

HONOURING YOUR LOVED ONE

At Fair Haven, when possible, an announcement will be made for staff to gather in the halls while your loved one is accompanied by the funeral home assistant as they leave the building. They will have a special quilt lain over top of them and a candle will be illuminated in recognition of their Spirit. In the following weeks, a celebration of life service may occur in the Chapel to honour them as well as others at Fair Haven that have recently passed.

Questions? Contact Us

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www.fairhaven.bc.ca

Reference: Laurie Deacon. "Pamphlet". Delta View Life Enrichment Centres.



SAYING GOODBYE

Take your time to say goodbye.

There are tasks that staff are obligated to do, such as pronouncing death, paperwork, calling the funeral home, etc.

Please make sure that we have the information of the Funeral Home your loved one will be using. We seek to do the tasks with sensitivity. Know that we strive to treat your loved one and the family with respect. It is a difficult time.



HOW WILL WE KNOW?

Here are some signs that your loved one has passed:

- Eyelids may be partially open with the eyes in a fixed stare.
- Mouth may fall open as the jaw relaxes.
- Any bowel and bladder contents that remain may release as the entire body relaxes.
- All breathing and heartbeat ceases. The nurse will listen for a heartbeat to know for sure.



GIVING PERMISSION TO LET GO

Sometimes, the person who is dying will try to hold on. Sometimes they will set a benchmark to get past before they will let go – a birthday, anniversary, or holiday. Give them permission to let go.



Fair Haven Homes Society

PREPARING FOR END OF LIFE

What to expect





THE JOURNEY

Each person is unique in their living and their dying. This is the time when they say goodbye to their physical body that has served them for many years. The time of transition from life to death is natural.

It is also a time when we say goodbye to them and recall the blessings and challenges they have experienced while we've known them.

Resolution is a gift that may or may not be there. Nevertheless, this is the time to give acceptance, support and comfort to your passing loved one.

PHYSICAL SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

As the body slowly lets go, you may observe these things:

- **Lower temperature:** skin, especially hands, arms and legs can become increasingly cool and may feel clammy or damp.
- **Elevated temperature:** it is common for a person to develop a fever. The nurse may give something to decrease the fever and offer a cool cloth on the forehead.
- **Bladder and bowel control:** incontinence or decrease in output.
- **Sleeping patterns:** increased sleeping, may appear uncommunicative or unresponsive.
- **Fluid and food intake:** your loved one will likely want little or no fluid or food. This is a natural biological process driven by the body's decreasing need for energy. Respect your loved one's lack of interest in food and fluids. Focus on nourishing your loved one through gentle touch instead of through food or drink. You can offer ice chips or popsicles and can keep the lips and mouth moist.
- **Confusion, disorientation and restlessness:** Your loved one may perform repetitive and restless physical movements. You do not need to interfere with these motions unless they are a safety concern.
- **Congestion:** Your loved one may have gurgling sounds coming from their chest. These sounds may be disturbing to family but do not indicate the onset of severe pain. Suctioning may not be necessary and may increase discomfort.
- **Breathing pattern change:** Your loved one's regular breathing pattern may become irregular with shallow breaths and periods of no breathing for between 5-30 seconds. Breathing can also be rapid, shallow, or panting like and sometimes moaning sounds. This isn't a sign of distress but the sound of air passing over relaxed vocal cords.
- **Decreased socialization:** Your loved one may want few, one, or no one around. They are just preparing for their transition ahead and may want to do it on their own.

SUPPORT WITH GRATITUDE

Spend time recalling memorable events and occasions. Even when your loved one is unresponsive, assume they can hear. Take time to say "thank you" for specific things they did or said or were to you. This process also serves to be healing for you. Assure them with phrases like "I love you" and "You are loved."

Touch is important - put lotion on their hands with a gentle massage. Stroking their face and head also conveys tenderness and love.

If you notice they appear in pain, tell the nurse. They may need a change in position or provide more medication.

Your voice can bring comfort. Read aloud from their favourite poetry, scripture, story, etc. Singing or humming is soothing, along with playing music.

Ask a Spiritual leader to visit or contact the Director of Spiritual Care through staff.

Be aware of your loved one's need to rest. Slow your pace. Be aware also that YOU need to have breaks.