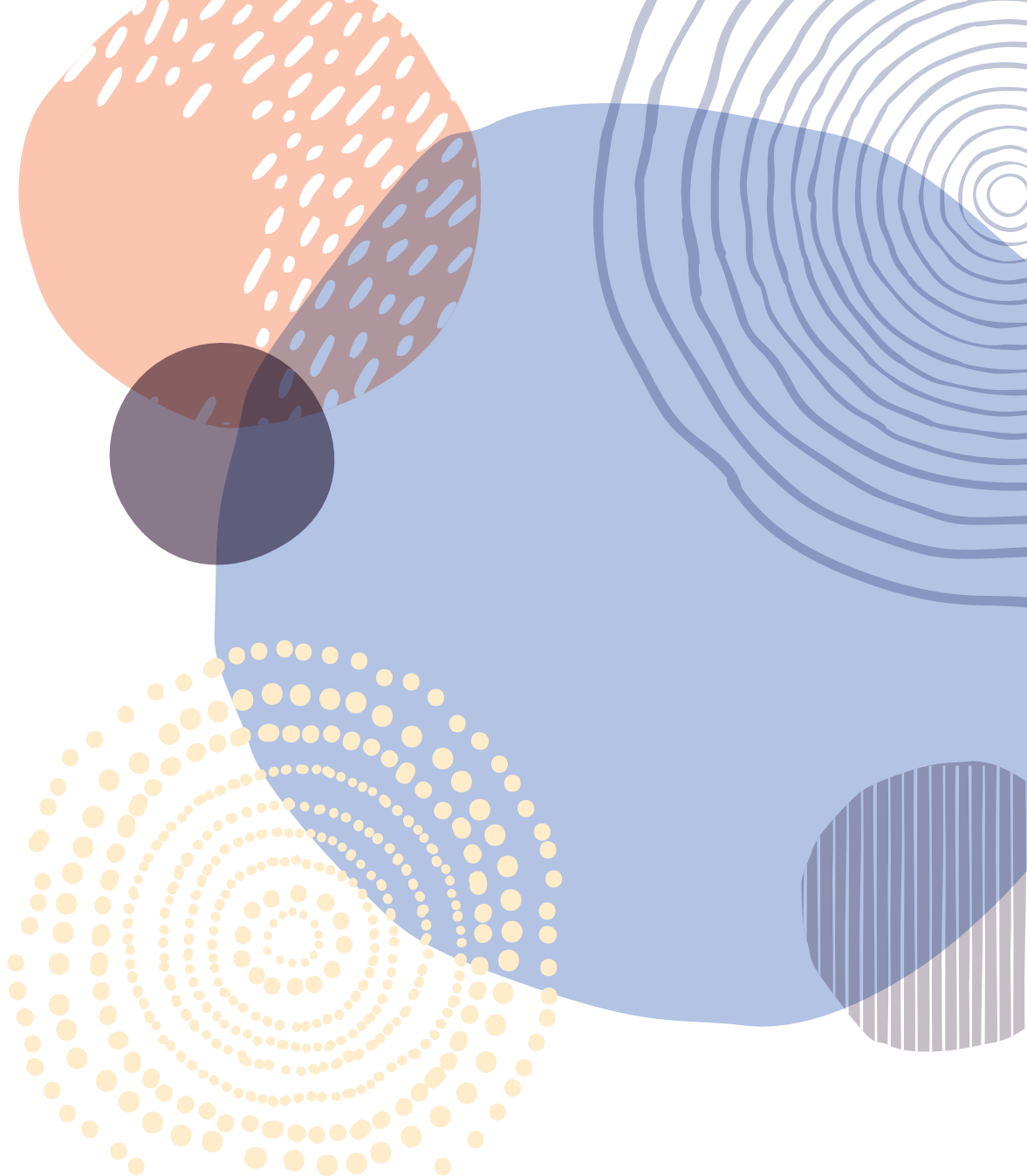




Easy English



# What to do when someone dies

Information for family and friends



Proudly supported by  
Queensland Health's  
**Clinical  
Excellence**  
Queensland



## Hard words



This book has some hard words.

The first time we write a hard word

- the word is in **blue**
- we write what the hard word means.

## You can get help with this book



You can get someone to help you

- read this book
- know what this book is about



- find more information.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should know that this book talks about death and dying.

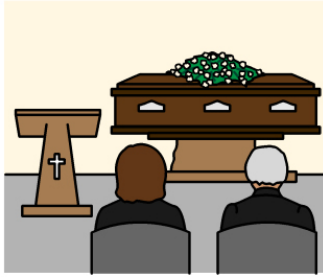


## About this book



**Queensland  
Government**

This book is written by Queensland Health.



