



Saying Goodbye to Dad

A Guide for Teenagers



What will happen?

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. When a person dies they do not feel anymore.

After a person dies, we may feel lots of different things. There is no right or wrong way to feel, but it is important to try to talk about your feelings with friends and family, and to ask any questions that you may have.

Losing a parent is painful and difficult. You are not alone and people will be around to support you at this time. It is important that you look after yourself and take up helpful support from those around you.

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

Remember that all the times that you have 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.

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This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.

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You may have already been told that your Dad is very ill. The doctors and nurses will do all they can to make sure that he is comfortable and not in any pain, but sadly we cannot make him well and we cannot make him better.

At this stage in a person's illness, their body cannot work properly and it begins to close down. 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 think that this is now happening to your Dad.

What changes will I see?

When a person is dying their 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, he can still hear you and will know that you are there but he will probably not be able to talk to you. You can talk to him and hold his hand if you want to. Sometimes people decide that they do not want to spend time with their relative at this time and that is okay too.

It is 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 letter with a relative or friend who may be visiting.

How will I feel?

When someone is dying we can feel lots of different things. We may feel very sad, angry that this is happening to us or confused about things around us. Sometimes we do not feel anything for some time and we can feel quite numb. There is no right or wrong way to feel, but it is important that you share your feelings with close friends and relatives who can support you.

If there is anything that you don't understand or that you are worried about, you could talk to a relative or member of staff who is caring for your Dad. They will try to answer your questions and offer you support at this difficult time.

How long will it take?

Sometimes a person can be very sleepy for a number of days before they die, while other people die more quickly. Everyone is different and sometimes things can change quite quickly. The staff caring for your Dad will watch him very carefully and adjust his medication to ensure that he is comfortable.

During this time you should still try to eat and drink, watch TV and speak to your friends, as you would normally do. But it is really important that you continue to look after yourself.

