



Death, Dying, Euthanasia, Suicide

Living Fully Until Death

M150.01

"Learning to die is also learning how to live," comments the late Morrie Schwartz, in this moving video. Schwartz, a Brandeis University Professor who was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease (ALS), chose to make his process of confronting death into a meditation on the meaning of life, as well as an inspiration for those who knew him personally and through his writing. Also featured in this program are Shirley Waring, who has leukemia, and William Meyer, who has lung cancer. Each has found a unique path toward coming to terms with terminal illness, taking control of what remains of their lives, and confronting the unknown.

1996, Color, 28 minutes, VHS

On Our Own Terms: A Time To Change

M150.02

Whether they want to or not, four out of five Americans will likely die in hospitals or nursing homes, and the care they get will depend on both who is providing it and who is footing the bill. In this program, veteran PBS journalist Bill Moyers introduces crusading medical professionals—including staff members of the Balm of Gilead Project in Birmingham, Alabama—who have dedicated themselves to improving end-of-life care by changing America's overburdened health system.

2000, Color, 87 min, VHS

On Our Own Terms: Living With Dying

M150.03

Death, which sooner or later comes to all, is treated as a strangely taboo subject in America. In this program, veteran PBS journalist Bill Moyers describes the search for new ways of thinking—and talking—about dying. Foregoing the usual reluctance that most Americans show toward speaking about death, patients and medical professionals alike come forward to examine the end of life with honesty, courage, and even humor, demonstrating that dying can be an incredibly rich experience for both the terminally ill and their loved ones.

2000, Color, 87 min, VHS

On Our Own Terms: A Death Of One's Own

M150.04

More and more Americans are looking for opportunities to exert some measure of control over where and how they die. In this program, veteran PBS journalist Bill Moyers unravels the complexities underlying the many choices at the end of life, including the bitter debate over physician-assisted suicide. Three patients, their families, and their doctors discuss some of the hardest decisions, including how to pay for care, what constitutes humane treatment, and how to balance dying and dignity. In the end, do these patients die the way they wanted? Yes ... and no.

2000, Color, 87 min, VHS

On Our Own Terms: A Different Kind Of Care

M150.05

At the end of life, what many Americans want is physical and spiritual comfort in a home setting. In this program, veteran PBS journalist Bill Moyers presents the important strides being made in the area of palliative care at pioneering institutions such as New York's Mt. Sinai Medical Center and Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. These advances are bringing peace to those who fear that they will be a burden to loved ones, will suffer needlessly, or will be abandoned in their hour of greatest need.

2000, Color, 87 min, VHS

Whose Death Is It Anyway?

M150.06

KSU Center on Aging

Media Descriptions listed by Category

Experts on end-of-life decision making - nurses, physicians, social workers and members of the clergy - join a studio audience hosted by Dr. Nancy Snyderman. Betty Rollin introduces profiles of real families in the midst of difficult decisions.

1996, Color, 55 min, VHS

Harriett's People

M150.07

In This video, you'll meet nurses, nursing assistants and a physician who team together to provide the best possible care during the final months and days to residents in a nursing home. Harriett's people, responding to advance directives, treatment limitations, and the wishes and emotions of patients and families, provide a world of giving to residents who are coping with inevitable endings. Tears, hugs, holding hands, staff supporting staff - all contribute to care in the final days.

Color, 22 min, VHS

A Desperate Act: Suicide and the Elderly

M150.08

Families are often ashamed of it, institutions frequently downplay it, and society usually denies that it even exists: suicide among the elderly. This program comes to grips with the chronic depression that leads too many senior citizens to take their own lives. Promoting prevention, intervention, and follow-up, medical experts use three case studies as a basis for discussing the warning signs of depression and treatment through counseling, education, medication, electroconvulsive therapy, and occupational therapy. Ageism and the marginalization of seniors in a youth-dominated culture are also addressed.

2000, Color, 24 min, VHS

The Self-Made Man

M150.09

Is it ever rational to choose death? Is it ever good? On Independence Day at Stern Ranch in central California, 77-year-old solar energy pioneer Bob Stern finds out he is seriously ill – possibly dying. Meanwhile, an elderly in-law is slowly declining on artificial life support in a hospital. Bob decides to cheat that fate and takes his own life. His family tries to stop him. Bob sets up a video camera. Daughter Susan Stern tells the story of her father's quirky, inspiring life and the difficult end-of-life choices faced by an aging population.

2005, Color, DVD

Live and Let Go: An American Death

M150.10

Sam Niver was 76 and had terminal cancer. The end was near. A proud, fiercely independent man, he wanted control in death as well as in life. He could die in a hospital, as his wife did recently, or he could die at home, hopefully on his own terms. Sam believed strongly in death with dignity and assisted suicide. Did he have the strength to act on his belief? Would he? In Live and Let Go - An American Death, we meet Sam Niver: patriotic WWII veteran; career newspaperman who ran the Bedford, Ohio hometown newspaper; loving, 50-year husband to his wife, Sweeny; beloved father and respected friend. Live and Let Go tackles death - the universal fact of life - with unflinching candor. It tells one man's compelling story about the choice he makes ... a choice that everyone must ultimately face.

Self Deliverence

M150.11

KSU Center on Aging

Media Descriptions listed by Category

John Grisham says that he has reached his "use by date." He believes in God, and in the dignity of human life, but he also believes that helping people end their lives may sometimes be more compassionate than using machines and drugs to prolong a life already at its end. While he doesn't expect to change anyone else's mind, he demands respect for his own decisions. When his life becomes intolerable, he wants to die on his own terms. Living with constant pain, and with the knowledge that his time is limited, John spends his days looking for a hospice program that will respect his wishes, or a doctor who will help him to end his life when he decides it is time. In the meantime, he tries to stockpile enough drugs to do the job himself if he needs to. This unflinching portrait was filmed in Australia's Northern Territory, where Parliament was debating the world's first legislation guaranteeing terminally ill people the right to a physician-assisted death. It includes articulate testimony from physicians on both sides of this controversial issue, but its primary focus is on one courageous man's determination to confront death with dignity.

2000, 18 min., VHS

In Their Own Words: Integrity and Despair

M150.12

Widows and widowers discuss the traumatic experience of losing a spouse. They describe their feelings, their reactions, and the ways they adjusted. These seniors share their life-altering experiences and the effects it had on them. The function of one's social network of friends and family is also revealed. "Integrity vs. Despair" is Erik Erikson's last of eight stages of man, the stage of late adulthood. In this second portion of the program, seniors reveal their integrity and despair, both in glaring fashion.

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