

Silverado Hospice

Newsletter

Silverado Hospice Los Angeles

Mental Health Matters

It's Mental Health Awareness Month! During October, let's take time to recognize the importance of prioritizing our mental well-being, as this issue impacts so many people. While there are countless factors contributing to mental health challenges, the key takeaway is that poor mental health can hinder our ability to live fully and function effectively. A healthy mind helps us cope with stress, manage daily activities, form meaningful relationships, and boost productivity. On the other hand, poor mental health can affect both our physical and mental state. If you notice your mental health is declining, don't hesitate to seek help. Remember, there's no shame in addressing these issues. We all deserve to be our best selves and live life to the fullest. Stay strong and positive—no matter the challenge!

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Conversations to have with your Hospice Team

We are pleased to support you and your family with end-of-life care. Our mission is to enhance the quality of life for patients nearing the end of their journey. While difficult, planning for the future is an important part of this process. Some families may feel overwhelmed and hesitant to plan, as they may not want to immediately confront the reality of losing a loved one. However, the sooner you and your family can prepare for what comes after, the smoother the transition can be back into everyday life. We encourage you to talk to your healthcare team about any questions or concerns you may have regarding these plans.

Making Legal Arrangements

As part of making after-death arrangements, it is essential for patients to seek legal assistance to prepare any necessary agreements, such as managing assets, filing life insurance claims, and handling matters with institutional agencies. Pre-planning these arrangements can help alleviate stress and frustration during the grieving process, making it a bit more manageable. We recommend that these conversations remain private, only to be discussed with trusted professionals. For beneficiaries to collect assets, institutional agencies will require a death certificate. If the patient has served in the military, they may also be eligible for military funeral honors. It's important to discuss plans for the body, including options like eye or body donations, traditional burial, or cremation. For more information on these options, we encourage you to connect with your hospice team.

At the time of death

We want you to ALWAYS feel that you are prepared! We especially want you to feel that you understand what to expect as your loved one is passing. Familiarize yourself with the symptoms of death. If you wish, you may call us to assist when you begin to recognize these symptoms. We do not recommend that you call 911, as it can cause unnecessary anxiety to an already difficult time. When you call us, we help attend to the death and contact the funeral home and primary physician. If prior arrangements were not made, we will need to make quick decisions on where and how your loved one will rest

Common symptoms that death is near are:

- A sense of confusion or disorientation
- Loss of bladder and bowel control
- Loss of interest in consuming food
- Restlessness and agitation
- Seeing or hearing things that you do not

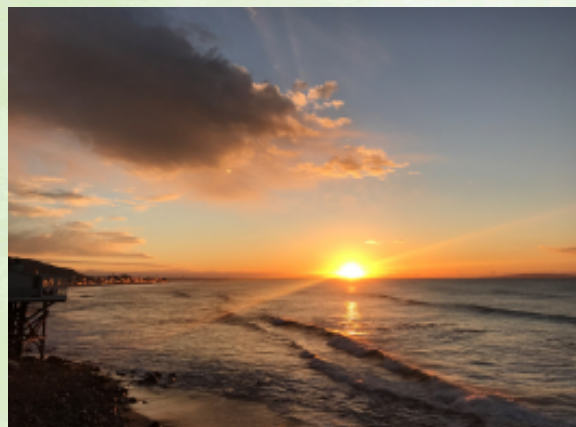


As you notice these symptoms, try to ease the patient's discomfort in any way you can. Speaking in a calm voice and holding their hand can provide comfort. Many people nearing the end of life may unknowingly prolong their discomfort until they feel reassured that their loved ones will be all right after they are gone. Take this time to say your final words, offering them peace and comfort.

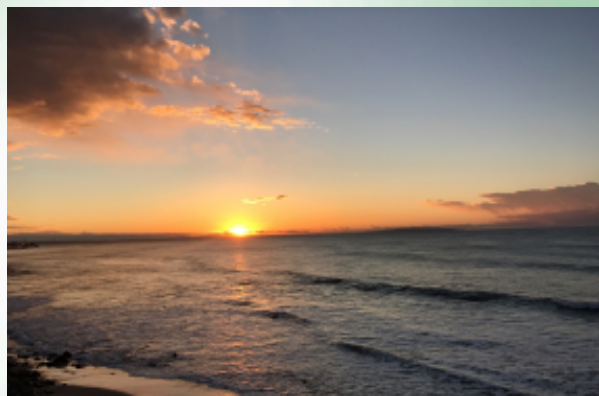
Important conversations before your loved one passes

Dr. Ira Byock, a passionate advocate for palliative care writes in his book “The Four Things That Matter Most”, that dying people want to hear these four things before they pass:

- Please forgive me
- I forgive you
- Thank you
- I love you



A fifth important thing may be goodbye. Think about having these conversations, and have meaningful conversations you’d like to express.



