

Resources On Death and Dying
With sections for: Funerals and Burials; Swiss Death-With-Dignity
Agencies;
Books and Articles on Dying; and a List of Resources Compiled by East
Bay End of Life Doula Network
Compiled by Sue Reamer - August 2024 for OLOC

Aging With Dignity agingwithdignity.org
Five Wishes www.FiveWishes.org

For 25 years, Aging with Dignity's Five Wishes advance care planning program has helped improve end-of-life care for millions of individuals and families across the nation. Their Five Wishes form is easy to use and is available for \$5 and functions as an Advance Directive that uses more ordinary language and focuses more on personal and spiritual priorities.

Compassion and Choices compassionandchoices.org

Compassion and Choices is an organization that promotes physician-assisted "right-to-die" legislation and helps people plan well during a serious illness or for the end of life. They empower people to get the care they want during a serious illness or at the end of life by offering excellent resources such as an End-of-life Decisions Guide and Toolkit and a Covid-19 Toolkit, in addition to advocating for right-to-die legislation. Currently medical aid in dying is authorized in ten states: Oregon, Washington, Montana, Vermont, California, Colorado, Washington DC, Hawaii, New Jersey and Maine.

Emory University Center for Ethics CRITICAL *Conditions* Planning Guide
ethics.emory.edu

The Emory Center for Ethics and the Healthcare Ethics Consortium (HEC) are the new hosts of the CRITICAL *Conditions*® Planning Guide. Advance Care Planning allows each of us to consider what care and treatment we would like to receive if we are not able to speak for ourselves when healthcare decisions need to be made. In order to plan we need access to information about the kind of decisions that we may face as well as resources to assist us in considering our values and treatment preferences. The CRITICAL *Conditions*® Planning Guide provides a pathway for such planning. The CRITICAL *Conditions* Planning Guide and Individual Worksheets are downloadable from their website.

Everplans.com

This website has a free, comprehensive Important Documents Checklist you can download of essential documents, accounts, and types of information you should organize. Page six of this checklist is a one page list for "Legacy/After I'm Gone" items.

Better Exit (in CA) abetterexit.org

Their mission is to broaden California's End of Life Option Act (EOLOA) so that individuals struggling with irremediable suffering have the right to a peaceful death through Medical Aid in Dying.

Exit International **exitinternational.net**

“At Exit, we believe that it is the fundamental human right of every adult of sound mind, to be able to plan for the end of their life in a way that is reliable, peaceful & at a time of their choosing” – Dr Philip Nitschke. Exit International was founded in Australia 1997 by Dr Philip Nitschke under the name the Voluntary Euthanasia Research Foundation (VERF) and rebranded in 2001 to be Exit International. Exit International offers two regularly updated ebooks on various ways to have death with dignity: **The Peaceful Pill Book** and **Going to Switzerland**

Final Exit Network **finalexitnetwork.org**

“You only die once...We're here to make sure you have a choice in the matter.”
Mission: To educate individuals in practical, peaceful ways to end their lives, offer a compassionate bedside presence, and defend their right to choose. Final Exit Network is committed to advancing the social acceptance of an individual's right to comfortably end their own life when faced with intractable suffering or a loss of selfhood through dementia. For fifteen years, Final Exit Network has provided information on painless, reliable and dignified self-deliverance to those who qualify.

The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization **caringinfo.org**

This organization provides free advance directives – a form in which you explain what you want done to save or prolong your life (or not) if you are unable to make decisions for yourself - and instructions for each state on it's website. The directive is intended to advise your treating doctors and representatives in making appropriate choices for you when you cannot. It protects health care professionals and your representative from charges of neglect or mistreatment if they follow your wishes. This website also can be accessed using the internet address nhpco.org

CaringInfo: A Program of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization
caringinfo.org.

During serious illness, **CaringInfo** is here to help you make informed decisions about care and services before a crises. Understanding and discussing topics like [advance directives](#), [palliative care](#), [caregiving](#) and [hospice care](#) may feel overwhelming on top of dealing with a serious or life-limiting illness.

CaringInfo's [guides](#) and [resources](#) are here to help you through the journey you are on and to aid you in understanding the choices you have.

Order of the Good Death **www.orderofthegooddeath.com**

A general resource for ways of thinking about death, for inspiring and informative social media content, and for the resources you need to get your death plans in order. They are advocating for legislation that protects and expands people's ability to have a good death. They are currently creating comprehensive LGBTQ+ end-of-life planning guides for every U.S. state. This

will empower LGBTQ+ people and the people who care about them to make informed choices about their own, or a loved one's, end-of-life care.