This book is about what to do when a **relative** or friend dies.

A relative is someone from your family.



It is hard when someone you know is dying or dies.



Take your time to read this book.

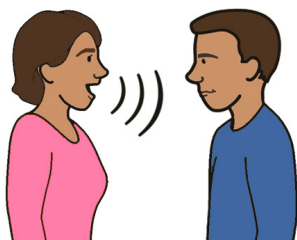
Only read the parts you feel ready to read now.

## You can do things to help someone who is dying



A relative or friend might be sick and know that they will die soon.

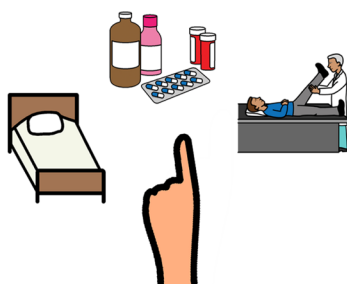
There are ways you can help them now to support them.



You can talk to them about their

- wishes and beliefs

and

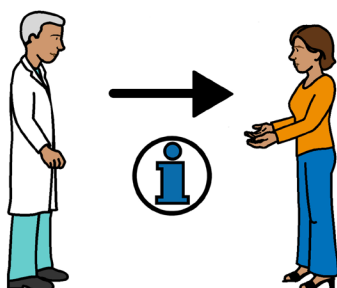


- choices for medical treatment.


You can talk with health workers about

- what other supports your relative or friend needs

For example, spiritual or cultural supports



- what to expect when someone dies.

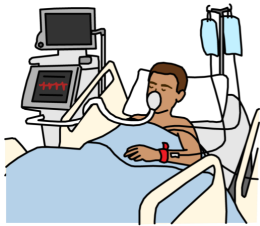


You can help someone decide where they want to be cared for as they get close to the end of their life.

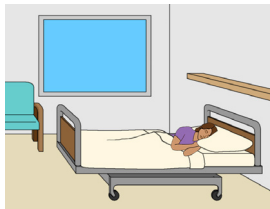


For example

- in their home



- in hospital



- in **palliative care**.

Palliative care is health care for people who are sick and at the end of their life.



If your relative or friend chooses to die at home you will need a health worker to help you.

A health worker could be

- your local doctor
- an expert in palliative care.

For example, a doctor, nurse or social worker.

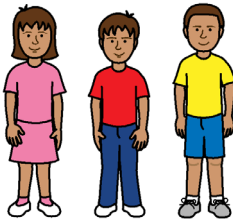


You can help your relative or friend to write a **will**.



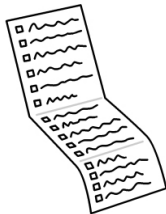
A will is a legal letter that tells people

- what you would like to happen to your things when you die



- who will care for your children when you die

- what sort of funeral you want.

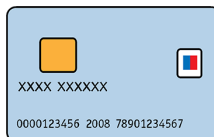


You can make a list together of all of their important personal information.



Important personal information might be

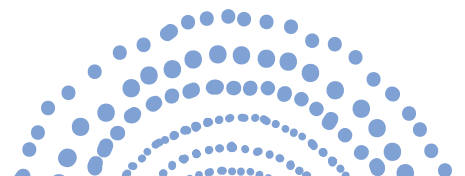
- a birth certificate or Medicare card number

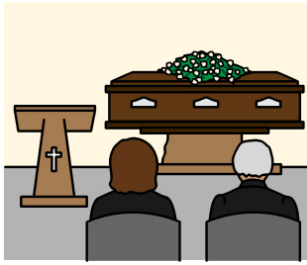


- bank account details

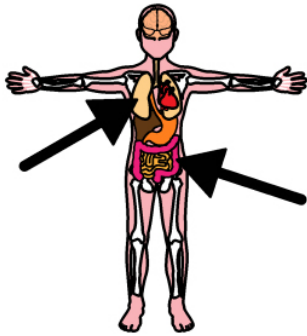


- passwords for their phone or computer.





You can help your relative or friend to plan their funeral.



You can talk about a choice to **donate** their **organs** after they die.

Donate means to take an organ or body tissue from one person and put it into another person to save their life.

Organs might be a kidney or lungs.



You can find more information about how to donate organs and body tissue at DonateLife.

