

Notes

This ceremony can be used by any caregiver to provide comfort to someone nearing the end of life. It is meant to be short, recognizing that some caregivers, especially those working in hospitals may have many other responsibilities.

It is ideal if you can ask permission from the individual for whom this ceremony is being performed. If they are unable to respond, ask family members and/or friends. If there is no way to ask for permission, use careful judgment. Let them know it is a simple way to support them as they approach the end of life.

As the caregiver, take a few calming breaths to center yourself before beginning. If you are unable to find a sense of calm for yourself or to be fully present for the person nearing end of life, it may be better to leave this for another time. The person approaching end of life will need your full attention and presence. They do not need you to be free of emotion, however, and it is okay to feel whatever arises. But be careful not to displace your emotions too far onto them. The goal is to bring them a sense of relative comfort and ease.

During the ceremony, the caregiver will be breathing in support of the person nearing end of life. Breathing deeply can sometimes bring about lightheadedness, so please be very careful to steady yourself. It can be helpful if the caregiver is either seated or holding onto a bed rail, counter, or wall.

There is an option below with space for the caregiver to read a short poem. We have several available on our website, or choose your own.

Introduction

Caregiver: [NAME], I would like to offer this simple ceremony to you to let you know that I see you, honor you, and support you. I will offer my breath to you, hoping that it brings you a sense of comfort and peace.

Ritual

(If it is possible to safely take their hand, asking permission where possible, gently do so)

Caregiver: [NAME], I take this deep breath in for you. As I do, I SEE you.

(Caregiver breathes slowly in)

Caregiver: [NAME], I exhale this breath deeply for you. As I do, I HONOR you.

(Caregiver slowly breathes out)

Caregiver: Breathing in, I see you.

Breathing out, I honor you.

(Caregiver breathes slowly in and then breathes slowly out for a few rounds, taking care to remain steady)

Caregiver: [NAME], I make this act of breathing as an offering to you. Allow it to be a symbol of the many others who love you and also want to honor you right now. Though they may not be physically present, they are surrounding you with breath.

Breathing in, we see you.

Breathing out, we honor you.

(Caregiver breathes slowly in and then breathes slowly out for a few rounds, taking care to remain steady)

Caregiver: [NAME], I and others share our breath with you. We see you. We honor you.

(Pause for a few seconds)

Caregiver: [NAME], as I breathe for you, know you are not alone.

(Pause for a few seconds)

Caregiver: And as I breathe out, allow yourself to rest.

(Pause for a few seconds)

Caregiver: As I breathe in for you, know you are not alone.

As I breathe out for you, know you can rest.

(Pause for 10 seconds, caregiver breathing slowly and carefully, gently continuing to hold a hand if possible)

OPTIONAL: This may be where the caregiver reads a short poem. We have several available on the website as examples. If this option is chosen, then:

Caregiver: [NAME], I would like to read a short poem. Don't worry too much about the exact words. Just allow them to wash over you in any way that naturally occurs.

Conclusion

Caregiver: [NAME], as I have breathed with you, I have invited you to know that you are seen and honored. I have also invited you to know that you are held by those who love you and that you can rest.

(Pause for a few seconds)

Caregiver: [NAME], you are seen.

[NAME], you can rest.

(Pause for a few seconds)

Caregiver: As I close this short ceremony, allow yourself to remember this. You are seen.
You can rest.

END