

Living life with independence and inquisitiveness

ELSA AU
Patient

For someone who was always reinventing herself career wise, Elsa wasn't about to let a medical crisis bring her down. She decided to take a completely different direction after she was diagnosed with breast cancer. She became a teacher. It gave her a sense of purpose and brought out the knowledge-seeker in her. So when she was referred to Hospis Malaysia after the cancer spread to her bones and left her immobile, she sprung into information mode. "How was I going to live my life from here on? I had a lot of questions," Elsa reminisces. "And Hospis Malaysia really filled the gaps for me. Yvonne, the palliative care nurse who was initially assigned to care for me, came and spent a long time with myself and my family, getting to know me and my condition."

Elsa believes that the understanding of palliative care is very important. "Hospis Malaysia knows what is required to support someone like me. I had a slight infection one night and got worried. So I rang the emergency number of Hospis Malaysia and the nurse-on-call advised me. The next day, Mastura, my nurse, came by. The support system is so well thought-out and the people are well-equipped with how to resolve issues," Elsa highlights.

Elsa also attributes her ability to cope with her condition, to both the professionalism of the people at Hospis Malaysia and their personalised approach to patient management. "Like my occupational therapist, Raymond. He treats my case as an individual. It's not like "one size fits all". Thanks to him, I can now walk and bathe myself," Elsa says gratefully. "He relates to us as normal people yet mindful that we're actually not quite the same as the abled-bodied."

She feels very assured by how much the team knows about her condition. She's also comforted by the fact that the level of care and interest remains the same, from the day she was referred till today. That's why having taken the journey with Hospis Malaysia now, she reckons that with more of Hospis Malaysia, more people in need would be able to live better lives.

"I'm taking it one day at a time," Elsa replies when asked about her hopes. "And together with my doctors, my family and Hospis Malaysia, I believe I can get through this well."



Elsa and mum



How Hospis Malaysia is supporting:

- Occupational therapy to improve mobility
- Symptom management including access to 24-hour emergency call service
- Caregiver support