

### **Questions**

1. *What information is important to know about this illness and what will likely happen to over time?*
  - *What can we expect in the coming (months, years, etc.)?*
  - *How do other illnesses affect the different symptoms we might see?*
2. *How will we know when the person is entering in the terminal stages of the disease?*
3. *What symptoms will the individual likely have?*
  - *Can anything be done for the symptoms we might see?*
  - *Speak up about your concerns*
4. *How are the different organ systems working?*
  - *What about the gut/GI tract? Can food and nutrients be absorbed?*
    - *If the answer is NO - will it get better?*
  - *What about the kidneys? Are they working well?*
    - *If the answer is NO – will they get better?*
5. *Would any attempts at resuscitation be successful? If not – can you explain why?*
6. *Palliative Care: ask if there is a palliative care service available (in the hospital or in the community).*

## Navigating Sickness and Dying

### Resources

US Conference of Catholic Bishops. Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services. Part Five: Issues in care for the seriously ill and dying. 2009; 29-33. Available at <http://www.usccb.org/about/doctrine/ethical-and-religious-directives/>

- Directives: 55 – 61.

Maryland Catholic Conference. Comfort and Consolation: Care of the sick and dying. Available at: <http://www.mdccathcon.org/publications>

- From section on “Principles at the Heart of the Churches Teachings”:
  - 5. No patient is obliged to accept or demand useless medical interventions. (pg. 9-10)
  - 6. There is no moral obligation to employ useful but excessively burdensome medical interventions; however, the meaning of “excessively burdensome” must be properly understood. (pg. 10-11)
- The Terminal Patient Near Death (pg. 20)
- “Do Not Resuscitate” Directives (p. 22)

### Websites:

#### 1. Disease-specific websites

- Information on stages of illness and what to expect
- Examples:
  - American Heart Association: <http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/>
  - American Cancer Society: <http://www.cancer.org>
  - Alzheimer’s Association: <http://www.alz.org>

#### 2. [www.getpalliativecare.org](http://www.getpalliativecare.org)

- Many resources, information and links including:
- Planning for serious illness: Available at <http://www.getpalliativecare.org/quick-facts/planning-for-serious-illness-advocating-for-loved-ones-2/>