

After someone we love has died, we may feel lots of different things like sadness, anger and relief. Again there is no right or wrong way to feel, but it helps to try to talk about your feelings with grown ups that you trust and ask about anything that is worrying you.

This may be a really difficult and painful time but there will be people around to help 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.

Produced by the End-of-Life Care Program
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Saying Goodbye to Mum

Suggested ages 5-11 years



You may have already been told that your Mum is very ill. The doctors and nurses are working hard to make sure that she is comfortable, but we cannot make her illness go away and we cannot make her better.

Sometimes when a person is very ill their body cannot 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 Mum.

As Mum's body stops working as it should, her breathing may sound noisier. Sometimes people can seem a little bit restless but everyone is different.

You may want to spend time with your Mum. You can talk to her and hold her hand. She can still hear you and will know that you are there but she will probably not be able to talk to you. Sometimes children and grown ups 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 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, angry that this is happening to us or just very muddled up. Remember, there is no right or wrong way to feel.

If there is anything that you don't understand or that you are worried about, you should try to 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 Mum very carefully and give her more medicine or different kinds of medicine to make sure that she's comfortable.

During this time you should still try to eat and drink, play, watch TV and speak to your friends, as you would normally do. It is very hard to be sad all the time and it may help you to do other things as well. This is VERY important too.

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 is okay to touch or kiss her if you would like to. You will not hurt Mum because when a person dies they do not feel anymore.

