

to  My Soul

# End-of-Life Care and Legacy Building



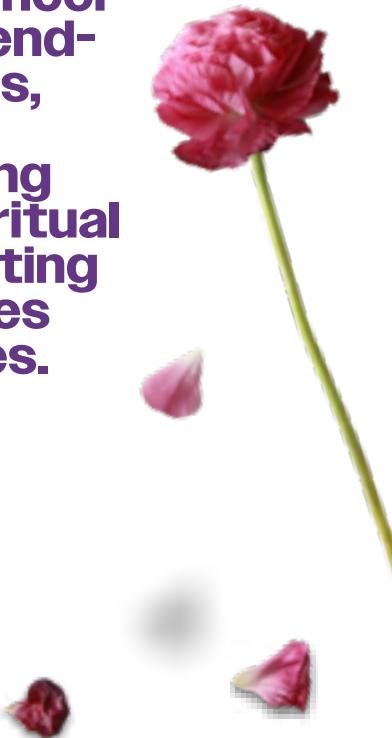
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**ENGAGE**   
ESGO European Network of Gynaecological  
Cancer Advocacy Groups

# OBJECTIVE



**Support women facing advanced gynaecological cancer in understanding end-of-life care options, communicating their wishes, finding emotional and spiritual comfort, and creating meaningful legacies for their loved ones.**



What do I do now?

# 01



Is this even real?

UNDERSTANDING  
END-OF-LIFE CARE

What are my options?



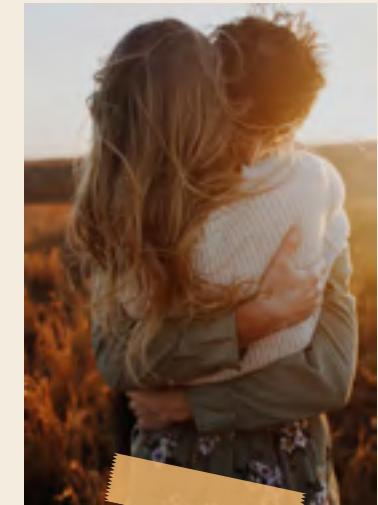
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**Facing the possibility of passing is one of the most vulnerable and emotional moments in anyone's life. It brings difficult conversations, deep fears, and a complex mix of emotions. But it can also be a time of deep connection, reflection, and love.**

End-of-life care is not about giving up. It is about prioritizing comfort, dignity, and personal choice.

It includes physical, emotional, spiritual, and practical support for both patients and their loved ones.

There is no one way to prepare for this time. Everyone's needs, beliefs, and wishes are different. What matters most is that your voice is heard and your values are honoured.



I will decide what is best for me...



## WHAT ARE YOUR CARE OPTIONS?

**Understanding the different types of care available can help you make informed decisions:**

# 02



### Palliative care

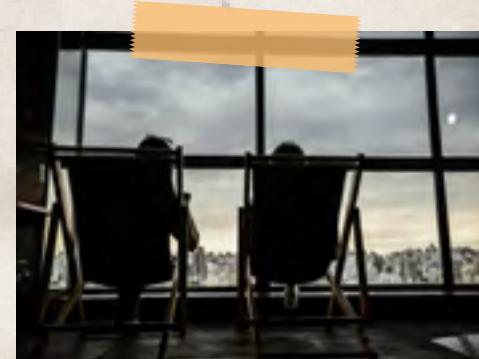
focuses on relief from pain, symptoms, and emotional distress at any stage of illness — not only at the end of life. It can be provided alongside treatments aimed at prolonging life.

### Hospice care

is typically offered when curative treatment is no longer pursued, with the focus shifting entirely to comfort. Hospice teams provide medical care, emotional support, and help for families at home, hospitals, or specialized facilities.

### Advance care planning

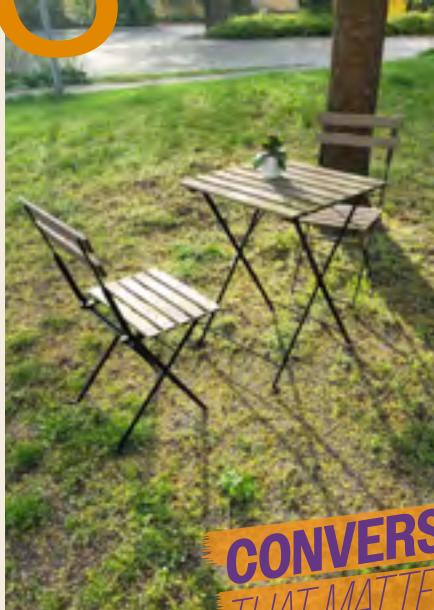
involves making decisions about your future health care preferences. This can include creating a living will, choosing a healthcare proxy, and discussing what quality of life means to you.



