

My Way Session V: Preparing for a Preferred End of Life for Myself

September 15, 2025

Guest: Dixcy Bosley, Family Nurse-Practitioner, RN, Clinical Nurse Care Manager for the Aging and Caregiving Support Team at Iona House. She's spent 35 years developing wellness programs and advocating for end-of-life care.

Basic Information about dying (in addition to the legal documents described and provided in the *Compassion and Choices* booklet distributed at a prior *My Way* session)

- The dying process: awareness about becoming a different person whether in pain or not, no matter what the diagnosis or timeline.
- Dwelling options for dying: your home, another's home, out of town, out of the country, retirement home; inhouse hospice, hospital, etc.
- Different ways of dying: sudden without warning; short-term illness; prolonged illness; self-deliverance; assisted suicide
- Mechanisms for ending life: VSED (Voluntarily Stopping Eating and Drinking), Aid in Dying, Hospice (separate document), Peaceful Pill and other drugs.
- How to manage if some form of dementia is involved

Next Steps

- Assemble your Team Support Group and list their responsibilities
- Name an Advocate who can connect all the "moving parts" of decision-making and can coordinate activities, maintaining a calendar, clothing, coordinating doctors, health professionals and caregivers, communication with family and friends/neighbors, food and meals, housekeeping, laundry, tracking/picking up/organizing medications, paying bills, dealing with email and has legal status ie a family member, a partner, has Health POA (Power of Attorney)
- Recognize and deal with anxiety
- Pay attention to the importance of agency and aesthetics (flowers, clothing, activities, etc)
- Be aware of timing and logistics concerning Hospice options (Handout.)

Discussion within groups: What's your comfort level around what has been presented? What questions do you have? What do you need? How can the Village help? What's a first step?

Resources

- *Death Doula's Guide to Living Fully and Dying Prepared*, by Francesca Lynn Arnoldy
- Death Cafés at Congressional Cemetery organized by Death Doula Laura Lyster-Mensh
- *The Art of Dying Well* by Katy Butler
- *Compassions and Choices: My-End-of-Life Decisions: Advance Planning Guide and Toolkit*
- DCV Website
- *Standing at the Edge, Being with Dying: Cultivating Compassion and Fearlessness in the Presence of Death*, by Joan Halifax
- *Hospice Directory for DC* (dchealth.dc.gov)
- *Final Exit*, by Derek Humphrey
- Iona Senior Services
- *Finish Strong: Putting Your Priorities First at Life's End*, by Barbara Coombs Lee
- Living at Home programs, including Goodwin Living at Home and Ingleside at Home
- Sibley Senior Association
- YouTube Positive Aging (emailed to Villagers by Beth Merricks)