

## HOW TO LIVE WITHOUT MY MOTHER: DIFFICULTIES OF A MOURNING DAUGHTER

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In spite of advances in cancer treatment, in some cases, medical resources are exhausted and patients and relatives have to live with the possibility of death. This period can be very hard, mainly in case of difficulties to accept the prognosis, which puts up obstacles for effective communication between patients and family members, due to the establishment of a scheme that denies the actual situation. After the patient's death, relatives may go through a difficult mourning experience.

**Objective:** To reflect on some aspects present in an interview with a young woman who had lost her mother, severely affected by cancer, and who had accompanied her during treatment until the terminal phase.

**Method:** We carried out a qualitative study. After having read the material several times, it was submitted to content analysis.

**Results:** Data indicate that the young woman experienced great difficulty due to having been her mother's caregiver, mainly in a situation in which both sides' attempt to deny reality made it impossible to establish an open dialogue about the possibility of death. Mental efforts were directed at masking the situation, and maintaining them caused great exhaustion. After her mother's death, the daughter continued facing difficulties to understand the process of loss she was going through.

**Conclusion:** The study presents reflections with a view to thinking of strategies to help patients and relatives during a terminal disease process, as well as after death, during the mourning phase.