**PLANNING AHEAD IS A WAY OF TAKING CONTROL DURING A TIME THAT OFTEN FEELS UNCERTAIN. IT ALLOWS YOUR LOVED ONES AND MEDICAL TEAM TO RESPECT YOUR VALUES AND WISHES, EVEN WHEN YOU MAY NOT BE ABLE TO EXPRESS THEM.**

# 03

I need to tell you...



**Talking about dying is hard, but avoiding the conversation can create even more fear and uncertainty. Opening up about your feelings and wishes helps your family prepare emotionally and practically.**



## You might start by saying:

I've been thinking about what matters most to me right now...

If things become difficult, I'd want you to know my preferences.

This is not easy to talk about, but I need you to hear me.

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## Let your loved ones know:

- **What kind of care you want—and don't want.**
- **Who you would like to make decisions for you if needed.**
- **How you'd like to be comforted or supported.**
- **Your thoughts on being at home, in hospital, or in hospice.**



**IF SPEAKING FEELS TOO HARD, CONSIDER WRITING A LETTER OR USING RESOURCES LIKE CONVERSATION GUIDES OR SUPPORT FROM A THERAPIST OR CHAPLAIN.**

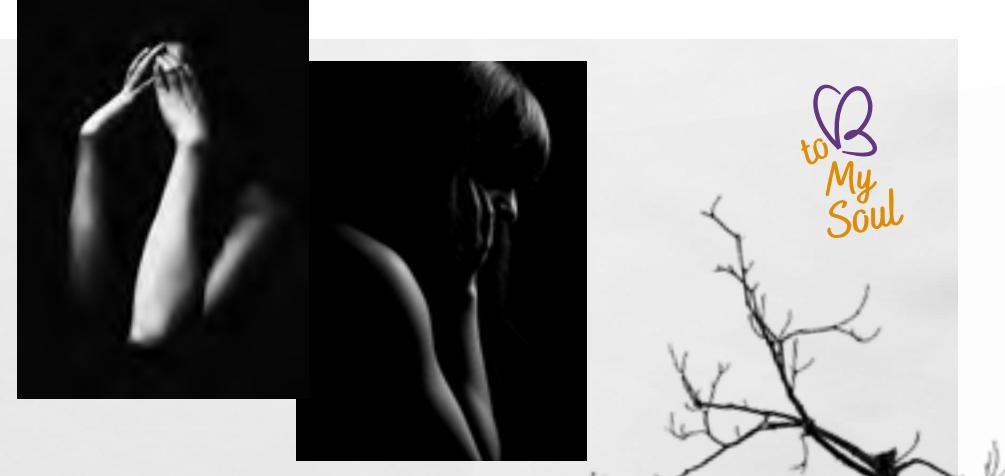
I feel everything and nothing at the same time...  
...and that is normal.

# 04



**COPING WITH**  
EMOTIONS, GRIEF &  
SPIRITUAL QUESTIONS

**There's no right way to feel during this phase — grief, fear, anger, peace, hope, and sadness can all coexist.**



At times, you may feel helpless, frustrated, or deeply alone. You may experience moments of resentment, despair, or even emotional numbness. **These are not signs of weakness.** They are honest, human responses to an unimaginable situation. Let yourself feel them without judgment.

For many, the deepest fear isn't about their own death, but about those they will leave behind.

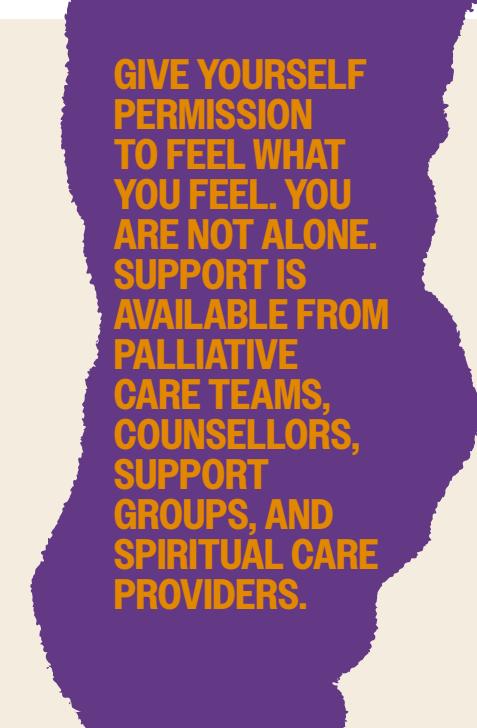
You may find yourself wondering how your loved ones will cope, how they'll be supported, or how their lives will go on without you. This concern is rooted in love — and it can be one of the most heart-wrenching parts of the end-of-life process. Acknowledging this fear, and speaking openly with your loved ones, can help provide comfort and connection for everyone involved.





