

ABOUT HOSPICE:

Hospice is patient-centered palliative care which aims to make the last months of life as comfortable and peaceful as possible for patients and their caregivers. Hospice strives to improve quality of life at the end of life, not only for patients, but also for their family and friends. The patient, family and volunteer caregivers are considered an integral unit. Hospice is not a place - it's a concept. The focus is on caring, not curing; on life, not death. Quality of life, family wellness, community involvement and personal dignity are all part of the compassionate and progressive vision of Hospice.

AT THE SHUSWAP HOSPICE SOCIETY:

◆ We provide trained volunteers for the visitation of patients with life-limiting illness, either in their home, in the hospital or in facilities and in partnership with a team of health professionals.

◆ We support the rights of all persons to receive consistent physical, emotional and spiritual assistance to maintain individuality and dignity while facing life-limiting illness and bereavement.

◆ We offer continuing bereavement grief support through one on one or group sessions.

◆ We are integral Members of the end-of-life palliative care team in the Shuswap.

◆ We are members of the British Columbia and Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Associations (BCHPCA, CPHPCA) and the British Columbia Bereavement Helpline (BCBH).



The Shuswap Hospice Society supports those who are struggling to cope with death and the associated emotional realities of that process.

The Society provides grief and bereavement support to the families and friends of those whose loved ones have died.

FUNDING

To help supplement partial funding from IHA

We are a non profit, volunteer organization that depends on donations and support from:

- > In-Memory Gifts
- > Memberships
- > Service Organizations
- > Bequests
- > Your Donations
- > Fundraising

YOU CAN HELP

- > Become a Member
- > Become a Volunteer
- > Make a Donation
- > Leave a Bequest

Please make your cheque payable to Shuswap Hospice Society or go online to donate at www.shuswaphospice.ca

ACCESS

Our Services are provided **free** to anyone who needs them. Referrals can be made by anyone, for yourself or anyone you know.

We want you to know:

That you are **not alone**,
That we **care**,
That we are here to **help**,
Please **CALL**
250.832.7099



WHEN SOMEONE DIES

*Providing Compassionate
Care Services to the
Shuswap Since 1986*

Shuswap Hospice Society

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When someone dies, our world is changed in an instant. When a relationship changes, our lives change. When someone dies, things are never the same again.

This is why, when there is a death, we feel helpless and powerless. It may be the first time that we can't control an outcome. It may be the first time that we can't *'make it better'* for ourselves or for our children.

When you are grieving there is a strong feeling to want to be alone. This may even mean that you do not want to be around other close family members or friends. As time passes, it is important to reach out to those who are close and to share stories about the person who has died. This is part of your healing.

HOW WE MAY REACT WHEN WE EXPERIENCE GRIEF AND LOSS

There are many ways that we react to death, grief and loss. You may not experience all of those listed here, but these are some natural grief and loss reactions. If the grief and loss you are experiencing is frightening or doesn't slowly go away, you should talk to someone about it. When there is a loss, you can have physical, emotional, psychological, social and/or spiritual reactions to the loss.

Finding someone to talk things over with are very powerful and helpful ways to do grief work.

PHYSICAL GRIEF AND LOSS REACTIONS

- ◆ Pain in the neck, head, jaw, back, chest.
- ◆ Pounding or racing heartbeat.
- ◆ Stiff, sore, weak muscles.
- ◆ Feeling dizzy or fainting or like you are choking.
- ◆ Having difficulty breathing.
- ◆ Changes in appetite.
- ◆ Changes in sleep patterns - can't get to sleep, waking in the middle of the night, always sleeping.
- ◆ Feeling jumpy and sensitive to sudden, loud noises, crowds, or other people.
- ◆ Being absent-minded or accident prone.
- ◆ Feeling restless, low energy, exhaustion.

If any of these physical conditions are worrisome, contact your physician and have them checked.

EMOTIONAL GRIEF AND LOSS REACTIONS

- ◆ Disbelief and shock that the death occurred.
- ◆ Crying - sobbing or unexpected, sudden outbursts of crying.
- ◆ Frequent sighing.
- ◆ Relief that the person's suffering is over or that a bad relationship is over.
- ◆ Anger at the medical system, higher power, the person who died, yourself, or whoever/ whatever was responsible for the death.
- ◆ Irritability.
- ◆ Nightmares or dreams about the death or person who died.
- ◆ Withdrawn, uncommunicative.
- ◆ Talking a lot, rambling, confused, repeating conversations or stories.
- ◆ Anxiety, panic, fear.
- ◆ Sadness or despair.
- ◆ Envy of other families or of the one who died
- ◆ Guilt for:
 - not preventing the death, even though this was not possible.
 - things said or done in the past you wish you could take back; things not said.
 - things you promised to do or wish you had said and never did.
 - surviving.
- ◆ Irrational thoughts about joining the dead person or about the death.
- ◆ Visual images or thoughts that are experienced repeatedly
- ◆ Think you are losing your mind.
- ◆ Can't concentrate.
- ◆ Memory and time are distorted.
- ◆ Self-absorbed - no energy or interest in others.
- ◆ Loss of confidence and security.
- ◆ Increased sensitivity to appreciation of /or criticism from others.
- ◆ Unable to cope with people's jokes, laughter, complaints.
- ◆ Problems making decisions.
- ◆ Depression.
- ◆ Afraid you have a serious illness.
- ◆ Not allowing yourself to believe you are OK.

These and more are all completely normal.



SOCIAL GRIEF AND LOSS REACTIONS

- ◆ Loneliness.
- ◆ Isolation - "I'm the only one who has ever felt like this." "Nobody understands."
- ◆ Changes in relationships.

SPIRITUAL GRIEF AND LOSS REACTIONS

- ◆ Loss of faith, questioning previous beliefs.
- ◆ Openness to the spiritual world.
- ◆ Interest in other faith traditions.
- ◆ Feelings of connection or communication with the person who died.
- ◆ Asking, "Why?" "Why them?" "Why me?"
- ◆ Asking, "What is the meaning of life?" "What is the meaning of my life without them?"
- ◆ Asking, "Where are they now?" "Is there a Heaven?"

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF?

- ◆ What was your relationship with the person who died like?
- ◆ Was the death sudden or anticipated?
- ◆ How were you involved with the death?
- ◆ What else is happening in your life?
- ◆ How did you deal with other losses you have had?
- ◆ What support do you have in place?
- ◆ What did the dying person want after their death?
- ◆ What is your expectation of your grief journey?
- ◆ How long does this grief journey last?

All or some of these answers will shape your grief journey. The answers to these questions may help you to return to functioning in a way that puts some energy back into your life. It is very helpful to reach out for support.

Shuswap Hospice Society offers a variety of Bereavement and Grief Support Programs. You are not alone and we are here to help you

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