

# Comfort Care

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As a caregiver you may need to provide for all aspects of your loved one's or friend's comfort. In addition to ensuring your loved one's physical comfort, you can also provide emotional and spiritual comfort.

Your loved one or friend may experience emotional and spiritual pain. They are experiencing many losses including the loss of control over their own life. It is important for you to continue to explain what is happening with your loved one or friend's care, condition, and any other changes. Talk with a social worker, clergy, or spiritual caregiver to help you find resources for additional emotional and spiritual support.

Take some time each day to talk to your loved one or friend about their feelings. Be patient and listen to what they want to share with you. Whatever feelings they have - let them know that they have a right to feel that way; do not try and talk them out of their feelings. Your loved one or friend may wish to discuss their fears or concerns with someone else - encourage them to do so. Offer to contact a friend, counselor or chaplain, and give them privacy when they discuss these issues with another.

The following suggestions are for you, the caregiver to help you enhance your loved one's quality of life and are some examples of providing emotional and spiritual support.

## **Meal times**

Meal times can be pleasant social events, when you can be together and talk. If your loved one or friend is confined to bed, you can sit and talk while he or she eats and bring a tray in for you. There are a host of eating utensils and accessories that make eating easier for persons with disabilities.

Use an attractive plastic tablecloth or place mats that are easy to clean and a towel, apron or other covering for your loved one or friend's clothes, if there is a tendency to spill food. Use light-weight, plastic easy-grip glasses, or cups with handles. If there is a lot of spillage, try a drink holder with a lid and plastic straw insert.

Consider having a vase of flowers on the table or next to the bed, if your family member or friend is confined to bed, and open the curtains and let the sun shine in.

## **Entertainment, Entertaining and Travel**

The following is a list of activities that can also enhance the quality of life of your loved one. These suggestions may be activities that your loved one will look forward to sharing with you and others.

- Check the TV listings and choose your favorite programs to watch each day rather than having the TV on nonstop.
- Get large print and talking books from the library and read together.
- Check for special events that are low-cost or free. Invite a friend or family member to join you, preferably one who can drive or help you if your loved one or friend has a disability.
- Go out to lunch or the early- bird specials at restaurants.
- Visit an art-hobby store and see what is available in the way of arts or crafts projects that you can enjoy together.
- Invite family and/or friends for dinner or lunch. If you have limited funds to entertain or do not have time to prepare food, have them over for dessert or snacks; ask each of them to bring something, or to chip in on a carryout meal.
- Plan day trips to local places of interest. Again invite a friend or family member to join you.
- If you have the room, invite family member or friends to come and stay with you for awhile in your home.
- Check colleges, religious organizations, and community centers for free courses and other activities.
- Visit museums, galleries, botanical and zoological parks or a petting zoo.
- If appropriate, get a pet. Your local shelter or Humane Society has many pets available for adoption.
- Get a computer with Internet access so that you can e-mail friends, join in chat rooms, learn about things that are of interest, and enjoy computer games.
- Ask your local Area Agency on Aging about friendly visitor, volunteer, and telephone reassurance programs.
- Many fraternal, religious, and social organizations have activities specifically for older people. This can be a great way to extend your circle of friends and supportive network.