

THE TRIPLE C

Caring, Compassion & CHOICE

Hospice can help patients and families face end of life emotions

By JANE HRON, RN BSN - Marcus Daly Hospice Center and Services

When someone is referred to hospice it is often a decision fraught with emotion and a multitude of feelings – sorrow, anxiety, confusion, frustration, anger, and sometimes relief. When the hospice team steps into the picture and begins to offer support, they immediately address any physical symptoms the patient may be experiencing. Hospice clinicians are experts in managing any kind of physical symptom and comfort is our top priority.

The team will also begin to explore other goals the patient may have at this time in their life. What do they hope for now? What is left undone? What is important for them to have a “good death” or to “die well,” to be at peace? Modern psychological theorists, among them Erik Erickson, Jean Piaget and Abraham Maslow, whose work forms the basis of modern behavioral medicine, all asserted that human development is a life-long process. Even at the end of life the range of human experience and the opportunity for growth remains vast.

In hospice we speak of the seven tasks of living and dying healed, which are:

Please forgive me. I forgive you. Thank you. I love you. Good bye.

Let Go.

Open up.

It is said that these seven tasks hold the secret to living and dying free and healed. The words sound pretty simple, and it sounds like it might be easy, but it isn't. It is very difficult and takes some work. It takes courage, honesty, and humility. Take a little time to contemplate these seven tasks and reflect on those areas of your life that you could apologize for, offer forgiveness to someone, show your appreciation and your love, grieve the losses in your life and let them go, and then open up for all that is coming into your life in the future.

As Ira Byock, a long time palliative care physician and author states, “Through my years as a hospice doctor, I have learned that dying does not have to be agonizing. Physical suffering can always be alleviated. People need not die alone: many times the calm, caring presence of another can soothe a dying person’s anguish. I think it is realistic to hope for a future in which nobody has to die alone and nobody has to die with his pain untreated. But comfort and companionship are not all there is. I have learned from my patients and their families a surprising truth about dying: this stage of life holds remarkable possibilities. Despite the arduous nature of the experience, when people are relatively comfortable and know that they are not going to be abandoned, they frequently find ways to strengthen bonds with people they love and to create profound meaning in their final passage.”

Do you know someone who is living with a serious illness, without options for a cure? Someone who is beginning that last journey at the end of life? Hospice can help.

Family Quote

“You were our lifeline. The caring, compassion, knowledge, respect and patience could never be completely understood unless you actually experienced the support of the Old Colony Hospice workers...”

Quote of the Month

“When you forgive, you heal your own anger and hurt and are able to let love lead again. It’s like spring cleaning for your heart.”

Marci Shimoff



For more information, please

call us at:

781-341-4145

Old Colony Hospice
One Credit Union Way
Randolph, MA 02368

www.OldColonyHospice.org

