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## Tagline

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## How You Can Support Someone Who Is Grieving

**R**ecognizing that it's often hard to know what to say or do to help someone who is grieving the death of a loved one, *Reader's Digest* published a list of "9 True Stories That Will Show You What People Going Through a Loss Really Need." Below are practical suggestions from the article based on personal stories from contributors who experienced loss. Read the stories and learn more about grief support at [www.rd.com/advice/relationships/losing-a-loved-one/](http://www.rd.com/advice/relationships/losing-a-loved-one/).

### Give a handmade memento.

Creating a handmade memento to capture memories can mean a lot to someone who is grieving. Consider collecting handwritten notes from friends and family about the person who died. The notes could be packaged in a decorative box and given to the bereaved person — a lovely gift that can be cherished for years.

### Be a bodyguard.

Challenging situations can arise after a loved one's death. Being a "bodyguard" — stepping in and protecting the grieving person from tough interactions or insensitive people — can help. Contact the funeral home and ask the hard questions; answer the many calls, emails, or texts from well-wishers; or be at the grieving person's side to redirect rude or nosey people. Removing these stressful burdens can create a safe space for the person to grieve.



### Share happy memories.

Reach out to share fond memories of the person who died. Talk about good times, fun trips, or qualities of the bereaved person that remind you of their lost loved one. Maybe they have the same features or sense of humor. This can make the grieving person feel like they are carrying on their loved one's legacy.

### Get out of your comfort zone.

Plan a special activity just for the grieving person. Book a spa day or take the person to a movie they want to see, even if these things don't interest you. Taking time out of your busy schedule or going out of your comfort zone can show the person you care.

### Be supportive through a range of emotions.

Understand that there can be conflicting emotions a grieving person may feel. Take a moment to let the person know that "it's OK to not be OK when you lose someone you love."

### Give flowers long after the funeral.

While many people share support for a short while after the loss, small acts of kindness continuing long afterward can provide lasting encouragement and support. Sending flowers or a sweet treat with a note weeks after the funeral might give the person a boost just when they need it.

### Just listen.

"Everyone has a different grieving process." It's important to talk less and listen more in order to understand and validate the grieving person. Sometimes people don't need advice. They just want to talk to someone about how they feel and be heard.

### Allow plenty of time for grieving.

Everyone grieves at a different pace, and a grieving person shouldn't feel pressured to resume normal life when others feel they should. Give the person as much time as they need to grieve and find a new normal. Avoid pushing the person to start dating or moving on in other areas of their life if they are not ready.

# End-of-Life Care Highlights for Families

## Hospice Milestone: 50 Years of Compassionate Care

It was a half century ago that Dame Cicely Saunders, a nurse, social worker, and physician, opened St. Christopher's Hospice outside London, England, and revolutionized the way society cares for the dying and bereaved. Saunders' quote, "You matter because you are you, and you matter to the last moment of your life," is a pillar of hospice philosophy.

This modern medical movement inspired the Hospice Demonstration Project in America in 1978, and since that grassroots effort, hospice has become an integral part of healthcare in the United States. Over the last 50 years, more than 14 million patients and their families have benefited from the care and compassion of tens of thousands of hospice professionals and volunteers.

By 1982, Medicare covered the cost of hospice services, expanding the clinical expertise on pain and symptom management, emotional and spiritual care, medications, therapies, and other specialized support for those nearing the end of life. Palliative care also began to become more mainstream, addressing chronic pain and other needs of seriously ill patients who were still receiving curative treatments.

Earlier on, many hospice patients had cancer. Today, patients with a broad range of illnesses are admitted to hospice, including heart and lung disease, Alzheimer's/dementia, stroke, AIDS, and many other conditions. After 50 years of groundbreaking work, about 6,000 hospice programs are now in operation, offering compassionate care to patients at home, hospitals, nursing homes, and inpatient care centers across the country.

## A Prescription of Hope

*Moments of Life* is a public awareness campaign created by the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. On the campaign website ([www.momentsoflife.org](http://www.momentsoflife.org)), a daughter of a hospice patient shares her thoughts: "Hope generally is not the

first word most people associate with the word 'hospice.' Yet, hope is the word that describes my family's experience in the hospice journey. Our wish and desire for the remainder of mother's life was for her to be free of pain and supported so that she could actually live."

When aggressive medical treatment is no longer effective or wanted, seriously ill patients and their families often ask, "What's next?" Many are looking for hope and a way to deal with their fears, loss of control, and grief.

Most families served by hospice say if they had known about hospice, they would have called sooner. They realize that even if there is no longer hope for a cure, they can rely on a dedicated team to be there for the patient — to manage pain, honor wishes, and care for loved ones.

If you wonder whether hospice is right for you or a loved one, talk to your doctor or contact hospice directly. Learn more at [www.caringinfo.org](http://www.caringinfo.org).

## How Hospice Works

- 1. Referral.** Talk to your doctor or call hospice when a patient with any serious illness, regardless of age, is thinking about stopping curative treatments.
- 2. Eligibility.** For the patient to be eligible for hospice services, two doctors must verify that the patient will likely live six months or less; services can be cancelled at any time.
- 3. Payment.** Services, medications, and equipment are covered by Medicare, Medicaid, and most private insurance, as well as non-profit support for those who can't pay.
- 4. Location.** Hospice goes wherever the patient lives — home, inpatient setting, hospital, or other facility.
- 5. Care Plan.** Treatments and care team visits are scheduled to meet the patient's unique needs; the care plan changes with the patient's condition and includes grief support for family members.

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**Hospice Name**

Street

City, State, ZIP

**Phone**

[www.website.com](http://www.website.com)