

## What is a Life Review?

This booklet is designed to offer you as a family caregiver or friend, the tools you need to conduct a life review with your loved one. Life review is the process of looking back on memories of one's life to come to terms with all the events that have happened in a lifetime. As we approach the end of our life, it is natural that we would want to reflect back and desire to sort through our memories. Doing this gives us a sense of value, belonging and peace.

In my work as a hospice social worker, I am often asked to help my patients share and record their life story. I have developed a list of questions which usually evoke memories. I don't always use all of the questions listed in this booklet. I let my patient guide me and the process usually unfolds beautifully. Your sense of curiosity and respect for

the person you are doing the life review for are your greatest tools.

I usually videotape the session so that my patient and their family have a record of the life review. Families often tell me years later how much they appreciate having their loved one's life documented in such a way. Many have used the tapes in memorial services and in celebrating birthdays, anniversaries and births in the family. The life review videotape becomes a living tribute to the life of the person who has died.

Life review can be a natural healing process for the patient and their family. It can help the patient cope with their illness and enhance a sense of closeness with our family.

As we approach the end of our circle of life, we need to be given the opportunity to reflect back on our life and the significance that it has had for