

Talking to relatives

A community guide to compassionate phone calls during Covid-19 outbreak



1

Introduce

- My name is
I am a
- #hello my name is...

Speak slowly

- I'm calling to give you an update on your relative.....
- Open with a question
- Are you okay to talk?

Establish what they know

- Can you tell me what you know about his/her/their condition?

2

Share information in small chunks



Use
Pauses, simple language



Avoid
Euphemisms, jargon

3

Helpful concepts

- **Honesty and uncertainty**
There are treatments that might help your relative's symptoms. But if his/her/their heart stopped we wouldn't try to restart it as this wouldn't work
- **Hope for the best but plan for the worst**
We hope improves with these treatments but we are worried he/she/they may not recover
- **Sick enough to die**
Your relative is very sick and getting very tired. He/she/they is/are now so unwell he/she/they could die in the next hours or days. I'm so sorry to have to tell you this over the phone, but sadly your relative died a few minutes ago

4

Comfort and reassure

- *Is there anything you can tell me/us about your relative to help us look after him/her/ them. What matters to him/ her/ them?*
- *We've been looking after him/her/them making sure he/she/they is/are comfortable*

5

Allow silence

- **Listen**
I am so sorry please take your time
- **Empathise**
I appreciate It must be very hard to take this news in over the phone
- **Acknowledge**
I can hear how upset you are. This is an awful situation

6

Ending the call

- **Don't rush**
Before I end the call do you have any questions about?
- **Next steps**
Do you need any further information or support?

7

After the call

- **Debrief** by chatting to a colleague and these situations are hard

Signposting for bereavement support for Community

- Please follow the SOP for appropriate after death care and sensitive removal of belongings.

- | | | | |
|--|----------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| ● Cruse Bereavement | 0808 808 1677 | ● Samaritans | 08457 90 90 90 |
| ● Dying matters | 08000 21 44 66 | ● Macmillan Cancer support | 0808 808 0000 |
| ● Mariecurie.org.uk/supporting-children | | ● Winstons Wish | 08452 03 04 05 |
| ● St Leonard's Bereavement Support Service for bereaved adults | | | 01904 708553 |