Call 07 3176 2350

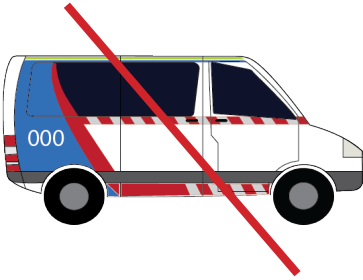
Website [donatelife.gov.au](https://donatelife.gov.au)



You can also help your relative or friend to say goodbye to people they love and care about.

## When someone dies at home

### When someone dies at home and you knew it would happen



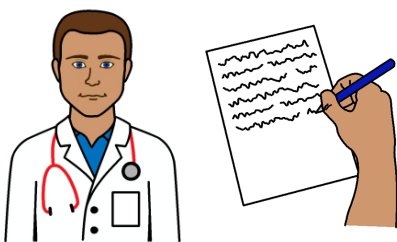
It is **not** an emergency when your relative or friend dies at home and you knew it would happen there.



It is important that you know who to call to write the **cause of death certificate**.



A cause of death certificate is a legal letter that says the reason why the person has died.



The person's doctor or a doctor who knows their medical history can write the certificate.



The certificate must be written within 48 hours of the death.





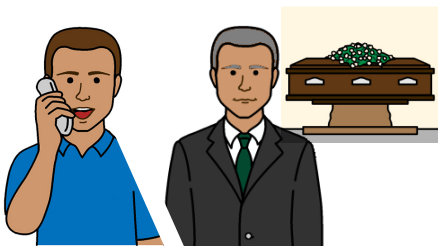


You can have time alone with your relative or friend before anything needs to be done.



When you are ready call the

- doctor
- palliative care service



- **funeral director.**

A funeral director can help you make a plan after your relative or friend dies.



You can find a funeral director at the Australian Funeral Directors Association.

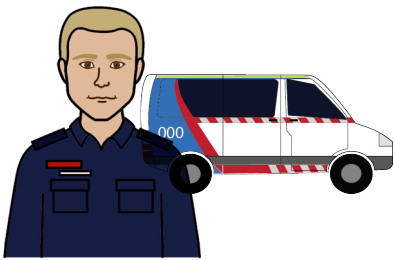
Website [afda.org.au](http://afda.org.au)

## When someone dies at home and you did not know it would happen



If your relative or friend dies at home and you do **not** know how they died you should call an ambulance on **000**.

The **paramedics** will contact the doctor.



Paramedics are people trained to help someone who might need to go to hospital straight away.



The doctor will write a cause of death certificate.



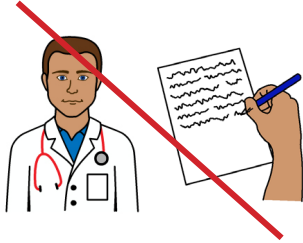
If the paramedics can **not** get a cause of death certificate from the person's doctor they will need to call the police.

Do **not** worry. This is a normal part of the process.





The police will talk to other doctors about what has happened and then a doctor will write the cause of death certificate.



A cause of death certificate can **not** be written if the person's death is

- **not** natural

For example, an accident or violent death.



and



- **not** expected.

The police will report the death to the **coroner** who will find out how the person died.



The coroner is a public officer who finds out someone's cause of death when it is sudden, violent or unusual.

## When someone dies in hospital



If your relative or friend dies in hospital the staff will help you.



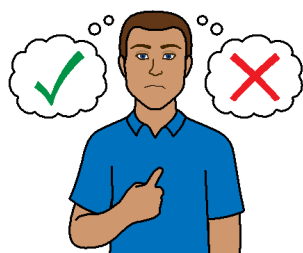
You can have time alone with your relative or friend before anything needs to be done.



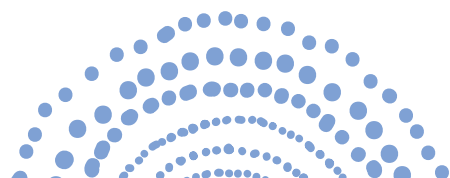
You can ask the hospital workers for help or more information.

It can help some people to see their relative or friend after they have died to say goodbye.

This is called a viewing.



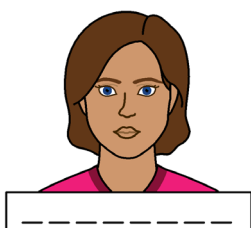
You can choose if you want to go to a viewing.



## What you can do after someone dies

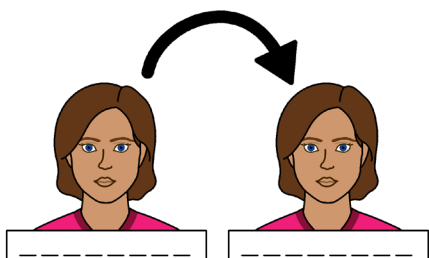


After your relative or friend has died you will need to get all of the important personal information you have about them.



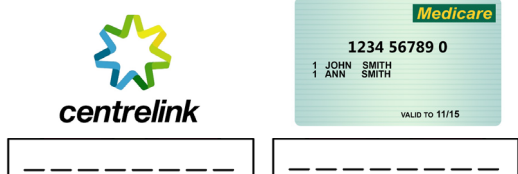
You might need information like

- their full legal name. **Not** a nickname.



- other names they have used.

For example, their name before they were married.



- important numbers.

For example, Medicare card number, Tax File Number or Centrelink Customer Reference Number.



- financial information.

For example, loans or **superannuation**.

Superannuation means money paid to an account for a worker to use when they retire.



You will need to find a copy of their will.

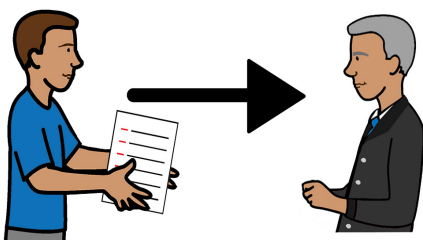
You must let the **executor** of their **estate** know about their death.



Executor means the person who has the legal right to make things happen that are in the will.



Estate means all of the things the person owned when they died.

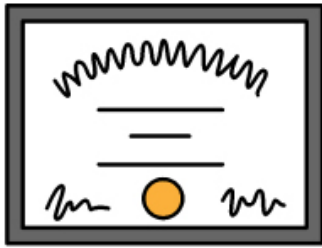


You must let the right organisations know about the person's death.

These might be

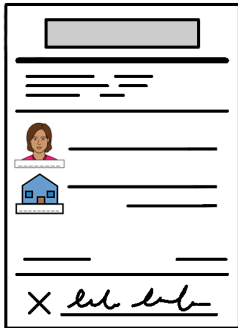
- the bank
- Centrelink
- Australian Taxation Office.





You can let the organisations know by showing them the **death certificate**.

The death certificate is the official notice of death. It is different to the cause of death certificate.



You might need to give the organisations personal information about your relative or friend who has died.



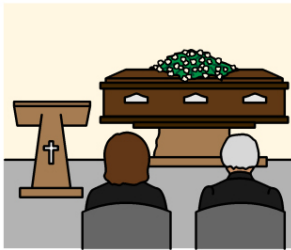
If your relative or friend was paid money from Centrelink it is important to let them know about the death as soon as possible.



If you do **not** tell them straight away they might keep making payments that you will need to pay back later.

## About the funeral or memorial service

There are different ways to say goodbye to your relative or friend.



A funeral has a burial or **cremation** and happens at

- a funeral home



- a cemetery



- a crematorium

- a church or other place of worship.



Cremation is when a relative or friend's body is made into ashes for burial.

A memorial service can happen anywhere and there is **no** burial or cremation.

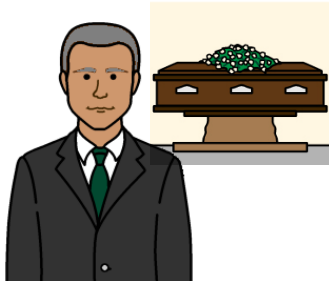






The funeral director will help to organise

- transport of the body



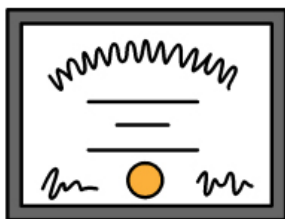
- a funeral or memorial service

- a viewing for family and friends



- a funeral service with the help of a church leader if needed

- registration with the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages



- the death certificate.

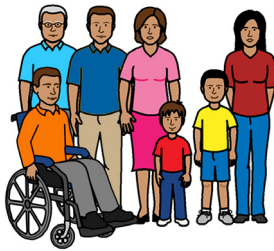
## How to pay for a funeral

A funeral can be paid for in different ways.

For example



- your relative or friend might have paid for their funeral before they died



- family might pay for the funeral

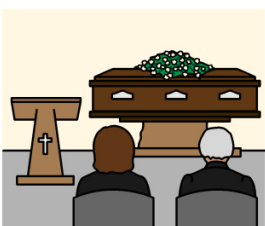


- the funeral might be paid from the relative or friend's superannuation.



