



Starting the hospice conversation

Tips for Caregivers

No one is ever fully prepared to have a conversation about death. It's sad and difficult for loved ones of a person reaching the end-of-life as well as for that person's physician who has been focused on helping that person recover or improve.

No one wants to hear, "There is nothing more that can be done," and with hospice as an option that statement is never true. A cure might not be possible, but it's important each individual faced with that reality know that there is still more life ahead.

The best thing for the people we love is for them to have the best quality of life possible, for as long as possible – and when a cure is no longer possible, hospice is available to offer care and support.

At VNA Community Healthcare & Hospice, we offer symptom management while also supporting the social and spiritual needs of people helping them to live their best possible lives in the time remaining.

The best way to broach the topic of hospice with a loved one is to put all the cards on the table and have an honest discussion about the person's prognosis and the complications of their current condition, such as frequent ER visits and hospital stays, side effects of their illness or treatment such as infections, pain and shortness of breath, and the overall stress and fear they are feeling.

It's important for a person considering hospice care to know what their options are and that they will not be alone. Focus on the following points:

- There is not a cure for your condition, so let's focus on the things we can control and that includes making sure you make the most of the time you have left
- The hospice team will help you to maintain as much independence and dignity as possible for as long as possible so you can have the best possible quality of life
- Because of hospice, you'll have better control of your symptoms and be able to stay at home with us
- Your doctor is still part of the team and we can reach out if we need him/her
- You aren't going to live as long as we all want, but we'll be able to enjoy the time we have with you

VNA Community Healthcare & Hospice is happy to sit down with families and help them have this conversation or have it with their loved ones for them. No one should walk the end of life journey alone, and we are proud to be here to support patients and their loved ones every step of the way.

For more information call 866.474.5230.