- Serenity and inner peace;
- Sharing good times with family and friends;
- Passing a legacy of strength and courage on to those they leave behind.

It is important to talk about feelings, concerns and goals. For more information or support, contact the London Regional Cancer Program's Palliative Care Team. They are there to support you through this journey.

For more information on Palliative Care Services within the Southwest Region:

LRCP Palliative Care Services
519-685-8500 ext 53257

South West CCAC
519-641-5438

You may also contact the Community Care Access Centre that is closest to your community.

" To Cure Sometimes
To Relieve Often
To Comfort Always"

(origin. 15th century France)

Southwest End-of-Life
Care Network

Patient Information
Understanding Palliative Medicine / Palliative Care

London Health Sciences Centre
London Regional Cancer Program

790 Commissioners Road East
London, Ontario   N6A 4L6
519-685-8600
www.lhsc.on.ca/About_Us/LRCP/

Understanding Palliative Medicine/ Palliative Care

The concept of Palliative Medicine is not well understood by the public and many health care professionals. Many times it is confused with hospice care and supportive care.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to give a general overview of the purpose and goals of Palliative Medicine/Palliative Care.

What is Palliative Care?

Palliative Care is a term that is used to describe the professionals who work as a team to support people who cannot be cured of their illness. This team consists of physicians, nurses, social workers, spiritual care specialists, and others. They focus on relief of suffering by meeting the physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual needs of the person and their family.

Many times, a person diagnosed with a life threatening illness has a hard time finding meaning and purpose in life. Palliative Care providers can help the person and their family address issues, expectations, needs, hopes, and fears. When receiving palliative care, many people experience an improved quality of life and reduced anxiety once symptoms have been well managed.

What is Palliative Medicine?

Maintaining a person's comfort and dignity is the major focus of Palliative Medicine.

Palliative Medicine provides care, comfort and support to individuals and families who are living with or dying from an illness. Its purpose is to relieve suffering in order to improve a person's quality of life. Palliative medicine provides medical treatments that focus on symptoms rather than on curing the illness.

What are the treatment goals of Palliative Medicine?

Rather than curing a person from a disease, the goal of Palliative Medicine is to help relieve the symptoms the person may have. These symptoms can come from the disease itself, or from treatments that are used to treat the disease. Medication, radiation therapy, and other complementary therapies are used to manage many different symptoms. Some of these symptoms include:

- Pain;
- Shortness of breath;
- Nausea/vomiting;
- Fatigue;
- Loss of appetite;
- Depression and anxiety.

When death is imminent, treatments are provided so that a person can die in a peaceful and dignified way.

How is information shared?

The team at the London Regional Cancer Program will support both the individual and the family members. Information about a person's illness will be given in a supportive and compassionate manner. In sharing information, people's wishes will be respected in terms of how much inform-ation they want and the manner in which they want to receive it.

As a person's goals, needs and expectations change, the services provided by Palliative Care professionals will also be changed in order to address these issues.

Where can Palliative Care Services be provided?

Palliative Care can be offered anywhere a person faces a life-threatening illness. It can be provided at home, in hospital, in outpatient clinics, in long term care facilities and in other specialized units.

Hope is always there...

When a person realizes that a cure cannot happen, it is possible to reframe hope to include realistic goals. These goals can include: