

## **Communicating With Your Loved One Now**

As death approaches, your loved one may become more withdrawn and less responsive. Though you may find it challenging to communicate now, remember that hearing is the last sense to be lost, so even if your loved one doesn't answer, he or she likely does know what you are saying. This time with your loved one is very meaningful, and it's important to:

### **Pay attention to everything your loved one says in these final days.**

You will treasure these last days together. Your family members will also want to hear about your conversations, even if they seemed insignificant to you at the time.

### **Ask open-ended questions.**

You might say, "What are you thinking or feeling now?"

### **Do not push for answers.**

If your loved one doesn't reply, let it go. He or she may be unable to express experiences in words and may feel frustrated.

### **Do not argue or challenge your loved one's reality. Instead, accept and validate what your loved one says.**

For example you might say, "You said you saw your grandmother here in the room talking about what comes 'after.' Do you want to talk about it?"

### **Be honest when you don't understand what's being said.**

You might say, "I want to understand what you're telling me because I know it's important. Please keep sharing your experiences with me."

### **If you don't know what to say, it's okay to simply sit quietly with your loved one.**

Touching your loved one's hand or forehead lets him or her know you are present. You can reassure him or her by saying, "I'm right here beside you."

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