

Caregiver Exercise

We are going to go thru the questions to identify your wishes at End of Life. Please right down your responses as we discuss each question. Don't anticipate the future you, answer the questions in the present, WHAT IS IMPORTANT RIGHT NOW!

If you have a chronic illness, I am assuming you have a good understanding of that illness. It will make answering the questions easier. You can answer for your loved one with Alzheimer's... as though they were answering.

1st Domain - Physical symptoms

List symptoms you are concerned about.

How important is it to have your symptoms under control?

Which of these symptoms are your top 3 concerns?

Are your symptoms being addressed or managed?

2nd Domain - Treatment Preferences

Having a serious illness you may need to make decisions about treatment preferences. If you were to need any of these treatments today, would you want them?

Breathing machine

Dialysis machine

Antibiotics

Feeding Tube

Resuscitation

Artificial Hydration (IV fluids)

Intensive care

3rd Domain - Family

How important is it to you to spend time with the following members of your family?

List the specific family members.

4th Domain – Whole Person – Core Values and needs

How important is it for you to:

- Laugh and smile
- Keep your dignity and self-respect
- Find meaning and purpose to your life
- Be touched or hugged by your loved ones

5th Domain – Life Preparation – Spiritual, financial and medical coverage concerns

How important is it to you to have a visit from a religious or spiritual advisor? If so who?

How important is it to you to avoid strain on your loved ones? How so?

How important are the following to you?

Have personal medical leave?

Your family have medical leave?

Manage your health care cost?

Other?

How important is it to you to feel at peace with what lies ahead?

6th Domain – Moment of Care – from whom and where would you like to receive personal care

If unable to care for yourself, where would you like to have your care given, home, assisted living, nursing home etc

Whom would you like to help with your care if this occurs?

Discussion

Keep a journal

I suggest you maintain a journal of events. Before you take your loved one to the doctor's office summarize the events or changes that have occurred since the last visit.

Weight:

If unable to stand on the scale, change in clothing size, decrease food intake (be specific), decrease in water intake, difficulty swallowing (coughing, keeps food in her mouth and won't swallow).

Ability to walk:

Walks unassisted

Able to stand from a sitting position

Walks a certain distance then becomes short of breath

Ability to do ADLs

Feed self

Dress self

Walk and transfer

Bath self

Continence - bowel and bladder

Toileting

Besides Dementia

Does she/he have any other chronic illnesses; i.e heart disease, kidney disease?

Have you noticed new symptoms?

Is she/he experiencing agitation, paranoia, delirium?

New problems or medical events since the last visit

Falls

Infections, upper respiratory or urinary tract infections

Skin breakdown

ER or Hospital visits? Why? Did treatment help? Did you notice any changes in her/his level of activity after the medical event?

Since your last visit with the doctor, have you noticed a significant change? If so, how?

Helpful Resources:

www.fivewishes.com

www.medicare.gov

Alzheimer's Association

Hospice and Palliative Care Groups - in person or Facebook