

End of life care is more than the last 24 hours

People often tell Hospice nurses, "I could not do what you do."

The perception of Hospice Nurses is they care for people who die.

Hospice nurses are with people when they die, and they are also with people during their last months of life.

When given the opportunity to care for someone and their family before they die, Hospice Nurses enable people to live their last days to the fullest.

"Living to the fullest" means life without pain, planning afterlife care, and having important conversations.

The reality is Hospice Nurses spend far more time dealing with the living than the dead.

In Hospice, we talk about "dying" and "active dying." Dying is something we all do every day and it begins with birth.

Cells die, cells are replaced, some cells are not replaced, our body ages. This is different than active dying when body systems begin to shut down.

An actively dying Hospice patient may stop eating, drink less, sleep more, and begin to withdraw emotionally. Active dying can last for hours, days, or weeks. It is best if Hospice care begins before active dying begins so Hospice Nurses can help patient and family prepare themselves for a final journey.

When someone is actively dying they may not be conscious all the time and may be unable to make important decisions or have meaningful conversations. Therefore, important decisions are made and conversations occur before active dying begins. This is why end of life care is more than the last 24 hours.

Hospice Nurses are experts at listening and assessing a Hospice patient's position on the scale of active dying.

When we understand a patient and family, and before active dying begins, we facilitate meaningful conversations such as telling people they are loved, discussing things people wish they had done differently or things they wish they had done, expressing apologies, and expressing hopes.

Hospice Nurses also ensure the Hospice patient's wishes are known so they can be honored after death.

Families appreciate a Hospice Nurse guiding them through difficult conversations, managing symptoms, and making sure funeral planning is finalized.

This end of life care is enhanced with more time.

End of life care and afterlife care are wonderful terms in the healthcare community today.

These terms indicate that care is needed as someone dies and after they die.

Hospice facilitates planned end of life and afterlife care.

This planning is best with the active involvement of the dying person. Hospice Nurses are well trained to assist a dying person and their loved ones experience good end of life and afterlife care.

We will help you if you call us for the last 24 hours of life, and we will appreciate the opportunity to assist you and yours for longer than 24 hours since we believe end of life care is more than the last 24 hours.

Call (970) 887-9074 Heart of the Mountains Hospice for more information or to talk about Hospice care for someone you care about.

The Heart of the Mountains Hospice office is located in Granby and we have Nurses on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



Carol Kelly, RN, is the Clinical Coordinator for Hospice services in Grand County. She oversees direct patient and family care and manages all the administrative tasks associated with growing a Hospice organization. Carol began as a volunteer RN when we began offering Hospice care in 2001 and remains the “heart” in Heart of the Mountains Hospice.

Powered by [TECNAVIA](#)

Copyright © 2008, Sky High Daily News 03/18/2008