

After someone we love has died, we may feel lots of different things like sadness, anger or relief. Again there's no right or wrong way to feel. It helps to talk about your feelings with grown ups that you trust and let them know about what is worrying you. This may be a really difficult and painful time but there will be people around to help you.

Things won't always be so difficult. You will never forget them, but in time it won't hurt as much as it does today.

Remember all the times that you've shared together and your special memories will last forever.

This has been adapted from a guide developed by the Marie Curie Palliative Care Institute and the Childhood Bereavement Network, United Kingdom.

The End-of-Life Care Program wishes to acknowledge the support of these organisations in providing permission to adapt this guide.

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request.

Produced by the End-of-Life Care Program
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Saying goodbye to dad

Suggested ages 5 to 11 years



You may have already been told that your dad is very ill. The doctors and nurses are working hard to make sure that he's comfortable, but we can't make his illness go away and we can't make him better.

Sometimes when a person is very ill their body doesn't work properly. We can see that this is happening because people may become a lot sleepier, their breathing can change and they no longer want or need to eat and drink.

This means that the person is dying and the doctors and nurses believe that this is now happening to your dad.

As dad's body stops working, his breathing may sound noisier. Sometimes people can seem a little bit restless but everyone is different.

You may want to spend time with your dad. You can talk to him and hold his hand. He can still hear you and will know that you're there but he probably won't be able to talk to you. Sometimes children and grown ups decide that they don't want to spend time with their relative at this time and that's okay too.

It's important that you do what you feel is right for you. If you choose not to visit you may want to send a message, card or picture with a grown up who will be visiting.

When someone is dying we can feel lots of different things. We may feel very sad or angry that this is happening to us or just very muddled up. Remember, there's no right or wrong way to feel.

If there's anything that you don't understand or that you're worried about, ask a grown up who can help you. You may notice that the grown ups in your family are feeling very sad as well, but they still want to help and look after you.

Sometimes a person will be very sleepy for a number of days before they die. Other people may die more quickly. Everyone is different and sometimes things can change quite quickly. The important thing for you to remember is that the doctors and nurses will watch dad very carefully and give him more medicine or change his medicine to make sure that he's comfortable.

During this time you should still try to eat and drink, play and talk to your friends, as you would normally do. It's very hard to be sad all the time and it may help you to do other things as well.

When someone dies, their body stops working. They stop breathing and their heart stops beating. They may look a bit paler and after a little while their skin may feel cold. It's okay to touch or kiss him if you would like to. You won't hurt dad because when a person dies they don't feel anymore.

