

# END-OF-LIFE CARE FOR DEATH WITH DIGNITY!

*In the end, it's not the years in your life that count.*

*It's the life in your years... Abraham Lincoln*

## WHAT TO KNOW!

- ❖ Although difficult, many people are now facing decisions about death and dying because of medical advances that are prolonging people's lives
- ❖ As people, we tend to plan: our schooling, our work, our family, our vacations, and our finances yet most of us do not plan for the end of our lives
- ❖ Decisions about dying and medical care are often made when the family is most vulnerable, emotional, and in need of comfort and support
- ❖ Thinking about our own or our loved one's deaths is quite difficult and emotional; we tend to avoid those decisions yet planning ahead can ease the burden
- ❖ Making end-of-life care decisions when healthy allows one to maintain their values, make the right choices for themselves, and unburdens family members
- ❖ Considering end-of-life decisions requires facing any fears one might have about being in pain, losing one's dignity, losing one's memory, not being able to communicate to others, being unconscious, and leaving family and loved ones behind
- ❖ When making these decisions, it is important to discuss thoughts, feelings and fears with family members as well as what kind of end-of-life care you want
- ❖ Different types of end-of-life care include:
  - ❖ Curative care is any medical treatment designed to help you live longer
  - ❖ Palliative care helps provide relief from pain and provides support for you
  - ❖ Hospice care provides palliative care for those close to dying
- ❖ Typical questions include:
  - ❖ Who will make health care and financial decisions for you if incapacitated
  - ❖ Will you want to be hospitalized or stay at home if terminally ill
  - ❖ Do you want to be resuscitated
  - ❖ What medical care will you accept and not accept
  - ❖ What happens when a person dies and what decisions will need to be made
- ❖ Tools to communicate one's wishes about future care are called advance directives and consist of living wills and durable powers of attorney for healthcare
- ❖ A living will allows you to write down your wishes about medical treatments to guide your family and doctors at the end of your life when you may not be able to communicate
- ❖ A durable power of attorney for healthcare authorizes a specific person to deal with all medical situations when you cannot speak for yourself
- ❖ Other questions to consider include whether to donate your organs and how healthcare expenses will be paid for

## WHAT TO DO!

- ❖ Recognize and accept that death is inevitable and will be a difficult time for family
- ❖ Have a discussion about your thoughts, feelings, and wishes for your end-of-life
- ❖ Allow them to express their feelings
- ❖ Complete a living will and durable power of attorney for healthcare
- ❖ Decide about organ donation, healthcare expenses, and resuscitation orders
- ❖ Seek professional help if you have emotional difficulty making these decisions

## WE CAN HELP!

Call us at **954 755-2885** or email us at [DrKimmel@KimmelPsychology.com](mailto:DrKimmel@KimmelPsychology.com)

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