

Twelve Tips to Help a Grieving Loved One During The Holidays

The holidays are quickly approaching and while many people look forward to yearly traditions, gatherings with family and friends and the general good feelings associated with the season, some people dread the holidays.

For those who have lost a loved one during the past year, the holidays may emphasize their grief, reports the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization.

Often friends and family of those affected by a loss are unsure how to act or what to say to support their grieving loved one during the holidays.

Hospices are valuable community resources that often help people who are struggling with grief and loss. Hospices provide bereavement support to the families they serve; many offer specialized programs to help the bereaved cope with the holidays.

NHPCO offers twelve practical tips from hospice professionals:

1. Be supportive of the way the person chooses to handle the holidays. Some may wish to follow traditions; others may choose to change their rituals. Remember, there is no right or wrong way to handle the holidays.
2. Offer to help the person with baking and/or cleaning. Both tasks can be overwhelming when someone is experiencing acute grief.
3. Offer to help him or her decorate for the holidays.
4. Offer to help with holiday shopping or give your loved one catalogs or suggest online shopping sites that may be helpful.
5. Help your loved one prepare and mail holiday cards.
6. Invite the person to attend a religious service with you and your family.
7. Invite your loved one to your home for the holidays.
8. Ask the person if he or she is interested in volunteering with you during the holiday season. Doing something for someone else, such as helping at soup kitchens or working with children, may help your loved one feel better about the holidays.
9. Donate a gift or money in memory of the person's loved one. Remind the person that his or her special person is not forgotten.
10. Never tell someone that he or she should be "over it". Instead, give the person hope, that eventually, he or she will enjoy the holidays again.
11. If he or she wants to talk about the deceased love one or feelings associated with the loss, LISTEN. Active listening from friends is an important step to helping him or her heal. Don't worry about being conversational...just listen.
12. Remind the person you are thinking of him or her and the loved one who died. Cards, phone calls and visit are great ways to stay in touch.

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 they need to know their loved ones are remembered too.

Local hospice grief counselors emphasize that friends and family members should never be afraid of saying or doing the wrong things, because making an effort and showing concern will be appreciated.

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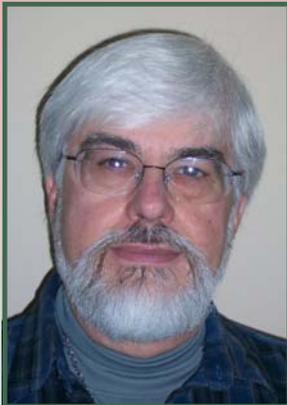
New Staff Members

High Desert Hospice welcomes their new Spiritual Care and Bereavement Coordinator.

Patrick Stroup has served the spiritual needs and bereavement care of hospice patients and their families in the Klamath Basin for the past six years. Patrick is a graduate of Eugene Bible College holding credentials with Open Bible Churches Inc. with over 25 years' experience in pastoral care. He has served a Pastor at Keno Open Bible for the past thirteen years. He has served as Chaplain for Klamath County Sheriff's Office for the past ten years supporting Sheriff Personnel and the community in time of crisis.

Patrick and his wife, Teresa have three grown children who currently reside in Portland, Fairbanks and Ottawa Canada. Teresa is finishing her Master's Degree in Social Work and is employed at Lutheran Community Services.

Patrick was awarded the Oregon Hospice Association's Award of Excellence back in 2008. His colleagues describing his care as "deeply compassionate and respectful; honoring the unique path of each patient while demonstrating a heartfelt commitment to walk beside them, regardless of their spiritual faith or value system."



Happy Holidays

Family Comments –

- It's comforting to me and my family to know that my wife of 62 years received the best care available on this earth the last 60 days of her life. Thank you and God bless you all.
- Family members from California who were present at time of death commented that High Desert Hospice provided much more care of the patient and consideration of the spouse than those hospice organizations they had dealt with. We were all impressed with Angela and, as the surviving spouse, felt blessed that God sent her to us.
- I would like to thank the whole hospice team for all they did and thank you for the small painting. I have it where I can see it every morning to remind me that God will make tomorrow a better day.
- We appreciate the care and help received. Mom loved her hospice family and she looked forward to every volunteer visit and to the nurse and doctor's visits. She told me at first she was so scared, but by the last two months was very content and aware of the process. Karen helped her spiritually. Mom said she was "ready" the day before she died. For all this, I am so grateful.



"It deeply saddens me that we live in a world where grievors have to defend their right to grieve. The only thing it does is create more grief."

Volunteer Corner



There is no better place than working for hospice to learn the lesson that change is inevitable. Life is not static, but very dynamic. My biggest change in these last few months is my transition to semi-retired. What that means is I am concentrating on only the tasks of being Volunteer Coordinator. There will be more on this as time goes on so look for some of the changes.

I do want to take this opportunity to say thanks for all the wonderful work that the volunteers have provided this last year. As you know, hospice need to have 5% match of volunteer hours to paid patient care hours. We made that match and more in 2012. Congratulations to our volunteers and thank you all so very much.

Karen Little
Volunteer Coordinator



Volunteers give themselves wholeheartedly, and in doing so they improve the health of their own hearts (and minds).

Volunteers bring the outside world to those that they visit, and with this action they make the world a better place.

Thank you for all you do.

~Call to Volunteer
(541) 882-1636~

Annual Snowflake Parade

The theme this year was Star Spangled Snowflakes and the float was decked out in flags and red, white and blue lights. Because of our "We Honor Veterans" program, we were especially proud to participate.

~A special thank you to our friend, John Boehm, a WWII veteran, for joining us on our float~



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Light A Candle

Celebrations of Christmas, Hanukah, and New Year's seem to always involve lights. Turning down all the bright lights and just lighting a candle can be a ritual to help you get through the holidays.

Light a Candle

by Paul Alexander

And I will light a candle for you.
To shatter all the darkness and bless the times we knew.
Like a beacon in the night
the flame will burn bright and guide us on our way.
Oh, today I light a candle for you.
The seasons come and go, and I'm weary from the change.
I keep moving on, you know it's not the same.
And when I'm walking all alone
do you hear me call your name?
Do you hear me sing the songs we used to sing?
You filled my life with wonder, touched me with surprise,
Always saw that something special deep within your eyes.
And through the good times and the bad,
We carried on with pride.
I hold onto the love and life we knew.
And I will light a candle for you.
To shatter all the darkness and bless the times we knew.
Like a beacon in the night
the flame will burn bright and guide us on our way.
Oh, today I light a candle for you.