

When words are difficult

You do not need perfect words

It is natural to worry about saying the wrong thing, especially when someone you love is seriously ill or dying. A gentle, honest sentence is often enough. Speak as you normally would, and leave room for them to answer - or not.

Simple ways to begin

"I'm here."

"I love you."

"Would you like to tell me what's on your mind?"

"Would you like to talk, or would you rather sit quietly together?"

Listen and follow their lead

You may hear fear, sadness, hope, memories or practical worries. You do not have to find an answer to everything. Try listening without rushing to reassure. You might simply say, "Tell me more," or "That sounds hard."

Silence can be a kindness

Some moments need no words at all. You might sit nearby, hold a hand if it is welcome, or share a familiar piece of music. Being there with warmth and attention can say a great deal.

A gentle reminder

You can pause, begin again, or say, "I'm not sure what to say, but I'm here."

Your presence matters more than finding the perfect phrase.