

LIFESTYLE / RETIREMENT

End-of-life planning can ease the stress of growing older, experts say

Leslie Conner, End of Life Doula and Reiki Master talks to Newsday about end of life planning and shares creative ideas on how to make final days more comfortable and meaningful between loved ones.

Click here to read the full article: <https://www.newsday.com/lifestyle/retirement/senior-citizens-can-embrace-end-of-life-planning-1.33653610>



As an end-of-life doula, Leslie Conner offers holistic end-of-life and bereavement support for families. Photo Credit: Kristen Russo

Planning your emotional exit

Leslie Conner, an End of Life Doula and Reiki Master at the Prancing Peacock Yoga Studio in Langhorne, Pennsylvania, offers holistic end of life and bereavement support to families.

- “Think about bedside plans. When it comes to the emotional side of planning for end of life, there tends to be a lot of assumptions. Talking about what should happen during the actual dying process helps take the guesswork out of it and allows loved ones to focus on connecting in a comfortable and meaningful way,” she says.
- Choose interactive activities that will help ease the awkwardness visitors may feel when coming to your bedside to say goodbye. For instance, consider having a favorite book or collection of poems by the bed, giving them the option to read to you instead of sitting in silence. Or create a playlist on Pandora or Spotify to encourage those who visit to pick a song you can listen to together. Think about telling loved ones ahead of time to come with their favorite memory to share.
- Give some thought to physical cues and how you’d like to communicate those with loved ones, such as whether you’d like people to hold your hand or sit in bed with you. When permission is given, and boundaries are laid out, everyone feels comfortable participating and is more likely to have a meaningful memory of their goodbye, as opposed to painful regret or fear over not knowing what to say or do.
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- Says Conner, “One of the most transformative techniques for processing end of life is to work on a legacy project with your loved ones. This can look like curating a collection of photos or treasured items for a scrapbook or memory box. It might involve going on a favorite walk, or selecting a new path, that your loved ones can keep using in the future. It can be a playlist of your favorite music, a series of letters, or even tattoos!

“Having a meaningful connection to the deceased is a key factor in successful grieving. The actual collaboration on the project also encourages connection and allows everyone to focus on the love holding the relationship together, instead of the loss.”