



ILTCCABC Education Session Overview (SLO) Supporting Loved Ones at the End of Life in Long-Term Care

November 18, 2025

Summary

End-of-Life Doula Support Education

The Independent Long-Term Care Councils Association of BC hosted an educational session featuring end-of-life doulas Leanne Cohen and Corey Bretz. They emphasized the importance of normalizing the dying process, reducing fear, and facilitating communication between families, staff, and residents. The session highlighted the role of family councils in strengthening end-of-life care culture.

Understanding and Accepting the Dying Process

Importance of discussing and accepting death, emphasizing that naming reality can help reduce personal suffering. Family Councils could be helpful in supporting this reality by encouraging families to plan for long-term care to be the final place of residence and make it feel like home. Use the resources provided to map the dying process, outlining three phases: before, during, and after death, with specific actions for each phase. Understand common signs of active dying and the importance of being present for comfort and connection.

Advanced Care Planning and Communication

Most essential!

My Voice document, a tool available in British Columbia for documenting a person's beliefs, values, and wishes regarding their care. Effective communication during the dying process requires proactive and kind communication strategies, suggesting phrases that can help facilitate these conversations.



End-of-Life Comfort Care Strategies

Comfort measures are taken for loved ones at the end of life, emphasizing the shift from aggressive life-prolonging measures to focusing on comfort and dignity. Suggestions: creating a soothing environment, using touch, music, and familiar scents, and engaging in storytelling and rituals. What are a dying person's preferences and needs? Offer support through activities like legacy projects and mouth care, and ensure a vigil schedule that includes solitude and privacy. Rituals and ceremonies should align with the dying person's values and beliefs.

Family End-of-Life Care Planning

Manage (even expect) family disagreements during end-of-life care. Have a plan in place for when a loved one dies. Use respectful communication, self-care, and use available resources like social workers and doulas to navigate difficult decisions.

Supporting Grief in Long-Term Care

Complexities of grief require families, staff, and community members in long-term care facilities to find and use resources during end-of-life processes: a grief support system, including resources like grief groups, counseling, and memorial events, and encouraged family councils to advocate for end-of-life education and policies. Family councils play a role in shaping a culture of compassion.

End-of-Life Care in Long-Term Facilities

The meeting focused on end-of-life care in long-term facilities, with Lisa, Lianne, Cory, and Robyn discussing procedures for managing a deceased resident's belongings, staffing during the dying process, and the role of family councils in advocating for better practices. They emphasized the importance of advance planning, including discussing room-clearing procedures and staffing arrangements with care homes, and highlighted the value of local hospice volunteers in supporting families. The group also addressed the need for clear communication with staff during the dying process, acknowledging their desire to participate in saying goodbye.



ILTCCABC

Independent Long-Term Care Councils Association of BC
Your provincial long-term care councils' association



RESOURCES:

Download Summary - Supporting a Loved One Through Dying in Long-Term Care From End of Life
Douglas Cory Bretz & Lianne Cohen Visit <https://www.endoflifechoices.ca/supporting-loved-ones-ltc-summary>

Province of BC End of Life Care: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/accessing-health-care/home-community-care/care-options-and-cost/end-of-life-care>

My VOICE <https://vancouvercoastalfamilycouncils.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/MyVoice-AdvanceCarePlanningGuide.pdf>

Vancouver Coastal Association of Family Councils: ILTCCABC Education Resources
Resources 3a,b and 4a,b,c are all a series on advanced care planning
<https://vancouvercoastalfamilycouncils.ca/resources/regional-association-resources/>

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