## Common emotional experiences:

- Worrying about loved ones
- Fear of pain or loss of dignity
- Regret, unfinished business, or guilt
- Feeling like a burden
- Longing for peace or closure



## You may find comfort in

- Talking with a therapist or spiritual guide
- Practicing relaxation or mindfulness
- Embracing prayer, rituals, or other forms of connection to your faith
- Being in nature, listening to music, or creating art
- Letting go of things you cannot control

**GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO FEEL WHAT YOU FEEL. YOU ARE NOT ALONE. SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE FROM PALLIATIVE CARE TEAMS, COUNSELLORS, SUPPORT GROUPS, AND SPIRITUAL CARE PROVIDERS.**

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**This is also a time to let others in — to receive love, support, and presence. Letting people help you is an act of courage, not weakness.**

## Involving Your Loved Ones

Your illness affects those around you in profound ways. Family and friends may feel helpless, scared, or unsure of how to support you. Letting your loved ones in and giving them roles — whether practical or emotional — can provide comfort to you and to them.

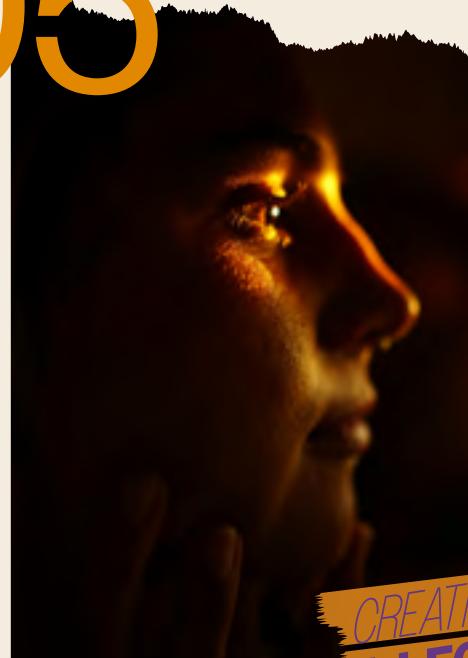


## Ways they can help

- Being present and listening
- Helping with daily care or decision-making
- Holding space for difficult emotions without trying to fix them
- Honouring your wishes, even when they feel afraid

**ALSO CONSIDER CREATING SPACE FOR SAYING GOODBYE — THROUGH CONVERSATIONS, HUGS, LETTERS, OR QUIET TIME TOGETHER. THIS CAN BE HEALING FOR EVERYONE.**

# 05



CREATING  
A LEGACY

**Even in the face of death, you can leave something meaningful behind — something that carries your voice, your love, and your wisdom.**

I want you to know...

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## Legacy activities can include:

- Writing letters or recording messages for loved ones
- Making a scrapbook or journal of your life story
- Planting a tree or creating art that reflects your spirit
- Sharing family recipes, traditions, or advice
- Writing cards for future moments such as birthdays, weddings, and graduations



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## Legacy Box

One powerful idea is preparing a “legacy box” — a package containing letters, photos, keepsakes, or gifts for loved ones. These deeply personal offerings provide comfort, connection, and a sense of your continued presence in the lives of those you love.

Legacy boxes can carry your essence and comfort into the future, becoming a precious way for those who love you to continue feeling your presence and your love.





## Dignity therapy

You might also consider “dignity therapy” — a guided conversation with a trained professional that helps you reflect on your life, values, and what you wish to share with your loved ones.

This process can result in a written document that can become a treasured legacy — capturing your voice, memories, and messages of love. It's a way to be remembered not just for your illness, but for who you are and what truly matters to you.

**What you create doesn't have to be grand — it only needs to be real. Your words, your presence, and your memories will matter more than you know.**



You matter!!

**Even now—especially now—your life holds meaning.**



Who you are is not defined by your illness or how much time you have left. Your love, your relationships, your laughter, and your strength will all continue to make a difference.

This time is not about giving up. It is about choosing how to live — fully, consciously, and with heart. It's about being together in meaningful presence and finding peace in connection with those you love.

**You are not alone.  
You are not forgotten.  
You are held in care,  
respect, and love.**



# Affirmations

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I am still me, even in this phase of life.

I choose comfort, connection, and peace.

My wishes deserve to be heard and respected.

I offer love to those around me and allow them to love me back.

I am creating meaning, even now.

I am still me.

I offer love.

I let go of what I cannot control and find strength in what I can.

I trust that my presence, my voice, and my story matter.

I allow myself to rest, to be held, and to be at peace.

I live with intention, even in my final days.

I leave behind more than things — I leave behind love.