

When you walk to the edge of all the light you have and take that first step into the darkness of the unknown, you must believe that one of two things will happen: There will be something solid for you to stand upon or you will be taught how to fly.

Patrick Overton

Frequently Asked Questions

What happens to the health card after my loved one dies?

Though some families request the health card, we cannot release it to the family. The health card becomes the property of St. Joseph's Lifecare Centre. The Director of Care is responsible for destroying the card.

When do I have to remove my loved one's belongings?

As we are sure you will appreciate there is a long waiting list for rooms at St. Joseph's Lifecare Centre. It is necessary that your loved one's room be emptied within forty-eight hours. If needed, we can provide moving carts and bags to help with this.

What can I do with my loved one's mobility aides?

St. Joseph's Lifecare Centre will be pleased to accept any mobility aides that your family may no longer need such as wheel chairs, walkers, canes etc. They will be cleaned and adapted to another resident as needed.

When do the final bills come in?

You will receive a letter and a final accounting package from St. Joseph's Lifecare Centre at the beginning of the month which follows your loved one's death. If you have been receiving a monthly statement from Remedy's Pharmacy you will receive a final statement from them as well.

Grief & Bereavement Services

These services are offered by St. Joseph's Lifecare Centre through our hospice free of charge. For more information, contact 519.751.7096 Ext 2507.

Donations to St. Joseph's Lifecare Foundation (the official fundraising organization for St. Joseph's Lifecare Centre) have brought this building and program to life.

Ongoing donations are vital to ensure that our residents get the most enhanced, compassionate care that they need and deserve!

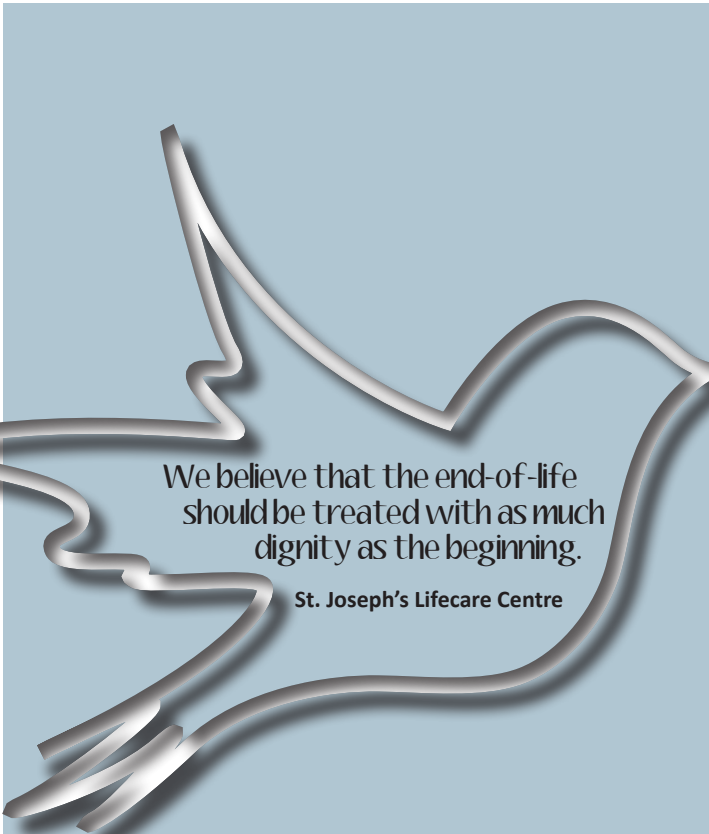
**If you would like to donate to St. Joseph's Lifecare Centre, please contact the Foundation office or give directly on-line at www.sjlc.ca
Thank you for caring!**

St. Joseph's Lifecare Foundation's mailing address is the same as the Lifecare Centre below.



ST. JOSEPH'S LIFECARE CENTRE
99 Wayne Gretzky Parkway
Brantford, ON N3S 6T6
519.751.7096
www.sjlc.ca

St. Joseph's Lifecare Centre Palliative Care



We believe that the end-of-life should be treated with as much dignity as the beginning.

