



Principles for Iona's End-of-life Curriculum

Recognizing that aging and death are closely intertwined, Iona seeks to support older adults and their families throughout the aging process and at their ends of life.

Iona believes that people with disabilities and serious illnesses, including dementia, can—with the right supports—enjoy quality of life, and experience meaning and purpose. We also understand that caregiving, while challenging for family members, is a part of the cycle of life, and that family members experience meaning and purpose as they care for their older family members.

Iona also acknowledges that the time may come when advancing illness can result in pain, disability, or other forms of suffering, and that medical procedures to prolong life may not be the older adult's choice.

The purpose of Iona's End-of-Life programming is to educate older adults, family caregivers, and the public about:

- Frailty and vulnerability in later life
- How to support autonomy, quality of life, and meaning throughout later life
- Options at end of life
- Ways to communicate choices about medical treatment, including:
 - Advance directives
 - Orders for life-sustaining treatment
- The role of palliative care and hospice
- Medical Aid in Dying (DC law)
 - What the law covers
 - How to access services under the law
- The role of:
 - Primary care physicians and geriatricians
 - Palliative care practitioners
 - Care managers
 - Hospice
 - Death doulas
 - Faith community leaders
 - Hospital ethics panels
 - Iona supportive services including care management, adult day, and support groups

Iona seeks to offer this education in an unbiased way to help individual older adults and families make the best choices for each of their unique situations.

