

## National Hospice & Palliative Care Month

By Kristina Nguyen RN, BSN, CHPN, Director of Patient Care Services

It's Silverado Hospice's time to shine as November is National Hospice and Palliative Care Month. Here at Silverado, we strive to provide the best care we can to patients and in the environment, they choose to receive care. This could mean in the hospital under a special level of care, an assisted living facility, in a skilled nursing facility, or in their personal homes.

Silverado is a Joint Commission accredited company. This means the company willingly requests a surveyor to come to our hospice sites and perform an audit to ensure we are maintaining those standards and making corrections, if needed.



As a team, we openly welcome this critiquing of our work as it ensures us to better our team to be one

of the best, if not the best, hospice provider in California.

It takes a special nurse, certified home health aide, medical social worker, and spiritual counselor to provide day to day care to a hospice patient. So, I write to my team with a heart filled with gratitude in wishing them a happy National Hospice and Palliative Care Month and a sincere thank you to everyone who works hard to keep Silverado as one of the best.



*Happy National  
Hospice &  
Palliative Care  
Month*

### Awareness Dates to Remember

American Diabetes Month

Lung Cancer Awareness Month

National Adoption Month

COPD Awareness Month

Stomach (Gastric) Cancer Awareness Month

Epilepsy Awareness Month

Family Caregiver's Month

Alzheimer's Disease Month

National Hospice & Palliative Care Month

National Patient Transport Week | Nov. 1-7

Allied Health Professionals Week | Nov 6-12

National Radiologic Technology Week | Nov 6-12

International Accounting Day | Nov. 10

World Pneumonia Day | Nov 12

National Nurse Practitioner Week | Nov 13-19

Perioperative Nurse Week | Nov. 13-19

Great American Smoke Out | Nov 17

# NEWSLETTER



## Helping Teens Deal with the Loss of a Parent

by Jaime Anderson, MSW

Losing a parent when you are a teen can be one of the most difficult experiences in their lifetime. Adolescence is a time when coping skills are only just beginning to surface, specifically during the ages of 13 to 18. During this stage of our lives, our bodies are developing both physically and mentally, and any traumatic event can alter normal development. This makes the grieving process, on top of self-discovery and self-identity, a grueling ordeal for many teens.

Grief is an unavoidable part of life. No matter what you do, grief will find you. Although it is a natural side effect of losing a loved one, we tend to have a pessimistic outlook on the grieving process. Many are taught at a young age that expressing “negative” emotions is wrong, which makes the grieving process profoundly difficult. But for many, grief can be a first-time experience during adolescence following an expected or unexpected death of a parent.

Many adolescents have an adult understanding of the concept of death, but don’t have sufficient life experiences, coping skills, or behavior of an adult, that is needed to be able to deal with the sadness and grief associated with loss. For bereaved teens who haven’t yet experienced the landslide of emotions related to loss, most will not possess sufficient self-care knowledge or understanding to properly cope. While we can’t hide teens from the loss of the parent and the pain associated with that loss, we can help them build healthy coping skills and support them through the grief process.

### Communication

Death can be a challenging subject to discuss with anyone, let alone a teenager. Even on a “normal” day with both parents present, a great number of teenagers struggle to communicate (or are willing to). Teens can be like adults, some will display healthy and appropriate emotions and grief, and others will struggle to

self-regulate and will mask or hide their emotions and feelings from family and friends, often reporting that “they are fine.” Bereaved teens may not be receptive to support from adult family members because of their need to be independent and separate from parents. In addition, the level of connectiveness that existed between the teen and the now deceased parent can have a profound effect on the grieving process of the teen.

Regardless, never shut down lines of communication with a bereaved teenager! It is important for family, caregivers, friends, and other figures in their lives to remain available and be present for the time when they are ready to talk. How an adult responds to a teenager following the death of their parent can have a major effect on the way the teenager reacts to the death. While we know that talking about death can be a tough subject to tackle, we can never assume that the teenager will be protected by not discussing the subject. In fact, it can even do more harm than good, and the teenager will grieve alone.

Teens will need caring adults to confirm that it is alright to be sad, angry, and various other emotions when a loved one passes. It is also important for them to understand that those feelings won’t last forever. Teens will grieve, just like adults, but if ignored, they may suffer more from the feelings of isolation, than the actual death itself.

### Things you can say to a teenager regarding grief:

- Crying is allowed
- Absent grief is a thing
- You’re not alone
- It’s normal and healthy to show emotion
- You don’t “get over” grief
- Don’t numb your pain in unhealthy ways

## Connections

When an important family member dies, the whole family can feel fractured and incomplete. It's quite natural to want to withdraw for a while and it is at this time that adolescents can feel lonely and disconnected from their grieving parent. It's important that your teen is able to still feel connected to the parent who has died and to you. You can help them to do this in the practical ways listed below.