St. Joseph's Lifecare Centre



St. Joseph's Lifecare Centre's Palliative Care

As long as there is someone who loves us we will remain alive. Memories make us immortal. In truth, love will outlive even memories.

Leo F. Buscaglia

When someone we love is nearing death it can be a very difficult time. The end of life is a personal journey and we cannot predict when death will occur. This pamphlet has been produced to help you understand what may happen. The following signs and symptoms may happen over a period of days or even hours. They do not follow any particular order or pattern.

Appetite and Thirst

As death draws near and the body can no longer process food or fluids, your loved one will not feel hunger or thirst. This is normal. Staff can provide swabs and show you how to moisten the mouth. We can provide a cream for the lips or you can bring in a favourite lip balm to apply. This may provide comfort.

Sleep Changes

Your loved one may spend a lot of time sleeping. This is normal. Take advantage of any time when you find he or she is alert to have short conversations if that is desired. Consider playing quiet music or reading a book out loud. Sometimes it may be more appropriate to hold a hand or talk quietly. This may be an opportunity to share memories or create new memories.

Elimination

Another normal change is that urine output and bowel function decreases. You may find that your loved one is no longer in control of their bladder or bowel functions. Staff will keep them clean and comfortable.

Skin Changes

As your loved one nears death you may notice temperature changes to their arms and legs.

Gradually you will notice that they may have colour changes to their skin. At this time the blood circulation is slowing down. Staff can advise you what may comfort your loved one.

Breathing

Their breathing may be in a different pattern; taking fewer breaths, or breaths that may be shallower. There may be times of rapid, panting-type breathing.

Often, as the throat muscles relax, saliva may collect in the throat. This creates noisy respirations. Notify staff if you are concerned about this type of breathing. This does not cause any pain or distress. If needed, there are things staff can do to help decrease the saliva.

Restlessness

Your loved one may look restless such as trying to get out of bed, picking at bedclothes, or reaching out to objects that are not there. Staff will assess this. Speak slowly, calmly and soothingly. Sometimes a familiar voice is all the reassurance that is needed. Restlessness is normal. It could be a result of temperature changes or your loved one being uncomfortable.

Family members may not be recognized. Do not be alarmed. This may be due to a decrease in oxygen circulation in the brain. Staff can provide oxygen via tubes to the loved one's nostrils if it is required. Many people find this comforting. If the oxygen tubing irritates your loved one, it can easily be removed. It is a comfort measure only and will not change your loved one's final course of life.

Spirituality

As end of life nears, your loved one may withdraw and become quieter. The outside world will have less significance. This may be an opportunity for both of you to express your feelings or you may be more comforted by sitting quietly just being together.

Faith

At this time, you may choose to ask for a clergy member to visit. Many dying people are comforted by talking with someone that shares their faith. Speak with the nursing staff to help with this.

Emotional Needs

You may find yourself emotionally and physically tired as you try to support your loved one through the dying process. Remember to take care of yourself too. Talk about your feelings with friends. They can provide support. It's okay to focus time on yourself. Try to share the visiting and other odd jobs with trusted members of your family and family.

Practical Considerations

If possible, speak with the dying person to ask if they have already made final arrangements. It is surprising how many people have already organized their funerals without telling their families. If this has not already been done, then take this time to plan ahead. Speak with a funeral director who can help you make decisions of which your loved one would likely approve. The St. Joseph's Lifecare Centre staff would be glad to assist you to obtaining this contact information.

You may wish to stay overnight with your loved one. Cots and linens are available for you. We advise that only one or two family members stay at a time. Once your loved one dies spend as much time with them as you need. There is no rush to do things. Call people you would like to come such as family or friends. When you are ready, the staff can provide guidance on contacting the funeral home you have chosen.

If you choose, when the funeral home arrives, you may accompany your loved one along our "butterfly pathway" to the vehicle that will take them to the funeral home.