

## What do we do with mama?

My mother died on the first of June 2020. She was 88 years old with a medium level of dementia, and she stayed at her home with 24-hour surveillance. At the end, she was not feeling well, and we took her to a clinic where we had to follow all the COVID-19 rules. Because the situation was not so bad in Greece, they allowed one family member to stay with the patient, so my sister or me were able to visit one at a time.

One week after my mother's entrance to the clinic, the doctor said, "Your mama is getting better, and she can leave the clinic, but it's difficult to take care of her at home. You have to find a place like a clinic for old people, where she can be taken care of."

I immediately thought, *this is a very difficult situation. We can't take mama to an elderly home, because they don't allow visitors at all.*

My sister and I went to a lot of places, but the rule was unbreakable: no visitors. Once you leave the person there, he or she would be alone.

I said to my sister, "Julie, you know what will happen if we put mama in a place like this? One day they will call us and say, 'sorry, your mother passed away,' and we won't be able to see her again, not even in her coffin. I don't want this; I don't accept this!"

My sister fully agreed, and we started looking for another solution. Finally, we found a lady who is a retired nurse and could take care of our mother at her home, where we could visit her. We made all the arrangements, but the day before she was scheduled to leave the clinic, my mom's health started to deteriorate. Just two days later, she died. She never left the clinic at all.

I'm not happy that my mother died, but I'm happy that my sister and I were there until the end. We were in the room holding her hands and watching her all the time. I'm not sure if she understood our presence –I think she did. I only know that we were all together in this. And that if it wasn't so, I would feel terrible thinking that my mom died alone.

Three weeks after her death, I had a dream. We were in our living room at my parental home, my sister, mom and myself, laughing, in a very good mood, preparing to go out. Suddenly my mom came and sat on my knees like children do. I woke up with a feeling of happiness and euphoria. I told the dream to my sister: "Julie I don't know where mama is, but I think she's feeling good!"

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