

Death Doulas

What Is a Death Doula?

- Also known as end-of-life doula, end-of-life coach, death midwife, or death coach.
- Death doulas provide physical, emotional, spiritual, and logistical support to both the dying person and their loved ones before, during and after death.
- Doulas differ from hospice care in that they do not provide any medical services. However, they're often an integrated part of hospice teams, providing a vital role in alleviating what medicine alone cannot.
- More and more people are hiring or becoming a death doula. [Read more](#)

What Do They Do?

- **Planning**—As death approaches, Death Doulas help the person prepare for their final stages and find meaning in their life to ease the transition.
- **Dying**—Doulas also ensure that the person is comfortable and that their wishes are being carried out.



- **Grieving**—Death Doulas can provide assistance to grieving family members in the immediate aftermath of death and can aid in sorting out logistical obligations.



Death doula Alua Arthur (above) fosters awareness about the end of life.

“We exist to support people as they answer the question, ‘What must I do to be at peace with myself so that I may live presently and die peacefully?’ And the answers to that question are as unique as we all are.”

— Alua Arthur, death doula and Founder of [Going With Grace](#)

While each person is different, Death Doulas often provide some mix of the following:

- Providing the opportunity to talk openly and honestly about the dying process.
- Alleviating the anxiety, guilt and shame often associated with death and dying.
- Developing a plan for how the person's environment looks, feels, sounds and smells.
- Coordinating with family and friends to evaluate visitation.
- Overseeing 24/7 care alongside healthcare providers like hospice and palliative care.
- Providing education and guidance related to other medical services like do-not-resuscitate orders and healthcare power of attorneys.
- Creating guided meditations and rituals specific to a person's religious faith or spirituality.
- Sitting vigil with a person as they near their final moments.

- Assisting with obituaries and planning funeral services.
- Providing supplemental grief counseling and companionship after someone has died.
- Finding creative ways to honor the person after they've died, which can include the person who's dying as a part of that process and exploring that person's life and legacy.



Legacy Work

- Legacy work is the process of exploring the most meaningful moments of someone's life and finding ways to pass on their legacy. This can range anywhere from putting together scrap books of memories to making those last phone calls and writing those last letters to long-lost friends and siblings. Death doulas guide this process to help people find closure in their final days.



- “I had one gentleman who always wore flannel shirts his whole life. He and I cut the buttons off of his flannel shirts and made bracelets for his granddaughters so that they would have those to remember him after he died.” [Read more](#)
— Anne O'Neill, end of life doula and social worker