*Requests for Hastened Death*

*One and a half (1.5) hours for Social Work CEU has been approved for this session.

**Speakers:**
Sarah Egan, MD, Hospice of New York
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**Description:**
We will discuss requests for hastened death, with the goal of understanding the meaning of these requests and formulating responses consonant with their intent, all within the larger context of examining our personal and professional values.

**Background:**
Though the data for prevalence of requests for hastened death show considerable variability (Bellido-Pérez et al., 2017), empirical evidence suggests that practitioners are often confronted with requests for hastened death from their chronically and terminally ill patients. These requests can be passive or active; they may express a passing wish or a fixed aim. They reflect a myriad of concerns and notions of suffering both in the present and for the future. Despite these differences, requests for hastened death universally arise out of distress. Often, these requests are met by the clinician’s own discomfort and anxiety, which potentially give rise to a formulaic and inadequate response: to wit, referral to psychiatry. If we approach requests for hastened death as a natural reaction to chronic and terminal illness, we can offer a more circumspect, nuanced, and compassionate response.

**Objectives:**
At the end of this presentation attendees will be able to:

- Recognize the unique intent and nature of an individual’s request for hastened death
- Discern empathic responses appropriate to the request being made by exploring meanings of suffering
- Understand legal options for hastened death
- Explore our personal reactions to requests for hastened death with the aim of reconciling our personal values with our professional edict to provide supportive and responsive care