

## **END OF LIFE**

### **Things to do before end of life:**

Pre-Pay for cemetery plot, mortuary costs, casket, cremation etc. Shop around, costs vary. Hospice usually can tell you which mortuaries have lower costs.

Have a Health Care Rep. or Legal Guardian

Have a POLST (physician Orders For Life Sustaining Treatment) Fill out with patient's doctor, becomes standing order.

Have a DNR (Do Not Resuscitate), DNI (Do Not Intubate), any other health care directives/end of life wishes.

Set up a ABLE savings account that can be used later for Memorial/Celebration of Life costs

### **Within 6 months – 1 year life expectancy:**

Look into Hospice options. Best to use one that has worked for Edwards Center.

Reevaluate POLST, DNR, DNI ect..

Learn options available... Roy had a harpist come play and massage

Start gathering photos for a life video to play at Memorial.

### **When they are on hospice care:**

Visit often! Develop a relationship with the Hospice workers. Communicate!

If possible have them up and joining in with other residents. If not, make sure they have visitors to their room.

Be appreciative of staff's extra efforts.

Be aware that staff may not have ever experienced a death before.... It can be daunting for them.

Bring them a coffee or treat. Let them know you appreciate their care of your loved one.

W/ John, his girlfriend came and spent the day with him until he passed. His friends came to say goodbye. Georgia sang to him. We played his favorite music and recited memories and told him we loved him and would see him in heaven.

Remember that even if they are in a coma or unconscious they can hear you! Studies have shown brain activity as a reaction. Hold their hand and talk to them. Touch and voice are important.

Also remember to give the other residents some love and attention. They are losing a friend and it can be upsetting for them. Reassure them that the person is not in pain and are being well cared for.

**After Death:**

Decide what clothing you want them buried in and if you want anything special put in the casket. Those go to the mortuary. John was buried in a Elvis Costume!

Choose keepsakes/photos for other residents and ask family members if they want anything.

Donate belongings to EC. They can use the furniture, books, DVD's for other residents.

I recommend doing a Celebration of Life at the Edwards Center. Personalize it with a theme... John's was Elvis themed. Jean was a huge help in putting together a program and giving advice on food, memory tables and having people speak.

Plan a party or gathering to celebrate the life of the loved one at the resident's home. It helps the other residents to grieve and get closure.