The Provincial Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) Program understands the decisions surrounding MAID are personal and will be experienced differently by every patient and family. Faced with a life-limiting condition you have made the decision to request MAID. You will have likely put considerable thought into this decision, wishing to have some control of how and when you die. As part of the Provincial MAID Program process, you will speak with a physician and/or nurse practitioner who will provide you with key information. The intent of this resource is to share normal thoughts, feelings, experiences, and offer suggestions of important practical and relationship tasks through the MAID experience. The Provincial MAID Program is here to listen and support you and your family and answer any questions you may have. It is okay to ask for help; you do not have to be alone at this difficult time.

### Preparing for Medical Assistance in Dying

Even if you are very sure about your request for MAID and your family is supportive, you may still experience a range of thoughts, feelings, and emotions as you prepare and plan for a MAID death. It is normal to find yourself reflecting on your religious, spiritual, cultural, moral and ethical beliefs and values. Try to make room for these feelings, whatever they may be.

This may be a difficult time in your family relationships; blended families, including divorce, separation, ex-spouses, stepchildren, estranged family members, etc. may be part of your family make-up. Everyone will have their own unique way of coping and moving through this journey. Possible tensions, challenges and disagreements can be expected; this does not mean there is anything wrong with you or your family, even if it can feel that way during such a difficult and emotional time. Remind yourself that even the healthiest of human relationships are imperfect. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness; it is a sign you are aware of your needs and taking care of yourself. Reach out to supports such as spiritual care, social work and counsellors. The MAID Social Worker can also talk to you and your family and offer support.

Anticipatory grief is a natural, expected experience; everyone’s grief is unique and different – there is no one way or right way to grieve. Grief when facing death can be confusing and difficult as you try to balance roles, responsibilities, relationships, attend to important tasks, all while grieving and letting go. Some common feelings you may experience are anger, fear, anxiety, guilt, regrets, joy, relief, peace, sadness, and love.

Disenfranchised grief is a hidden grief you may experience. Grief is not always openly acknowledged or socially supported. Some patients and families talk about feelings of isolation and shame due to the stigma of MAID impacted by cultural or religious norms, values, or beliefs. This can be painful and confusing and affect normal grief before and after death. It is important to find someone you trust to talk about these feelings as your grief is what you say it is, and you deserve to be listened to and supported.
The precious time of weeks, days, final hours of life and death can be both one of the most stressful and special times in our lives; there is no road map or “how-to list”. At any moment, you are doing your best to navigate an unfamiliar experience of preparing for a MAID death. Death is never easy, but patients and families commonly report feeling relief once the subject is brought out into the open. Knowing your wishes before and after death can be helpful to everyone. Do your best to be understanding of each other’s unique journey, while also being kind and caring towards yourself. Make room for differences, allowing everyone to decide how much they feel they can be part of this experience and ask for help and seek support from others.

### Exploring a Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) Death – Things to Consider

When thinking about your MAID death, many thoughts, feelings, and ideas may come to mind about what is important during the time leading up to the day of provision.

**You may wish to consider:**

- Focusing on the people and activities you enjoy and find supportive.
- Visiting special places (family home/farm, places in nature, spiritual places, etc.)
- Talking to your family about your decision for a MAID death and including them as much as you feel comfortable in preparing and planning your death.
- Talking to and preparing children for your death including ways to involve them directly or indirectly.

**Consider relationship matters with family and friends such as:**

- Expressing love, saying thank you, saying goodbye.
- Forgiving others, asking forgiveness, forgiving yourself.
- Expressing regrets or disappointments.
- Sharing stories, life lessons, wisdom, and memories.
- Sharing life joys, passions, accomplishments.
- Attending to estranged or stressed relationships.
- Having a bigger celebration or gathering with family and friends.

Writing letters, videos and wishing private time with loved ones are ways to share the above ideas. Talking about these matters can resolve anxiety, address regrets, and contribute to peace of mind for you and your family.
Consider practical matters such as:

- Arranging gifts or mementos you wish to leave for family and friends.
- Contacting a funeral home to discuss funeral arrangements that are meaningful to you.
- Taking care of legal concerns such as your Will, estate planning, financial information, etc.
- Providing direction on handling technology (computers, phones) and social media accounts.
- Planning for dependent children, adults, and pets who relied on you for care and support.

You may want to consider involving trusted people in these tasks if you feel comfortable doing so; it is okay to ask for help. Those close to you want to help but often do not know what to do. Think about what you need help with and who you can ask. Many people find it meaningful and helpful to be actively involved knowing they have only little time left to share with you. It can also assist in their healthy grief and coping after death including knowing they are respecting your wishes.

The above are suggestions based on what other patients and families have taught us about what can be important in preparing for death. Factors like your illness, energy, family circumstances and the time left until your death will impact what you can do. Be realistic in what you can achieve. The MAID team can support you and your family in exploring, planning, and completing the things that matter to you.

**When Someone Close to You Has Requested Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID)**

It is normal to have different feelings and reactions even if you are supportive of their choice. Remember your views are based on your beliefs and life experiences. They might not be the same as your loved one who is choosing a MAID death. You may not always know what to say and do and that is okay. Remember everyone is doing their best during a difficult, emotional, and unfamiliar time.

If you are strongly opposed to the decision, it may be helpful to find people or professionals, including the MAID team who can listen and support you so that you can find ways to be involved in your loved one’s experience that are okay for you.

**In the time leading up to your loved one’s death it may be helpful to consider the following:**

- Ways to spend time with your loved one choosing MAID.
- Important conversations about dying and death with your loved one and family.
- How family can come together and support each other through this difficult time (listening with an open mind, not judging, compromising, and being inclusive).
- Important things to say to each other (words of love, forgiveness, thanks, encouragement, understanding, saying goodbye).
• What you would like to know about them that you do not know (story telling) and how you might capture this in person, recording, writing, video, etc.

• How you can support your loved one to complete important tasks they have identified

• Other ways to support them (meals, caregiving, errands, housekeeping, organizing, etc.).

• Your own supports during this difficult time (emotional or practical support or help with planning and communication, etc.).

• Important things to do together (intimacy, sharing stories, visiting special places, celebration/gathering, celebrating special events birthdays, anniversaries).

• Ways to take care of yourself (exercising, meditation, spending time with family and friends, nurturing places (nature), healthy eating and sleeping, journaling, etc.).

• Talking to children about MAID and involving them directly or indirectly.

**Caregiving Benefits:** [Caregiving Benefits Government of Canada](#)

Caregiving benefits are available to eligible caregivers who provide care or support to a patient who is critically ill or injured or in need of end-of-life care. Caregivers must be family members or someone who is considered to be like family. See above link for details.

**CPP Disability Benefit** [Canada Pension CPP Disability Benefit](#)

The Canada Pension Plan (CPP) disability benefit is a monthly benefit you can get if you are under 65; have made enough contributions into the CPP; have a mental or physical disability that regularly stops you from doing any type of substantially gainful work; or have a disability that is long-term and of indefinite duration, or is likely to result in death. **Note:** There is a separate application form called Terminal Illness Application Form (ISP-2530A – terminal illness only) for individuals deemed to have a terminal illness. See above link for details.

**Employer Sponsored Benefit Plans** – if you have a benefits plan through your employer you may have coverage that can support you during this time. Please check with your employer.

The Provincial MAID Program is here to support you.
Please contact the Program by calling toll free 1-833-473-6243 (MAID) or emailing provincialMAIDprogram@saskhealthauthority.ca

**Acknowledgement:**

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4. Canadian Virtual Hospice Articles and Resources.