



Tan Tock Seng  
HOSPITAL



# The W.I.N.D Guide

When It's Near the end

Curated by TTSH Palliative Care Service

# INTRODUCTION

We have been forced by the COVID-19 pandemic to find new ways to cherish precious time together and honour our loved ones in the final phase of their lives. Despite the current visitor restrictions at TTSH, we hope that you will find this brochure useful in caring for you and your loved ones.



## PHYSICAL

When your loved one is dangerously ill, you may notice some physical changes in him/her. Here are four common phenomena which may be present in your loved one:



Appears sleepier or more confused. Sometimes he/she will be unable to recognise family members.



Hands or feet are cool to touch and may turn bluish or purple.

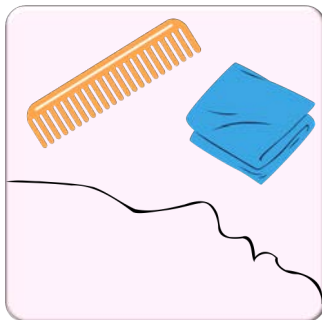


Decreased interest in eating or drinking – do check with the medical or nursing team if it is safe to serve any food or drink to your loved one.



An altered breathing pattern – their jaw may be relaxed and gurgling sounds may be heard.

**If you are comfortable, we encourage you to participate in your loved one's care. Do approach the ward staff to learn how to be involved in your loved one's care in a safe manner.**



Wipe your loved one's face or eyes with wet body wipes or comb their hair.



Apply oral gel to your loved one's lips. Keep his/her gums and tongue clean and moist by using a green oral sponge swab available in the ward.



Give your loved one a gentle massage if he/she enjoyed it in the past.



Bring items from home that will comfort your loved one e.g. bolsters, aromatherapy oils, liquid soap or a recording of their favourite music/prayers or chants.

**If you have questions about your loved one's physical condition, please do not hesitate to clarify your doubts with his/her medical or nursing team.**

# EMOTIONAL



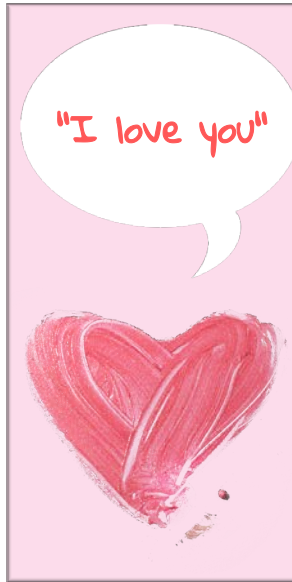
While there can't be physical healing, there can be relational healing. Here are five essential things you can say in any order, as you see fit. Even if your loved one is unable to respond, your voice, touch and presence is a great assurance that he/she is not alone. Do speak simply and audibly in your loved one's ear, in his/her preferred dialect/language.



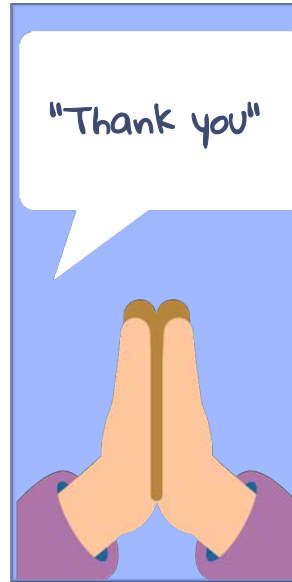
- It can be a great relief to let go of any resentment or grievances. Acknowledging these regrets, actions or hurt will help both to move on.
- Ask for forgiveness. Regardless of the response, take comfort that there was an effort for reconciliation.
- "I am sorry about \_\_\_\_\_ that happened between us".



- It is never easy to forgive, or you may not be ready to acknowledge the deep hurt; you can forgive your loved one in your heart and mind, even if you struggle to say it out loud.
- Saying "I forgive you" can clear the way for deeper sharing during the remaining time.



- Try and say "I love you" often in the remaining time you have together.
- If you are comfortable, you can elaborate further, "I love you because...", "I love when you...", "I loved the times..."



- Expressing appreciation for your loved one, helps him/her know of their lasting significance in your life.
- Remind your loved one of his/her legacy to heighten his/her sense of dignity.
- "Thank you for...", "I'll never forget when..."



- Saying goodbye brings closure. If "goodbye" is too hard to say, consider saying "until we meet again".
- Let your loved one know that he/she will always be important to you.
- Acknowledge openly that one does not know when we can see each other again.



# Tips for the Final Journey

1. Inform your friends and family about the loss of your loved one. It can be helpful to allocate tasks among family and friends or distribute the duties of handling your loved one's last rites.
2. Have your loved one's NRIC at hand as the Ward Doctor will require it to issue a Certified Cause of Death (CCOD)
3. You will need to register your loved one's death either at the TTSH Mortuary (during office hours) or Accident and Emergency Department (after office hours).
4. Contact a chosen casket company and your religious leader, if applicable.  
A list of funeral service directors is available in the ward.

## **IMPORTANT NOTE:**

Please consciously set aside time to care for yourself during this journey of caregiving.

For more tips on self-care during the season of bereavement, you can scan the QR code on the right:

