

The Doula Model of Care

- Summing Up and Planning, can begin any time after a terminal diagnosis. It involves

helping the dying person explore the meaning of their life, create a personal remembrance

project with loved ones, and plan for how the last days of life will unfold. The doula also finds ways to deliver the quality of life the dying person wants—given the circumstances of their life and illness.

- The Vigil begins when the doula companions the dying person and loved ones through the last days and hours of life by providing emotional support, respite and physical assistance for caregivers, an understanding of the signs and symptoms of dying, and advocacy for the wishes and rituals expressed when planning for that point in the illness.
- Reprocessing and Early Grief begin in the days or weeks following the death, when the end-of-life doula supports loved ones in exploring the feelings and events of the dying process and then guides them through the early time of their grieving. This work can occur in as few as one to three sessions or go on for several months.

The doula role may incorporate all of this work or focus on particular aspects of it—whatever works best for everyone involved. Throughout their involvement, as appropriate, the doula will interface with the dying person's medical team to ensure consistency in end-of-life care.



How Doulas Serve

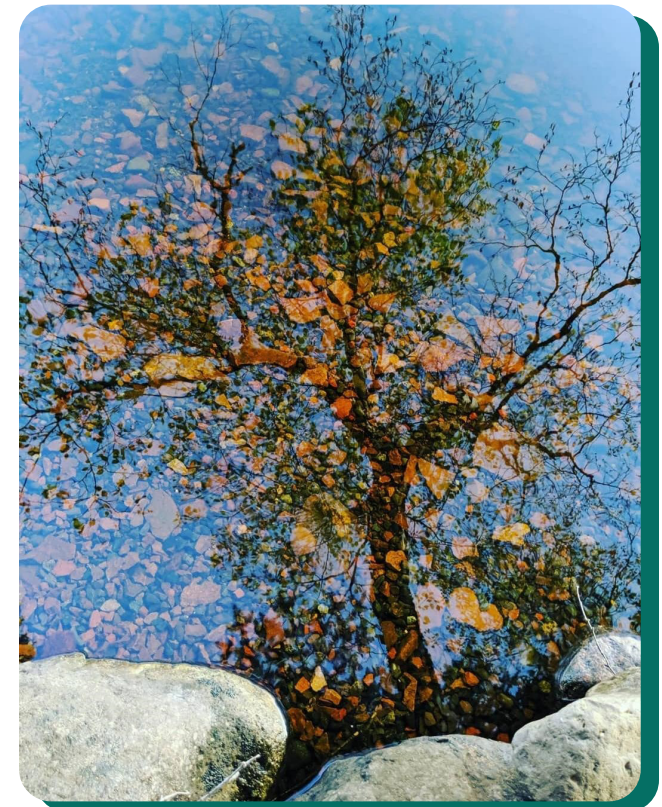
- Provide the opportunity to speak openly and frankly about dying
- Explore the meaning of the dying person's life and legacy
- Bring a focused and intuitive presence to the bedside
- Develop a plan for how the "bedside" and its environment will look, feel and sound
- Incorporate traditions or create new rituals to mark special moments
- Encourage appropriate ways of touching and caressing the dying person
- Assist with physical and practical care to ease the burden on caregivers
- Provide respite for exhausted caregivers
- Explain the signs and symptoms of the dying process when requested.
- Process the emotions and experiences with loved ones
- Support the spiritual practices of all involved
- Guide people through the early stages of grieving

Doulas are transforming the end of life experience so it brings greater meaning and sacredness to every dying person and their loved ones.

A Better Death

The Doula Approach
Transforming the Way People Die

A Better Death, LLC
Cook County Minnesota



Picture Courtesy Jean Skeels

Values

Empowering Individuals to Make Choices

The highest expression of service comes from providing what others need to blossom into their best selves. This is at the heart of what we offer and the way we serve the dying and their families.

Listening Deeply

We all long to be seen and heard. Listening to each other with an open heart guides how we determine the path ahead and how we honor the wealth of everyone's voices, from everyone's truths, and everyone's cultures.

Creating Safe and Respectful Space

We believe in the transformative and healing power of a non-judgmental presence. When we meet people where they are, we create a container big enough to hold whatever comes, open to whatever could be.

Advocating Courageously

Advocacy is essential to the end-of-life doula role. We carry this value to serve at every bedside. This may require questioning our overly medicalized healthcare system, ultimately working to change the broader public discourse and its policies around the inequities in end-of-life care.

Compassionate Support

Empathy requires feeling your way into another's experience. It connects compassion to care without trying to fix from the outside. This is a primary tenet of doula work. It is fundamental to how we understand and support each other. It is also the first step—often the most difficult—in addressing harm.

Accessibility

We are committed to making our services accessible to all.

Join Us at the Death Café

Fourth Thursday of Every Month

6:30 PM

<https://www.facebook.com/A-Better-Death-103391711934978>

Cook County Doulas

Jean is a yoga teacher, life coach, writer, and end of life doula. She is passionate about creating transformational experiences and moving people toward a more conscious, compassionate, and fully expressed life, which includes the journey at end of life. She is inspired endlessly by nature, and lives by her motto, "Beauty is." jmskeels@hotmail.com, (443) 643-5427



Suzanne has taught and loved youth with different learning abilities, gardening, laughing, grandchildren, reading and watching mysteries, love goopy and rich deserts, but above all, I love people. suzannesherman@hotmail.com, (218) 287-1536



Margy has 27 years as a massage/bodyworker, is a homeopath, and facilitator of women's intuition and leadership programs. Her core belief is that wisdom lies within us, we have only to listen, and to love. Improvisational theatre led the way for me to explore, with others, ways to transform our world. margy@boreal.org, (218) 343-7770



Pat is a sales professional with a passion for helping people succeed. She has an undergrad degree in journalism, a masters in leadership and as she ages, a healthy disregard for rules. She became a Death Doula after assisting family members at end of life and finding she has a lot to learn. She also makes a mean red sauce. pcampanaro@gmail.com (651) 336-2964



Who We Are

An end-of-life doula supports a person who is transitioning to death, and also their loved ones, through the dying process. Doulas can become involved at any point in a person's journey toward death.

Doulas provide

- Emotional, spiritual, and physical support to everyone involved in this process.
- Doulas listen deeply to the concerns, fears, hopes, and life stories of the dying person and their loved ones, to bring them peace at the end of life.
- The doula holds the space for the kind of dying experience that honors who the ill person is and has been in their life, and helps them live with purpose up to the final breath.

"Doula" is a Greek word, which in ancient times referred to a woman of service. The end-of-life doula approach is based on the birth doula model. At its core, this model of care is about open-hearted service. The doula meets with the dying person (and their loved ones) where they are, emotionally and spiritually.

The doula assists all involved to find ways to live their dying as best as can be - for them. At the same time, the doula will utilize their experience and expertise to offer an expanded view of dying that can bring greater meaning and comfort to this intense process.

