



Hospice of the Twin Cities

Hospice Insights

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“It is your attitude, not your aptitude, which determines your altitude in life.”
-Anonymous

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We Wish You Happy Holidays!

With the Holidays upon us it is time for gifts, hope, good cheer, and families sharing special moments together. And, it is perhaps the most difficult time of the year to bring up the subject of hospice. No one wants to think their loved one is in the last phase of their life, especially during the holidays. But let us think about what hospice really brings.

Hospice brings hope, comfort, peace and the presence of those who care, with the acknowledgment that each and every one of us has made valuable contributions in our lives, and that our lives have meaning from the moment we take our first breath until the moment we take our last breath. It seems appropriate then that we, as caregivers, continue assessing our resident/patients for hospice appropriateness throughout the holiday season ~ it could be the greatest gift we give to those we care for.

The following are some of the indicators which may help you assess those you take care of for hospice appropriateness:

◆ **Primary diagnosis of Cancer, any chronic disease that becomes “end-stage”, advanced**

diabetes, HIV/AIDS, and pneumonia with co-morbidities.

◆ **The presence of advance directives which reflect “comfort care”** such as do not resuscitate, do not intubate, do not hospitalize, do not run lab tests or x-rays, no antibiotics for infections, no blood transfusions, no I.V. fluids, etc.

◆ **Has received curative or life prolonging treatments and no longer benefits from them** (i.e. Chemotherapy, radiation, and/or dialysis.)

◆ **Has their MDS triggered several “quality indicators”?**

◆ **Has s/he seen the doctor more often than usual?**

◆ **Has s/he fallen several times recently?**

◆ **Has s/he had a significant decline in physical functioning over the past six (6) months, including increased dependence in mobility, locomotion, eating, dressing, bathing, and personal hygiene?**

◆ **Has s/he complained of pain on a daily or almost daily basis?**

◆ **Has s/he increased the usage of pain medications?**

◆ **Has s/he started feeling weaker or more tired, even though they are sleeping more?**

◆ **Has any of the following health conditions:** recurring fever, recurring infections, internal bleeding, increased shortness of breath, pressure ulcers which do not heal.

◆ **Has s/he had several hospitalizations or trips to the “ER” in the past six months?**

◆ **Has s/he had a documented weight loss of 10% of body weight over a six (6) month period of time?**

◆ **Has s/he been told by their physician they have a “limited life expectancy”?**

◆ **The cure is worse than the disease.**

◆ **The individual states, “I am dying...”.**

◆ **Ask yourself this question “Would I be surprised if s/he were not alive six months from now?”**

All of us at Hospice of the Twin Cities thank you for the privilege to serve with you. We wish you peace, health, and love for the New Year.

Happy Holidays!

How to Help a Grieving Friend During the Holidays

Twelve Practical Ways You Can Offer Help and Support

From Hospice of the Twin Cities and the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization

The holidays, especially the first ones after a loved one's death, can be especially difficult for a person who is grieving. Friends and family members may be unsure how to act or what to say to support their grieving loved one during the holidays.

In general, the best way to help those who are grieving during the holidays is to let them know you care. They need to be remembered, and know their loved ones are remembered, as well. Local hospice grief counselors emphasize that friends and family members should never be afraid of saying or doing the wrong thing, because making an effort and showing concern will be appreciated.

Here are some tips grieving people have shared:

1. Be supportive of the way your friend chooses to celebrate the holidays. Some may wish to follow traditions; others may choose to change their rituals.
2. Offer to help with tangible tasks such as baking, cleaning, or decorating. Seemingly simple tasks can be overwhelming while

dealing with grief.

3. Invite the person to attend a religious service with you and your family.
4. Offer to help with holiday shopping, or share your favorite catalogs and on-line shopping sites.
5. Invite your friend to your home for the holidays.
6. Inquire if your friend is interested in volunteering with you during the holiday season. Doing something for someone else, such as helping at a soup kitchen or working with children, may help him or her feel better about the holidays.
7. Make a donation in memory of your friend's love one, as a reminder that his or her special person is not forgotten.
8. Remember to avoid telling your friend that s/he should be "over it"; grief is an individual process and there are no right or wrong ways to grieve.
9. If your friend wants to talk about the deceased loved one or feelings associated with the loss, LISTEN. Do not worry about being conversational...just listen.
10. Remind the person you are thinking of him or her and the loved one who died.

Cards, phone calls, and visits are great ways to stay in touch.

11. Offer to help with preparing and mailing holiday cards.
12. Offer to help him or her decorate for the holidays.

Many people are not aware their community hospice is a valuable resource which can help people who are struggling with grief and loss. Hospices provide bereavement support to the families they serve and often offer services to other members of the community, as well.

Hospice is a philosophy of care for patients with life-limiting illnesses. A team of professionals and trained volunteers offer care and comfort to patients and their families when a cure is no longer possible. Fully covered by Medicare and most insurance companies, hospice services are available at home or in a facility, such as a nursing home.

More information is available from the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization's Web site, www.caringinfo.org or by calling the HelpLine at 1-800-658-8898. Para Español: *Cuidando con Cariño*, 1-877-658-8896.



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Mission Statement

Hospice of the Twin Cities' mission is to enhance the quality of the lives of our patients and their families by providing respectful care based on maintaining dignity, alleviating physical, psychosocial, and spiritual suffering, advocating for fundamental rights, and affirming the sacred value of life.