How will you know your loved one has passed?

- Signs a death has occurred:
- No heartbeat
- No breathing
- No response to verbal or physical stimuli
- Eyelids may be slightly open or eyes fixed on a certain spot
- Jaw is relaxed and mouth may be slightly open
- Loss of control of bowel or bladder

Care for the caregiver

No matter how prepared you are, loss can still feel overwhelming. Your emotions and feelings are valid, and grieving is a natural process that everyone experiences differently. Remember, we offer emotional care through our bereavement program to support you during your grief journey. You are not alone. Bereavement services are available by calling (888) 328-6622.

“All deaths are sudden, no matter how gradual the dying may be.”

Daily Reflection

"When someone dies, the first thing to do is nothing. Don't run out and call the nurse. Don't pick up the phone.

Take a deep breath and be present to the magnitude of the moment.

There's a grace to being at the bedside of someone you love as they make their transition out of this world. At the moment they take their last breath, there's an incredible sacredness in the space. The veil between the worlds opens.

We're so unprepared and untrained in how to deal with death that sometimes a kind of panic response kicks in.

"They're dead!"

We knew they were going to die, so their being dead is not a surprise. It's not a problem to be solved. It's very sad, but it's not cause to panic.

If anything, their death is cause to take a deep breath, to stop, and be really present to what's happening. If you're at home, maybe put on the kettle and make a cup of tea.

Sit at the bedside and just be present to the experience in the room. What's happening for you? What might be happening for them? What other presences are here that might be supporting them on their way? Tune into all the beauty and magic.

Pausing gives your soul a chance to adjust, because no matter how prepared we are, a death is still a shock. If we kick right into "do" mode, and call 911, or call the hospice, we never get a chance to absorb the enormity of the event.

Give yourself five minutes or 10 minutes, or 15 minutes just to be. You'll never get that time back again if you don't take it now.

After that, do the smallest thing you can. Call the one person who needs to be called. Engage whatever systems need to be engaged, but engage them at the very most minimal level. Move really, really, really, slowly, because this is a period where it's easy for body and soul to get separated.

Our bodies can gallop forwards, but sometimes our souls haven't caught up. If you have an opportunity to be quiet and be present, take it. Accept and acclimatize and adjust to what's happening. Then, as the train starts rolling, and all the things that happen after a death kick in, you'll be better prepared.

You won't get a chance to catch your breath later on. You need to do it now.

Being present in the moments after death is an incredible gift to yourself, it's a gift to the people you're with, and it's a gift to the person who's just died. They're just a hair's breath away. They're just starting their new journey in the world without a body. If you keep a calm space around their body, and in the room, they're launched in a more beautiful way. It's a service to both sides of the veil."

Celebration of Life

Silverado Hospice teamed up with Silverado Rolling Hills Memory Care Community to host a Celebration of Life for the residents at Rolling Hills who have passed on. The individuals remembered included both residents of Rolling Hills and hospice patients. Each team member had the opportunity to speak about a resident who had passed and filled a vase with sand in their memory.

At Rolling Hills, each resident becomes a family member to the team, and their passing impacts not only the families who have lost a loved one but also the individuals who cared for them within the community. Losing a loved one is never easy, but sharing memories and discussing how they touched our lives brings a bit of comfort.

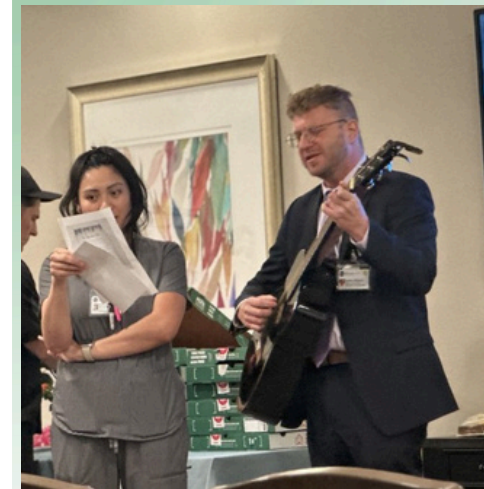
Thank you to Rolling Hills for allowing us to participate in this meaningful Celebration of Life.



In this picture you will find:
Pictured (left to right)
Nikao, Social Worker
Nina, RN Case Manager



In this picture you will find:
Pictured (left to right):
Nina, RN Case Manager
Farid, Rolling Hills Administrator
Nikao, Social Worker



In this picture you will find:
Pictured (left to right):
Nina, RN Case Manager
Joshua, Spiritual Counselor