



End-of-Life Conversations

Information for Mater patients
and their loved ones.



For people who are facing the end of their life and the people caring for them

Everybody understands death differently, depending on their own life experiences and their beliefs about death. Talking about death and dying can be uncomfortable for many of us, but it is also important. Mater will respect your personal values, beliefs and feelings about death.

Talking early about death and dying may be helpful. Patients, families and loved ones can use this brochure to help start the conversation, particularly if you don't feel you have the words. Just sharing this brochure with someone and saying, "I was reading this and it has been making me think..." might be enough to get the conversation going.

Who can I talk to about the questions I have?

Mater employs pastoral care practitioners, Advance Care Planning Coordinators, Palliative Care doctors, Clinical Nurse Consultants and social workers to help you consider your options for end-of-life care.

Some Mater People also have a lot of experience talking about death and dying. We are open to the conversation, so if you or a loved one asks us about death and dying we will do our best to answer your questions and provide support, or we will offer to find someone who can.



The important thing to remember is that no one will judge you. There are no wrong questions, thoughts or feelings.

A Catholic tradition of compassionate care

Mater is a Catholic healthcare organisation with a long tradition of providing compassionate care. We welcome and respect people of all faiths, cultures, traditions and spiritualities.

Mater is committed to excellence in end-of-life care as set out in the Code of Ethical Standards for Catholic Health and Aged Care services in Australia.

We assist the people in our care to die in comfort and with dignity. Mater does not facilitate or participate in the services provided for in the Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021 (QLD).

Some answers to questions you may not be comfortable asking

Not everyone is comfortable or experienced in talking about the thoughts, feelings and questions that might occur around the end-of-life. We have provided some brief answers to help our staff, you and people close to you as you start to consider end-of-life options.

What if I am afraid of death and dying?

Being afraid of death and dying is normal. For most of our lives we wake up every day thinking about life. The idea of life ending brings many thoughts and feelings. Knowing there are people around who can support and be with us is important.

Will Mater assist me if I want to die?

As a Ministry of the Catholic church, Mater adheres to a Code of Ethics that values the dignity of life in all its forms.

We do not facilitate or participate in the services defined in the VAD Act 2021 (QLD). However, we will not impede your access to VAD and will provide you with information and support services to meet your requests.

Mater offers high-quality palliative care from expert practitioners who relieve pain and symptoms associated with illnesses that limit life.

Palliative care provides holistic supportive care to people and their families. It does not mean prolonging life where treatment will not help or goes against your will.

Our ethic of healing includes commitments to:

- Heal and never to harm
- Relieve pain and other physical and psychosocial symptoms of illness and suffering
- Withdraw treatments when they are futile, overly burdensome or when a person no longer wants them and gives informed refusal of these treatments
- Never abandon the people in our care



What should someone do to prepare for death and dying?

Sometimes practical matters are the best way to explore how you feel about dying.

Saying goodbye and dealing with legal wills and funeral preferences are just a few of the things people might do before they die.

Some people want to be clear with their families, friends and the people caring for them about what will happen to them at the end of their life and after they die. These are important conversations that you can ask our staff to help with.

*Great
tenderness in
all things*

Catherine McAuley
Foundress, Sisters of Mercy

More people you can talk to and how they can help

If you are ready to talk to someone about care at the end-of-life, the following people may be able to help and guide you:

- Pastoral care practitioners
- Advance Care Planning Coordinators
- Palliative Care doctors
- Palliative Care Clinical Nurse Consultants
- Social workers
- Family and friends.
- Allied Health personnel

'The Heart to Heal, the Strength to Grow' artwork by David Williams of Gilimbaa.

Mater acknowledges that our services are provided on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands and pay respect to their Elders – past, present and emerging.

