



CAROLINA  
CARING



# NAVIGATING HOSPICE CARE:

**A Guide for Caregivers**

# EMBRACING THE ROLE OF A CAREGIVER

## THE EMOTIONAL JOURNEY OF CAREGIVING

Becoming a caregiver for a loved one entering hospice care is a profound and emotional journey. It's natural to feel a mixture of fear, sadness, confusion, and even anger—and providing emotional support to someone facing the end of their life while going through your grief journey can be very difficult. This ebook is designed to provide the support and information you need to navigate this challenging time with compassion and confidence.



## UNDERSTANDING THE HOSPICE CARE PROCESS

Hospice is a type of palliative healthcare – that is, care that supports the quality of life for someone with a serious illness who is unlikely to survive. The term “hospice” is often confused with the place where this care is provided. Hospices are usually units in hospitals or long-term care homes. People often think of them as places only for dying, when the intention of hospice care is to keep someone comfortable and happy.



# EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVERS

## MANAGING A RANGE OF EMOTIONS

Caregiving can evoke a spectrum of emotions, from love and tenderness to frustration and grief. While you'll feel an abundance of tenderness for your loved one who is entering hospice care, you'll also find yourself frustrated and grieved by their condition. Allow yourself to feel these emotions without bottling them inside. Strategies like journaling, talking to a trusted friend, or seeking professional counseling can help you manage these emotions constructively.

### ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR EMOTIONS

- **Cherish the moments of love and tenderness:** If there are moments of affection – hugging, kissing, holding hands, etc – these are moments of state stabilization and can give you and your loved one something to look forward to during the day.
- **Frustration:** Remember that feeling frustrated is not a sign that you're a bad caregiver. It is, instead, a typical reaction to the difficulties and uncertainties of caregiving.
- **Grief:** You are experiencing anticipatory grief. Some caregivers grieve before their loved one is actually gone. You may miss the person or relationship you once knew and mourn for what's to come. Acknowledge the grief and allow yourself to grieve at your own pace.

### COPING STRATEGIES

- **Journaling:** Writing down your thoughts and feelings is a cathartic way to process information. Keeping a journal can help you reflect and gain insight into your experiences by moving information through your emotions and into thought.