



Parents and Guardians: Please read the note on back page before you proceed.

Edited for COVID-19

## Why is Everybody so Sad?

### When a person you love has a serious disease and isn't getting better

**Everybody will get sick** or hurt many times in their lifetime, and most of the time the person will get better.

Sometimes even though doctors and nurses do everything they can to help, the medicines and treatments cannot cure the person or make them better.

That is what is happening right now. The doctors and nurses have tried to cure the person you love, but at some time soon, it could be in a few hours or a few days, we don't know exactly when, the person you love will stop being alive.



When someone dies the body stops working. The person cannot feel, think, talk, or do anything anymore. When somebody dies, they cannot come back to life.

Nobody expects you to know what to **think, feel** or **do** right now. Even grown-ups won't always know how they feel or what they should do.

Not knowing can be scary. The important thing to know is that any feeling you experience is okay.

**Just remember that no matter what happens there will always be people who can help.**

## What you can expect



The person may die when you are not in the room or while you are somewhere else. Sometimes you will be there when they die. You probably are not going to know what to say or do, ask someone you trust to explain things to you. Sometimes a person will die quietly and peacefully. At other times they may move around a lot and it looks like they are in pain. If they are in pain or if their breathing sounds gurgly, the nurse can give some medicine to help them relax.

## What you can do

The medicine the doctors and nurses use to make the person comfortable can also make them sleepy. Even though the person may not be able to talk and their eyes are closed, we think they can still hear people talking in the room. So you can talk to them and share your feelings. You can tell them that you love them, or that you will miss spending time with them, or anything else that you feel.

Usually family members take turns staying in the room with the person who is dying. It is okay if you don't want to be in the room all the time, you can do other stuff in another room like watch a movie, play, or help by babysitting a younger brother, sister, or cousin.

**Sometimes you cannot visit them or get to say goodbye in person. You can call them on the phone, video chat, write them a letter or draw them a picture to tell them how you feel.**

Remember that not everybody in the family is going to feel the same way you do at the same time. Be kind and patient with each other.

# Services

When someone dies it is important to have special ways for people who knew them to remember them. It might be a meal with just the family or a few friends, or it could be an event where it seems like everyone you know will be there. (And other people you don't!)

## Words that you might hear

**Funeral:** A funeral is a formal service that typically includes a religious or community leader. Usually there are songs, scripture readings, or favorite poems. At a funeral, people share stories and say prayers for the person who died. A funeral often happens within the first week after someone dies.

**Eulogy:** A talk given by one or more people during the service about the person who died.

**Casket:** A special box that a dead body goes in before it is buried. A casket can have a pillow and soft cushion for the body to lie on. Only people who die go in caskets.

**Cremation:** When the person who died requests to be cremated, their body is placed in a very hot room so that it turns the body into ash. These ashes are collected and put in a special container called an **urn**. Urns come in all shapes and sizes.

**Cemetery:** A special park where caskets and urns are buried. This is not a park that you play in, but it is a special place to think about and remember a person who has died.

**Memorial Service** or **Celebration of Life:** A gathering that is like a funeral but this kind of service can happen at a later time. Usually there is no casket but sometimes the urn and a photograph is placed on a table for everybody to see.

Sometimes you cannot go to the service or it has to happen at a later time. Your family can plan a special service that you can do in your own home.

*Do you know what kinds of services are being planned?*

## What you can expect

### **Different cultures and religions do different kinds of services.**

Many families will have people who are from different cultures and religions all in the same family and some families have their own beliefs but don't belong to any particular group. So some services will be a creative mix of things to honor the uniqueness of the person who died.

If your family is Jewish you may have a funeral and the body of the person who died will be buried in a cemetery. Then the family typically sits **Shiva** at a relative's house for 1 to 7 days. Friends and relatives will visit and pray and share stories about the person who died.

If your family is Christian you might have a service called a **wake** or **visitation** at the funeral home. Friends and relatives will visit and pray or share stories about the person who died. Then there will usually be a funeral at a church the next day. After the funeral you may go to the cemetery where the urn with the ashes or the casket with the body inside will be buried.

Families who are Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu, or atheist will have other services that are unique to their own cultural group too.

### ***Have you ever been to a service for someone who has died?***

### **Ask an adult you trust to explain to you what will happen.**

Maybe there is something you can do to help plan or prepare for the service. Maybe there is something special you can do during the service. Talk with your family about how you can participate.

## What you can do at a service

- help select pictures to put on a poster board so others can learn about the life of the person who died
- write a letter or draw a picture and put it in the casket or keep it in a special place
- read a poem, prayer, or some other reading at the service
- share a special memory about the person who died
- express your emotions, it is okay to cry. Ask for hugs and share hugs with others

You can also choose to not participate at all.

### ***Talk with your family about what you can and cannot do.***

# People don't know what to say

Think about times when you were nervous and you didn't know what to say or what to do.

## Words you might hear

When people are nervous sometimes they say **just the right thing**,  
Sometimes they might say **silly things**,  
And sometimes they will **not say anything at all!**

**Most people are kind and want to be helpful, the only problem is they just don't know what to say or do.**

## What you can expect

### People might say:

- "I'm sorry for your loss."
- "They are in a better place."
- "You need to be strong."
- "You will see them again."

## How to respond

### You might say:

- "Thank you."
- "I still wish they could be here with me."
- "I am strong, but I still need your support."
- "I will always remember them in my heart."

You can also expect that some people will want to cheer you up even though you may not feel like being cheered up at that particular moment.



# Love Lasts Forever (How long will grief last?)

## Words that you might hear

### **Grief, Bereavement, & Mourning:**

You might hear each of these words many times over the next few months. They are different ways of talking about remembering and missing someone who has died.

## What you can expect

You are going to remember the person who died all your life. That does not mean you are going to be sad forever. There are going to be times when you have a happy memory too! Sometimes a memory will pop into your head all by itself. Sometimes, like on birthdays, holidays, and other special times you will want to tell stories and remember the person.

### **Bodies wear out, people die, but love lasts forever!**

## What you can do

- Remember to still be a kid and make time to have fun every day.
- Re-telling stories over and over will help you remember the person who died.
- Talk with your family before holidays, birthdays, and other family occasions about special ways to remember the person who died.
  - make their favorite meal or dessert
  - tell stories, look at pictures, or watch videos of you together
  - do activities or play games that you used to play with them
  - visit the cemetery or some of their favorite places
  - remember them in your prayers
  - write in a diary or journal what you are thinking and feeling and doing



## Home and Hospice Services

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(847) 982-4364  
<http://northshore.org/hopsice>

# Instructions for parents and guardians

## Please read this information prior to talking with your children

This resource is provided as a guide to support you as you search for ways to communicate to your children (ages 5 - 13) that a loved one is approaching the end of life. Please know that you can adapt this resource in a way that best suits your needs.

Guided by your knowledge of your children and supported by your cultural and or spiritual traditions, do not be afraid to express your own thoughts and feelings about what is happening. Simple, open, and honest communication gives them some idea of what they can expect to happen in the coming days and weeks. Letting them know what is going on, sooner rather than later, should help decrease their anxiety and lets them know they can come to you with any questions or concerns they may have.

- **Read through this resource yourself, prior to sharing it with your children.**
- **You may want to focus on only one section at a time, being careful not to overwhelm the children with too much information.**
- **It is best to sit with your children and read through it together rather than giving it to them to read through it on their own.**
- **Like adults, children will benefit from the opportunity to say things like, “I love you,” “I’m sorry” or “good bye.”**
- **Know that there are additional resources available, talk to your healthcare provider for more information.**