

Helpful Hints

It is helpful to plan ahead. Know what your loved one's wishes are so that they are respected. Making funeral arrangements in advance reduces the number of decisions that will need to be made right at the time of death. It also provides an opportunity to talk about arrangements, concerns and feelings.

For Them:

- Sit with the dying person; hold his/her hand. Reassure the person with a reminder that you are there. Do not speak about your loved one as though he/she isn't there. Hearing remains until the moment of death.
- Identify your self by name. Speak softly, clearly and truthfully when you need to communicate.
- Talk to him/her while giving care and explain what you are doing.
- Sitting quietly at the bedside, playing soothing music or reading something comforting may achieve a calming effect.

For Yourself:

- Normal family routines may be disrupted and you may feel you have lost your ability to concentrate on anything, You may wish sometimes for things to be over because of the uncertainty, helplessness, emotional and physical exhaustion you may be experiencing.
- Feelings such as guilt, anger, frustration or sadness are common among people who are supporting a person during a terminal illness
- Tears are a natural expression of one's feelings. Some may internalize their feelings and may not be able to cry. Both reactions are normal.
- Good byes are appropriate. Both the family and the person dying may find comfort in this process of "letting go."
- During this time a member of the clergy, chaplain or a spiritual adviser can provide support and comfort to both the family and the person dying. Certain religions have rites or sacraments that may be desired by the client or family at this time.