

# A GRAPHIC GUIDE TO PALLIATIVE CARE

FOR PATIENTS, FAMILIES, AND LOVED ONES!

## ABOUT THE PROJECT



★ FEATURING PATIENT VOICES AT THE  
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY OF VIENNA  
PALLIATIVE CARE WARD, 2023

ART BY SAL

THIS QUALITATIVE RESEARCH x GRAPHIC MEDICINE PROJECT WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE GENEROUS PATIENTS AND PROVIDERS ON THE PALLIATIVE CARE WARD AT THE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY VIENNA,

WHO TRUSTED THEIR STORIES OF ILLNESS AND CARE WITH US. THEY, IN PART, MAKE UP THE CONTENT IN THIS PATIENT GUIDE, ALONGSIDE THE SPECIFIC GOAL TO EDUCATE ABOUT PALLIATIVE CARE AND TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO NEW METHODS OF LISTENING AND BEING SEEN INSIDE A CLINICAL SPACE.

THROUGH COMMUNICATION AND CO-CREATION WITH PATIENTS, WE AIM TO BUILD ACCESS TO INCLUSIVE, ACCESSIBLE, AND HOLISTIC\* END-OF-LIFE CARE.

★ CHARACTERIZED BY THE TREATMENT OF THE WHOLE PERSON, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT MENTAL AND SOCIAL FACTORS, RATHER THAN JUST THE SYMPTOMS OF AN ILLNESS

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Palliative comes from the Latin word "palliare" - to cloak.



A cloak is used to alleviate someone from harsh conditions.



Palliative care "cloaks" or protects from symptoms of serious illness.

Who you are is equally important as to how you are.

Palliative care strives to alleviate suffering and combine compassionate care with medical care.

Cicely Saunders, a former doctor, social worker, and nurse pioneered the field.



Based on this sentiment, palliative care treats all kinds of symptoms experienced by those who have incurable illnesses; including physical, emotional, spiritual, and social pain.

Many people get scared when their physicians mention palliative care...



In fact, research shows that people in palliative care tend to live *longer*!

The aim of palliative care is individual symptom-oriented support.



This is helpful at any stage of a disease, both in addition to ongoing therapies and late in life at the transition to the end of life.

**Let's enter a palliative care unit and see what patients and the team there have to tell us...**

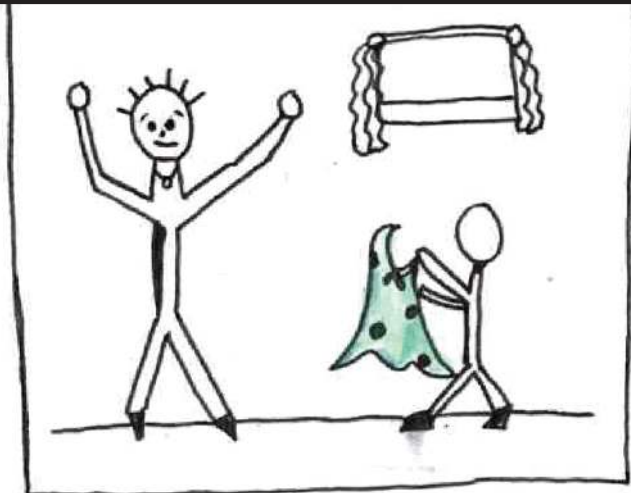


## What does "palliative" feel like?



"Happy like on a green meadow. Imagine a green meadow like this: spacious and pleasant.

The meadow is predestined for being happy."



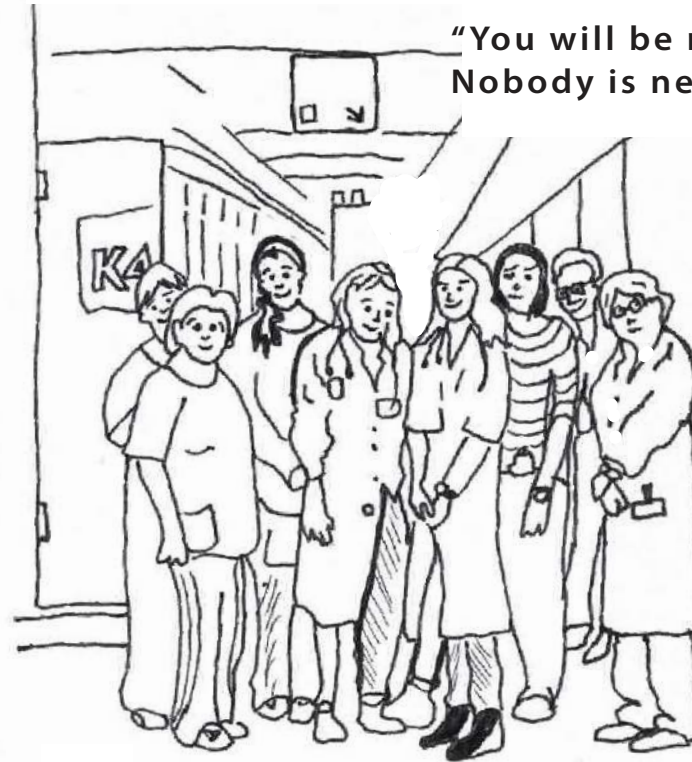
"A cloak that encloses the good and leaves the bad outside. The coat is the protection."

"This calm... You have more time here on the palliative care unit. There is no feeling of being under pressure."



"Compared to other healthcare units, more people can help here and have more time for each individual."

"You will be received with peace. Nobody is nervous here."



"The serenity of the staff is noticeable - from the medical as well as from the nursing side."

"If you repeatedly sound the alarm, I used to fear that would annoy the team that is working there."



But that is not noticeable here. Nobody questions your call for help whether it's the 8th or 18th time."



## What about grief, sadness, and pain?



**Grief and sadness are common, as well as social or emotional pain. When these feelings come we will provide room for them.**

**How does your grief feel today?**

**We encourage you to write, draw, or express yourself on the page.**

**We take you as you are: physically,  
emotionally, socially, and spiritually.**



**What do you wish for?  
What are your goals?**

**We encourage you to write, draw, or express yourself on the page.**

**We want to know what's bothering you.  
There is nothing to be ashamed of here.**



**Is there an elephant in the room that you  
would like to address?**

**We encourage you to write, draw, or express yourself on the page.**