

Caring during the dying process

How you care for someone during the dying process depends on their religious and cultural background or their own personal beliefs. They may have left specific instructions on what they want you to do at this time but if not you will need to make decisions yourself.

You may want to request a spiritual friend or a person from your loved one's faith tradition to be with them as they die and / or immediately afterwards so they can offer appropriate prayers or rituals. It is best to have arranged this in advance, so the person is ready to come at short notice. Support can be provided from a distance if they cannot be physically present.

As they die

In the final days and hours there are many things you can do to care for your loved one whether they are dying at hospital or at home. Some options to consider include:

- maintain a quiet, peaceful environment
- play music or recite prayers, poems or other readings that are soothing for them
- quietly pray or meditate yourself so that you are a calming presence
- place spiritually inspiring images and items where the person can see them or at the crown of their head
- remind yourself of their wishes if they have completed a [Making Your Wishes Known](#) checklist
- place soothing fragrances or flowers in the room
- speak to them gently and respectfully even if they are unconscious
- invite relatives and friends to visit and say goodbye

At death

- For many, death is a gentle process as the mind or soul gradually leaves the body over a period of time. An absence of perceivable warmth at the heart centre can be a sign that this separation has occurred. You may wish to sit quietly with your loved one until you feel this process is complete. Other members of the family and friends can also use this time to say a final goodbye. When you feel the time is right call the funeral director. Remember to give them any specific instructions necessary to ensure the wishes and beliefs of your

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loved one are respected.

After death

Following the death of your loved one you can continue to care for them by sending your love in the form of prayer or meditation or simply talking to them. Because of your close relationship such practices can transcend mundane connection and bring comfort to you both.

Karuna also has experienced people you can talk with on:
07 3632 8300 or karuna@karuna.org.au



This is a **Support and Learning** resource. More resources available at www.karuna.org.au/resources. Karuna is affiliated with www.fpmt.org



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