

How to talk about death and dying

Dying Matters

Talking about death might not feel easy. But there are lots of reasons to talk about it. Talking about death can help you plan for the future. And talking about death helps you let people know your wishes.

Talking about death will not mean you die sooner. Lots of people say talking about death makes them feel better. Talking about death can also help people cope with their feelings. And talking about death helps people to get organised.

Things you could talk about

There is a lot you could talk about. You do not need to talk about everything at once. We have listed below some things you could talk about.

- What care you would like at the end of your life
- Where you would like to die
- How long you want doctors to look after you if you are ill
- What kind of funeral you would like
- What you want to put in your Will
- Who will look after people who rely on you. Like children or people in your family
- If you want to donate your organs. You can choose if you want to donate organs like your liver or kidneys to help others.
- How you want people to remember you
- If you are worried about death or dying
- If there is anything you want people to know before you die
- If there is anything you want to tell people before you die.

How to talk about dying

There is no perfect way to talk about dying. But there are things you can do to make it easier.

Choose a good moment

Choose a time when you have plenty of time. It helps if you feel relaxed too. It can also help if the other person wants to talk about the future.

For example, a good time could be when the other person is talking about retirement. Or a good time could be when someone famous has died.

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Start with a question

A question can be a good way to start a conversation about death. You could ask 'Have you thought about what will happen when we die?' Or 'Do you think we should talk about the future?'

Help the other person feel comfortable

The other person might find talking about this hard. Try to make the other person feel better. You could say 'I know talking about this is not easy'. And 'I know we have not talked about this before and it might be hard'.

Be honest

It helps to be open about you feel. You might laugh or cry. Both are totally normal. And make sure you listen carefully to what the other person says too.

Try out the conversation

You could speak to a friend or someone you work with first. This can be helpful if you are worried about speaking to your family. It gives you a chance to try out the conversation.

Go slow

Do not feel like you need to cover everything. You could plan a few conversations instead.

Write a letter instead

If you are worried, you could write a letter instead of talking. You could use it to explain what you want to say. You could even give the letter at the same time as a gift. This could help you share your feelings. Or you could write a letter and a list of what you love about life.



Remember, no conversation is perfect. But you will make life easier for everyone by talking about death now.

Dying Matters is a campaign run by