Resources for Funerals and Burials

Funeral Consumers Alliance **funerals.org**

We are a non-profit organization empowering you to choose simple, meaningful, affordable after-death arrangements. We advise consumers on how to obtain affordable funeral & burial arrangements. We envision a funeral landscape that no longer includes funeral poverty.

FuneralWise. Prepare. Celebrate. Remember **funeralwise.com.**

Our mission at Funeralwise.com is to help you capably navigate all your funeral experiences. We'll guide you on what to say and what to do. Our job is to make it easier for you, whether you are planning ahead for yourself, making funeral arrangements for a loved one or supporting friends in their loss. We are here to help you prepare, celebrate and remember. Funeralwise.com is an independent service; we do not own funeral home facilities or cemeteries. We have an "arms-length" relationship with the funeral service providers, suppliers and manufacturers whose services and products are featured on our web site. We are a free resource for everything related to funerals.

Green Burial Council **Greenburialcouncil.org**

Our mission is to inspire and advocate for environmentally sustainable, natural death care through education and certification.

This is a nationwide website to learn more about green burial and how to find certified cemetery stewards, funeral professionals, and funerary product sellers who share the commitment to create more sustainable after-death options for you, your community, and the planet.

This website has two maps giving you a quick and easy access to locate providers near you in North America. One map shows Green Burial Council-Certified Cemeteries and Products, and the other map shows Certified Funeral Homes Across North America.

National Home Funeral Alliance **homefuneralalliance.org**

The mission of the NHFA is to educate individuals, families, and communities about caring for their dead. Our *Home Funeral Guide* is available on a pay-what-you-can basis. Topics covered include: Planning a Home Funeral; Building Community; Bodycare at Home; Disposition After a Home Funeral; and Grief & Vigils.

Natural Burial: The Ultimate Back-to-the-Land Movement **NaturalBurialCompany.com**

A "natural burial" reflects the desire for something simpler, something less 'wasteful' of time, money and natural resources. At its core, it cries out for the body's physical return to the earth, without barriers or inhibitions (in the form of non-degradable vaults or metal and plastic coffins) that prevent its transformation back into the elements it's made of. This website describes the natural burial ground proponents and the citizen counterpart, the home funeral movement.

U.S. Funerals: Green Burial Sites. us-funerals.com/funeral-articles/directory-of-green-burial-sites-in-the-united-states.html#.VVI-DVJy6So

Use the Green Burial directory and State Guides to Natural Burial on this website to learn all about Green Burial near you. Currently, there are some 220 natural burial cemeteries in the US. Only a few are designated Conservation Ground burial sites that specifically aim to restore natural habitat. A large number are Natural Burial cemeteries, and then there are hybrid cemeteries. Hybrid cemeteries are existing traditional cemeteries that have adopted a section specifically for green burial.

Resources for Body and Organ Donation

DieSmart diesmart.com/sayinggoodbye/body-organ-donation

Provides information on body, organ, eye and tissue donation with a list of every state's registry website address.

Health Resources & Services Administration organdonor.gov

Information about body, organ and tissue donation. On March 22, 2023, HRSA launched the [Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network \(OPTN\) Modernization Initiative](#) to better serve the needs of patients and families. The website includes demographic information about organ donors, waitlist candidates/registrants, and transplant recipients, as well as organ-specific data such as procured organ transplantation rates and transplant outcomes for several solid organ types.

Medcure medcure.org

Information about whole body donation to medical research.

Swiss Organizations Providing For Medically Assisted Deaths

Dignitas <http://www.dignitas.ch/?lang=en>

One of two organizations in Switzerland that works with non-Swiss people who desire a death with dignity even if they don't have a terminal diagnosis. This is an excellent resource for people with dementia and Parkinson's.

Pegasos Swiss Association pegasos-associaton.com

One of two organizations in Switzerland that work with non-Swiss people who desire a death with dignity even if they don't have a terminal diagnosis. Pegasos, a non-profit based in Basel, Switzerland, believes that it is the human right of every rational adult of sound mind, regardless of state of health, to choose the manner and timing of their death.

