you know what the person wants.

***Try to discuss where they would prefer to spend their final days.***

The GP can provide a form about this which the terminally ill person can complete which then goes on their medical records.

If the person wishes to be at home, then they will probably require care. Marie Curie or MacMillan Nurses can provide care free of charge.

Some hospices provide a 'hospice at home' care service – this means that carers from the hospice provide care at home, free of charge.

***Consider the practicalities*** – does your relative / partner require a hospital bed? easy access to a bathroom? Do you have someone to help move furniture if necessary?

Perhaps the person who is ill is your carer. Will you require extra care yourself? If so, contact the person in charge of your care - e.g. social services – as soon as possible.

Some hospices will take a relative or partner requiring care – so you may still be able to be with your relative.

Try to talk about how would all feel if it transpires that the person is unable to spend their last days in their preferred place. Don't feel guilty and blame yourself. Your relative will understand your limitations, that's why it's important to have this conversation before it's too late.

If you cannot be with your relative in their last days, do they have another person they would like to be with them?

***When people visit*** in hospital or hospice, if the sick person is too ill to talk ask the visitor to put the phone to their ear so that you can talk to them.

### ***Emotional Support***

You may find you need emotional support. This is a very difficult time for you too. Counselling is available via your local hospice. This is a free service.

Macmillan cancer support offers an advice and counselling line for those affected by cancer. The number is 0808 808 0000. The line is open 8am-8pm Monday-Friday

Your GP can also arrange for counselling.

Do not go without counselling if you feel you need it because you think it will affect how professionals view your ME. Professionals should treat your ME and how you are feeling at the moment separately.