

Voicing my Choices



Chamberlain University, MSN AGPCNP Track

NR: 578 Palliative Care in Adult-Gerontology Across the Spectrum

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I had the opportunity to interview a 24-year-old female for the purpose of this paper. The interviewee is a dear friend of mine as well as a co-worker. We work in the ICU together, which gives a different perspective for this interview. In addition, she was named the decision maker for her father who sadly passed away in our ICU 3 weeks ago. The following is a summary of the information gathered based on the Voicing my choices interview tool.

The interviewee

When B.B. puts herself in the shoes of a young person who is faced with a terminal illness or disease, she is very clear on what she wants, and what her wishes would include. She paints a picture of a serene end of life with the sole focus of care being pain management and comfort. She wishes to be in the comfort of her home, surrounded by her mother, sister, best friend, boyfriend, and her dog. She is a firm believer that quality of life is far more valuable to her than time on earth. She believes in God and states that if it her time to be called home [to heaven], then she will go. She feels that so often in her practice she sees patients prolonged by machinery, with their families stating that “it’s in God’s hands”. She feels this is a contradiction as it is the machinery and the skill of those running those machines that is prolonging life.

Health care surrogate

When it comes to medical decisions, she has chosen her longtime best friend, who is also an ICU nurse, to make the decisions for her. She stood witness to her mother during end-of-life decision making for her parents (interviewee’s grandparents) last year and felt her mother's emotions got in the way of her truly honoring the wishes of her parents. She feels her best friend has a strong grasp on not only her wishes going forward, but what prolonging life with no meaningful quality of life looks like. In terms of wishes, she would not want to be mechanically ventilated for more than 7 days and is refusing a tracheostomy under any circumstances. In addition, she would not want the placement of a PEG tube to