

My name is Teri Jacobson and I am an Advanced Illness and End of Life Doula.

Case #1: Client was end stage metastasized cancer.

Endured five years of approved treatment as well as clinical trials in different phases all over the country.

This Pt clearly had a desire to live, even with harsh side effects the trials produced.

The clinical trials left Pt with additional medical and physical challenges beyond the cancer, including being transfusion dependent. After being told what the end-of-life process most likely would look like (heart attack or bleed out), Pt pursued MAID via the State of Oregon and began assimilating a plan to get there. This is not an easy travel plan to put together. The logistics of medical air transport, the financial hardship, the emotional hardship of leaving a safe place called home (where most Americans say they want to die), a family hardship of not having support because they are now in a strange city, the complicated real concern of the what ifs during the in-between traveling and how to go from hospice in his home state to hospice in Oregon so there would be some continuity of care to help with symptoms and pain while waiting the two weeks.

The planning took too long, and Pt became too weak to go to Oregon. Hospice was unable to manage the pain and symptoms due to the complexity of conditions.

The suffering was compounded with distress as pt witnessed the helplessness and fear of loved ones and care partners while they waited for the "fatal event". Frustration and anger regarding how pt did not have a voice, or a choice amplified the suffering. All the pt wanted was to be at peace in the dying. To have moments with loved ones who were not wretched with fear and helplessness. Dignity, compassion, care. CHOICE.

So, I submit these questions for you to consider:

What would it feel like to be bed bound and waiting for cardiac arrest? What would it be like to sit and wait for your loved one to bleed-out? What does it look like to have uncontrollable pain, vomiting, air hunger, knowing there is even a more challenging event to endure in order for you to die.

Helpless? Hopeless? What choice was there? Every one suffered more because there was no choice.