Books and Articles on Dying

End-of-life care for the aging LGBT Population. advocate.com/health/2013/12/27/end-life-care-aging-lgbt-population An article in The Advocate on End-of-Life Care for an Aging LGBT Population

Joan Halifax, ***Being with Dying: Cultivating compassion and Fearlessness in the Presence of Death*** (Boston, MA: Shambala Publications inc, 2008). This compelling, wise book – with a Buddhist approach – draws from Halifax’s lifetime working with people at the end of life as a Zen priest, anthropologist and lecturer at Columbia University and other universities. In 1994, she founded the Project on Being with Dying, which has trained hundreds of health care professionals in the contemplative care of dying people.

Thich Nhat Hanh. ***No Death, No Fear and How to Live When a Loved One Dies.*** The Buddhist monk writes beautifully on death and dying and grief.

Greta Christina. ***Comforting Thoughts About Death That Have Nothing to Do With God.*** She is a noted Atheist and lesbian. Great to read interesting insights without a religious overlay.

Engelhart, Katie. ***The Inevitable: Dispatches from the Right to Die.*** She's a journalist who has written about people who want to die.

Yalom, Irvin and Yalom, Marilyn. ***A Matter of Death and Life.*** A beautiful love story. They co-wrote the book after Marilyn got diagnosed with terminal cancer.

Bloom, Amy. ***In Love: A Memoir of Love and Loss.*** The story of a woman who went with her husband to Dignitas in Switzerland after he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's.

Gewande, Atul. ***Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End.*** There is a documentary on YouTube with this title on his work.

Exit International <https://www.exitinternational.net/>. ***The Peaceful Pill Book.*** Discusses in detail various ways to have a death with dignity, legal or not. ***Going to Switzerland.*** These are both 2 year subscription ebooks that are constantly updated.

Ostaseski, Frank. ***The Five Invitations: Discovering What Death Can Teach Us about Living Fully.*** A physician and a Buddhist.

Freedenthal, Stacey. ***Talking to a Loved One with Suicidal Thoughts.*** Her site is www.speakingofsuicide. Stacey is a social work professor and her site is full of wonderful resources for people who may be suicidal and their friends and family. She normalizes suicidal ideation and believes that professional’s typical response (usually overreacting) to someone expressing suicidal ideation can be very damaging.

Resources Compiled by the East Bay End of Life Doula Network, Oakland, CA. March 2024

(Trained Death Doulas provide compassionate support at the end-of-life.)

While this list is somewhat oriented to resources for End-of-Life Doulas, it still has usefulness for anyone concerned about her end-of-life decisions.

Going With Grace training and resources: <https://goingwithgrace.com/>

Going with Grace general Doula Directory: <https://goingwithgrace.com/death-doula-directory/>

Going with Grace “get matched with a Death Doula”: <https://goingwithgrace.com/services/>

Mettle Health general website: <https://mettlehealth.com/>

Mettle Health Services: <https://mettlehealth.com/booking>

National End of Life Doula Alliance (NEDA): <https://www.nedalliance.org/>

International End of life Doula Alliance (INELDA): <https://inelda.org/>

INELDA Directory: <https://inelda.org/find-a-doula/>

A recent article in the Boston Globe (Feb 9,

2024): <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/02/09/opinion/death-doulas-good-death/>

And re: a comment + interest that surfaced in the Zoom Chat during our meeting, here’s general info about alkaline hydrolysis, or “water cremation”:

<https://www.cremationassociation.org/alkalinehydrolysis.html>

And here are the only certified Aquamation/Water Cremation facilities in CA at this time:

White Rose Aqua Cremation (nr San Diego, CA): <https://www.whiteroseaquacremation.com/>

Pacific Interment “flameless cremation” (nr Oakland, CA): <https://interment.com/service/flameless-cremation/>

A few videos that discuss end-of-life matters eloquently:

1) In an archly funny & very personal 18-min discussion of why death doulas matter/can help, [this](#) is a 2018 TEDx talk by Jane Whitlock, who lives and works near Minneapolis, MN

2) A slightly shorter (10 min) [video monologue](#) by this stunningly articulate former Emergency Dept/Palliative Care doctor (Zach Bush, MD), now dedicated to improving soils & farming practices in the US.

3) Here's a [short piece](#) (4-min excerpt from a longer TED Talk) by comedian and television writer, Emily Levine. Her full TED talk is [here](#)

4) A link to the YouTube channel for [Caitlin Doughty](#), a well-trained and funny younger (in her late 30's) funeral director, mortician, and author who has loads of videos under her "[Ask a Mortician](#)" series.