



## **When a Loved One is Dying and You Cannot Be with Them During Covid-19 Pandemic**

A loved one's illness and death can bring intense feelings, precious conversations, good-byes, life review and nostalgia. This time can include vigils by the bedside, travel from afar, personal and public rituals like funerals and celebrations of life. The natural instinct to gather in community at end-of-life calls us to connect in new and creative ways in this time of social isolation.

### **EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY AND STAY CONNECTED**

Maintain connection with medical professionals by phone. Use Facetime, Skype or ZOOM to connect the dying person with family around the world. Support yourself by connecting with your supportive relationships.

### **CREATE LASTING MEMORIES AND LEGACY WORK**

Hold video family meals with a favorite recipe, create a music playlist as family project, tell and hear family stories and memories (and record them), invite an oral history by the dying person (and record it), create and share slideshow of photos, send cards and letters to dying person to be read by a healthcare professional.

### **UNDERSTAND THAT "DYING ALONE IS NOT NECESSARILY DYING WITHOUT LOVE"**

(Reverend C. Brandon Brewer, in an article on CNN by Daniel Burke)

Love and attachment transcend bricks and mortar. Even during in-person vigils, some people die when their loved one leaves the room.

### **EMBRACE MEANING AND/OR THE GOD OF YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

(God, Allah, Spirit, Creator, Nature, Compassion, Ancestors, or Higher Power)

With faith and trust that you and your loved one are not alone even when physically distant. Reading Scripture, poetry, prayers, and books can bring comfort to some. Call your faith leader or a spiritual care practitioner if needed.

### **EMBRACE SELF-CARE AND SELF-COMPASSION**

Comforts that are unique to you including general nutrition, sleep hygiene, daily walk, time with children, comforting music, photos of vacations, rocking chair, weighted blanket, deep breathing, prayer/meditation, journaling, yoga, pet therapy, counseling, psychotherapy, etc.

### **USE COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES LIKE REIKI OR THERAPEUTIC TOUCH**

Connect with practitioners who can offer distance healing with compassionate intention. Learn complementary therapies and use them yourself throughout the day.

### **TRUST THE PROCESS OF ANTICIPATORY GRIEF**

Understand that a natural anticipatory grief process is at work for the dying person and their loved ones that include painful thoughts and feelings. Expressing these feelings encourages healing, hope, and peace.

### **RESOURCES**

[www.hearthousehospice.com](http://www.hearthousehospice.com)

<https://hearthousehospice.com/how-we-help/counselling-support/legacy-activities/>

<https://hearthousehospice.com/resource-library/other-helpful-resources/>

<http://www.mygrief.ca/>

[www.whatsyourgrief.com](http://www.whatsyourgrief.com)

Sources: What's Your Grief (WYG)

Story by Daniel Burke, CNN Religion Editor, March 29, 2020