



Strength
at Your Side

Final Days Training Sheet

WHAT ARE SOME SIGNS THAT A PERSON IS NEARING DEATH?

As death becomes closer, he/she may:

- Sleep more
- Become more confused or less responsive
- See or speak to people who are not present
- Eat or drink less, or not at all
- Have difficulty swallowing
- Make less urine, or lose control of urination and bowel movements
- Have a moist or rattling sound to breathing (sound congested)
- Have periods of restlessness
- Breathe differently - have long periods without breathing followed by several quick, deep breaths.
- Have hands and feet that are cool to the touch
- Have skin that is dark or dusky appearing around nose, mouth, fingers and toes
- Have a rapid or slow pulse
- Have a hot or cold body temperature
- Have eyelids that may not close all the way

As a person becomes less responsive, it is important to understand that they may continue to hear and have a level of awareness, even if they cannot respond. You should always assume the person hears everything you are saying. We encourage you to talk to them as clearly and directly as if they were awake and alert.

THINGS TO SAY AND DO WHEN TIME IS SHORT:

- Spend time with those who are important to you.
- Reminisce and celebrate life.
- Create a legacy; write a journal, write letters, take pictures, record a video.
- Say "I love you," "I'm sorry," "I forgive you," "Forgive me."
- Say "Goodbye," "I'll miss you," "I'll be okay."

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO HELP?

- Allow the person to sleep as much as he or she wishes. Plan visits and tasks for the time of day when the person seems most alert.
- Include the children in your family in a way that is sensitive to their age and willingness to be involved.
- Reposition the person if it makes him or her more comfortable.
- Moisten the person's mouth with a damp cloth or swab.
- Give medications as instructed to decrease any symptoms.
- If saliva gathers in the mouth, gently turn the person on their side to help it drain.
- Keep a soft light on in the room as it may be comforting.
- Play the person's favorite music softly.
- Maintain environment.
- Provide comfort, tell the person who you are, that you are there to take care of them and they are safe.
- If the person is seeing or hearing things, listen to what they say and ask how it makes them feel. Do not argue with them about it.
- Do not be alarmed by the changes noted above – they are a natural part of dying.

Also please refer to **The Family Guide to the Last Stages of Life** booklet

Call Unity if your loved one has any symptoms that are not well managed.

Call Unity 24/7 at **920.338.1111** or **800.990.9249**

If there is no answer and the phone continues to ring, call **920-490-7418**.