



# Hospice Highlights

## **What is a Death Doula?**

By Anika

Somehow, we believe by not thinking about death it will keep us safe and away from it but in fact the denial takes away the discovery of the meaning of life of our loved ones. By accepting the inevitable we could explore and preserve a legacy for them. Since we can't interfere with death, we have a chance to find appreciation in the last moments with your loved one under better circumstances rather than a overpowering, painful ending. A death doula functions as a support person for both a dying and their family.

Their involvement may begin well before the death and last for some time afterwards.

Doulas give friends and family members the reassurance that the stages when death is near are normal and doulas "will hold the space" which means that the details around the dying process doesn't overwhelm the dying person or their loved ones. The specific tasks of a doula are to assess the dying person's needs and their families and friends wishes.

Did you know that the last sense that goes in a dying person is hearing? They can hear your last goodbye or the last I love you. Other assessments might include

what does the dying person feel, hear, smell or see as they are near the end of life?

Do the family members need some rest, an ear to listen or a cup of tea? These are some of the things a doula is looking out for. Unfortunately, most people die in hospitals or nursing homes, which is sometimes necessary, but most likely they die there because there is no one available who understands the dying journey. We hope that death doulas will become a normal part in society and reintroduce this profession as we get more comfortable and accept this part of life - at the end of life.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia and Northern Health.



**Terrace Hospice Society**

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