The Seven Fears of Dying

A handout for caregivers on what their friends and loved ones think about when faced with a life threatening illness.

If caregivers wish to bring peace to a friend or loved one in the middle of a health crisis, they should be sensitive to what typically worries a person faced with a life-threatening illness. In her book, A Sacred Walk: Dispelling the Fear of Death and Caring for the Dying, caregiver, writer and inspirational speaker Donna Authers lists the most common fears encountered.

Fear #1: The Process of Dying

- Will death be painful?
- How will I get through this?

Fear #2: Loss of Control

- Must I give up independence?
- How will I cope with being dependent on others?

Fear #3: Loss of Loved Ones

- What is going to happen to them?
- How will they manage without me?

Fear #4: Others’ Reactions

- What if I see fear in the eyes of others?
- How will I respond to their verbal and nonverbal reactions to the changes in my body?

Fear #5: Being Isolated

- What if my visits with health care professionals and friends decrease?
- Will I die alone?

Fear #6: The Unknown

- What can I expect?
- Will there be life after death?

Fear #7: That Life Has Been Meaningless

- What did I accomplish during my life?
- Did I have a positive impact on the world?

This tip sheet is adapted from the chapter “Hospice Is For the Living” that offers suggestions to family caregivers on how to gently help dispel each fear listed. A Sacred Walk by Donna Authers is filled with real-life stories and lessons the living can learn from the dying.

At bookstores or online

Discussion Guide available for Small Group Study

For more information, visit: www.asacredwalk.com