

## Death Doula vs. Hospice Worker Comparison

Table 1: Comparison of Death Doula and Hospice Worker Roles

Aspect	Death Doula	Hospice Worker
<b>Role and Focus</b>	Non-medical professional providing holistic, emotional, spiritual, and practical support. Focuses on personalized comfort, emotional well-being, legacy work, and family support.	Licensed medical professionals (e.g., nurses, doctors, social workers) or trained aides. Focuses on clinical care, managing physical symptoms, and medical comfort for patients with a terminal prognosis (typically ≤6 months).
<b>Services Provided</b>	Companionship, education on dying process, legacy projects (e.g., memory books, letters), vigil planning, grief support, coordinating family wishes, pre- and post-death care, and creating rituals.	Medical care (e.g., pain management, medication administration), nursing, physical therapy, counseling, and coordination with healthcare providers. Follows a medical care plan, often covered by insurance/Medicare.
<b>Training &amp; Qualifications</b>	No medical license required; unregulated with varied training (e.g., INELDA, NEDA, or Doula Givers certifications). Training focuses on emotional, spiritual, and practical support. Many come from related fields or personal experience. Often a vocational calling.	Formal medical/professional certifications (e.g., RN, LPN, CNA, social work degrees) required, regulated by state/federal standards. Training includes clinical skills, symptom management, and legal/ethical considerations. Volunteers may include retired nurses or doulas in training.
<b>Setting &amp; Scope</b>	Works independently, hired privately, supports clients at any stage of illness/dying. Operates in homes, hospitals, or other settings. Can provide pre- and post-death support. Works solo or with doula networks.	Operates within structured hospice organizations in homes, hospice facilities, or hospitals. Services tied to a formal hospice care plan, available only with terminal prognosis. Works in multidisciplinary teams with structured roles.
<b>Reasons for Choosing</b>	Valued for flexibility, personalized emotional support, and filling non-medical care gaps. Often supplements hospice care for meaningful end-of-life experiences and grief navigation. Paid out-of-pocket.	Essential for medical expertise, pain management, and physical comfort. Often covered by insurance, critical for complex medical needs.

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Death Doula</b>	<b>Hospice Worker</b>
<b>Timeframe</b>	Can be hired at any time during illness or preparation for death, with no set timeframe. Straddles pre- and post-death support.	Generally reserved for final months/weeks of terminal illness or elderly with limited life expectancy and medical support needs.