### Specifically, they need:

- adequate information about the death
- their fears and anxieties addressed
- reassurance that they are not to blame
- careful listening
- acknowledgment and acceptance of their feelings and grief
- a sense of safety in the world
- respect for their own way of coping
- people who will guide and help
- help with overwhelming emotions
- involvement and inclusion in rituals and anniversaries
- opportunities to remember the person who has died

The most important thing a family can do in this difficult time is to try and maintain as normal a daily routine as possible. Continue school drop offs and pick-ups, going to church, extra-curricular activities, family meals, and celebrating holidays and special occasions. Teens want to feel as 'normal' as possible despite the loss. Make time to acknowledge the parent who is no longer alive. Look back on "special" moments during these events when they said something funny, put together memory scrapbooks and photo albums, journaling can also be a great way to keep connections alive. Teens today are great with technology,

making videos and other forms of social media can help them through the grieving process. Nevertheless, include your teenager in how and what those connections will look like for the future. The first significant events following the passing are always the hardest!

## Understanding Behaviors

Teens may want to protect their family fearing that if they express their loss and grief, it will only bring further sadness to the family. Instead, they internalize those feelings, which end up coming out in other ways. Displays of social withdrawal (not wanting to take part in previous activities), physical aggression and anger/impulsivity, sleeping and eating disorders, trouble with academic achievements, guilt, and self-destructive behaviors (drug & alcohol use, self-harm, dangerous behaviors). Many of these signs are normal following the death of a parent but may indicate a problem if they continue for a long time and don't seem likely to change. Seeking professional help to address these concerns from a licensed therapist is an opportunity for a teen to talk about difficult things in a safe and non-judgmental environment, and with a neutral party. There is no shame in seeking help!

Even at the best of times, the teen years can be challenging. Teenagers may want to be independent, yet at the same time want to be taken care of. It's common for teens to have a wide range of emotions, often within a short period of time. The death of a parent only adds to the difficulty of the teen years. It presents new challenges for both the teenager and his or her family. The death of a parent can have a profound effect on the life of a teenager. A teen's formative years largely depend on parental guidance and support. When a teenager loses a parent, it may be incredibly hard for them to cope with their grief.

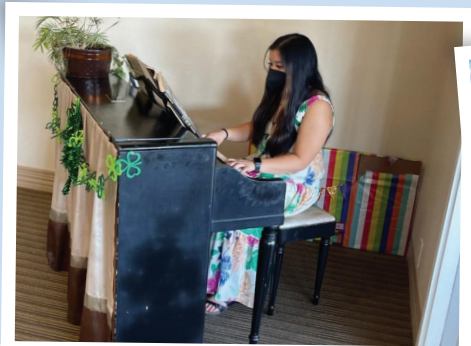
**November is Children & Teens' Grief Awareness Month.** It gives an opportunity to consider the unique needs of these children and teens. One of the best ways that adults and loved ones can help teens who are grieving is to listen to their stories, emotions, and concerns. Validate and normalize their fears and feelings. Be present and available when they need you. Remember, you are going through the loss together, but that doesn't mean you are going to experience the same things at the same times. The grieving process is unique to each person, and the best way to help someone going through it is to communicate and provide support and encouragement along their path to acceptance of the loss.

# Volunteers Needed

Silverado Hospice offers various ways to support individuals under hospice and palliative care. One way is through our Volunteer service program. There is an ongoing need for companionship, caregiver relief and emotional support. Volunteers act as an additional support along side the care team (Physician, Nurse, CHHA, Social Worker and Spiritual Counselor). We're in need of the following volunteers:

- We Honor Veterans - Vet to Vet companionship
- Music interactions
- Memory Bear Program - sewers needed
- Social visitors
- Memory Catcher - video editors
- Petals for Patients - floral arrangements and delivery
- Administrative Assistant - Irvine Hospice office

For more information on how you can join our team of Volunteers, contact the Volunteer Manager, Valerie Lomeli. (888) 328-5660



Music Interactions



Vet to Vet Companionship



Memory Bears

## CONTACT US

24-hour line: (888) 328-5660

Fax: (949) 653-0452

Referral line: (800) 507-9726

Volunteer inquiries: (888) 328-5660

Visit us online with our 24/7 Live Chat Line: [silveradohospice.com](https://www.silveradohospice.com)



If you would like to leave one of your favorite team members a praise, you may do so on our Yelp page. Search **Silverado Hospice Orange County**