

How Cultural Diversity Affects End-of-Life Care

Your cultural views will likely influence your choices about End-of-Life healthcare, including final directives and hospice and palliative care.

Final Decision-Making

The American value of autonomy promotes an individual's right to make his or her own End-of-Life care decisions, often with input from a healthcare provider.

Yet collective End-of-Life decision-making is common in many cultures. For example, some Somalis believe that healthcare decisions should involve the family, with the eldest male as the final decision-maker and spokesperson.

Advance Healthcare Directives (AHDs)

Cultural perspectives on End-of-Life care include completing final directives and managing pain.

An AHD is a legal document that states your final healthcare preferences and identifies a Healthcare Proxy to make medical decisions on your behalf. Appoint a trusted family member or advisor to protect your values, cultural and spiritual beliefs and best interests.

Although ethnic groups differ in their views and use of AHDs, Caucasian and Asian Americans may use AHDs more often than other cultures. Cultures that include the concept of karma may be less inclined toward AHDs.

Pain Management

Culture may affect a person's perspectives on pain management. North American cultures favor hospice and palliative care to manage pain at End-of-Life. Palliative and hospice care focus on relieving suffering and improving quality of life through physical, emotional, and spiritual support to a patient's unique needs. Hospice serves people in the last stages of life and provides grief support for surviving loved ones.

Cambodian cultures value an indirect communication style, so a patient may wait to be offered pain relief rather than asking for it.

Visit: www.culturaldiversity.com/au/resources/practice-guides/palliative-care to learn how cultural diversity affects palliative care, and www.hospicefoundation.org/hic-diversity to learn about cultural diversity with Hospice care.