



## **How to help a Person who is Dying**

### **Listen:**

Listen to reflect back the feelings/emotions you hear. This creates a safe and sacred place for pain to be expressed and healing to begin (bearing witness).

### **Acceptance/ Understanding:**

Encourage the individual to express their true feelings and emotions. You might ask, *"Tell me what is happening to you."* or *"What are you feeling?"*

### **Be comfortable with silence:**

Love and caring understands; it needs no words. Silence can be as supportive as conversation. Simply be with the person in their place of pain or contemplation.

### **Touch:**

Touch is one of the most comforting means of communication. A squeeze of the hand can show how much you care.

### **Truthfulness:**

Everyone, whether sick or healthy, should be treated with honesty, not deceit.

### **Humor:**

Continue to enjoy humorous incidents and stories. Illness should not put a ban on smiles and laughter.

### **Share time together:**

Talking, listening to music, watching television, playing cards or games can help fill lonely and frightening hours with shared companionship.

### **Accept your limitations:**

Your role is not to have all the answers or solve all the problems for the family or the client. Be willing to live with questions; embrace the mystery and meet the dying person/family in their place of pain. Remember that your role is to support the client and his family through this time of dying.