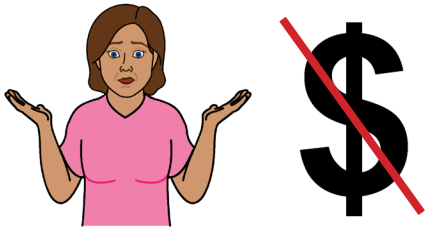
The cost of the funeral will depend on what happens in the service.

Always check what the cost includes and does **not** include.



For example, a burial with a big service will cost more.

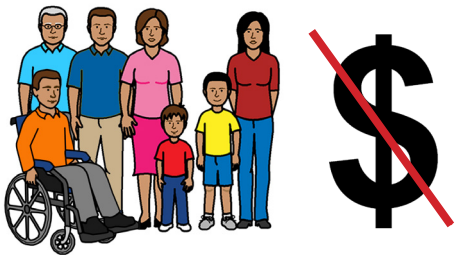




The government can help if

- the person who died did **not** have enough money to pay for a funeral

and



- the family can **not** pay for the funeral.



**Queensland  
Government**

The Queensland Government can pay **funeral assistance**.



Funeral assistance is money to help pay for a simple burial or cremation.



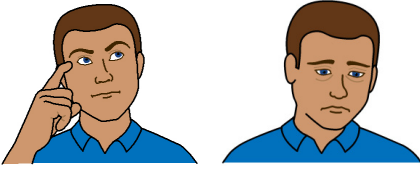
You can apply for funeral assistance at your local Magistrates Court.

## How to care for yourself and others

**Grief** affects different parts of our lives.

For example

- how we think and feel
- how we do things
- our relationships with other people.



Grief is when you feel really sad after you have lost someone or something.

It is important to know that grief is normal.





Grief affects people in different ways.

For example

- crying and sadness



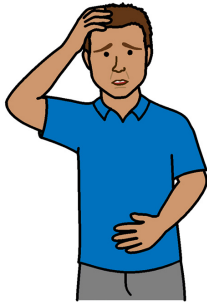
- anger



- nightmares



- feeling sick.



Some people have grief for a short time and other people have grief for many years.

Grief is different for everyone. That is OK.



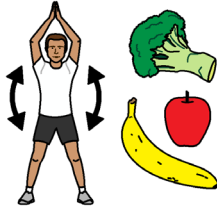
People deal with their grief in different ways.

There are a lot of ways to care for yourself and others while you grieve.



You can

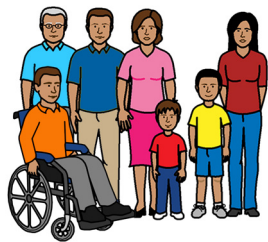
- make sure you get enough sleep



- eat a healthy diet and do exercise



- try **not** to make big life decisions

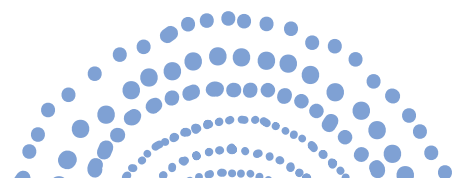


- keep in contact with friends and family.

Proudly supported by  
Queensland Health's  
**Clinical  
Excellence**  
Queensland



For help to find support services go to  
[qld.gov.au/careatendoflife](http://qld.gov.au/careatendoflife)



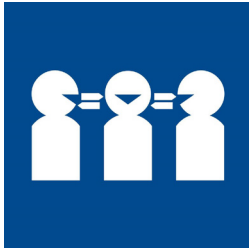


## More information

For more information contact  
Queensland Health.



Call 13 432 584



If you need an interpreter contact the  
Translating and Interpreting Service.

Call 131 450

This is free when you call a Queensland  
Government service.



If you need more help contact your doctor.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters of Australia and the Torres Strait. We respect all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their customs and their beliefs. We also pay our respects to Elders past and present.

© Scope (Aust) Ltd. You may use this document for your own personal, non-commercial purposes only. You must not use the document for any other purpose and must not copy, reproduce, digitise, communicate, adapt or modify the document, or any part of it, (or authorise any other person to do so) without the prior consent of Scope (Aust) Ltd.

Scope's Communication and Inclusion Resource Centre wrote the Easy English version in June, 2020.

To contact Scope call 1300 472 673 or visit [www.scopeaust.org.au](http://www.scopeaust.org.au)

To see the original contact Queensland Health.

The Picture Communication Symbols ©1981–2020 by Tobii Dynavox.

All Rights Reserved Worldwide. Used with permission.

Boardmaker® is a trademark of Tobii Dynavox.