



MEMORIAL HEALTH SYSTEM
Home Health & Hospice of Dickinson County
ABILENE Salina Regional Health Center

Newsletter

Spring 2023



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Abilene Office

1111 N. Brady
(785)263-6630

Herington Office

11 N. Broadway
(785) 258-3611

Hello to the newly bereaved. I'm sorry to meet you here in the place where loved ones leave you - a place where no one wants to be.

If this is your first time here, you may find it darker, foggier, and more frightening than you expected. If you've been here before, you'll probably notice that things look different than you remember. That's the nature of this place. It's always changing, depending on who you're saying goodbye to.

You may feel incredibly alone right now, so the first thing I want you to know is that there are people who want to help you find your way out of this place. Most people can only join you for parts of your journey, and those who you do and do not see along the way will probably surprise you. But they are out there.

There may be times when you feel let down by your support system, but try and remember, they aren't trained for this. Most likely, your friends and family have the same good intentions, but varying levels of tact and execution.

Though providing honest feedback sometimes feels awkward, you'll get more of what you need if you can tell people what is and is not helpful. Also, try and lean on your loved one's strengths and forgive their weaknesses at least once. And when all else fails, look for the grief safe havens in your community - the counselors, support groups, and grief centers.

The next thing you should know is there's no trail of bread crumbs to lead you back to your old life. After someone you love dies, life changes. Joan Didion (<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Joan-Didion>) put it well when she said, *"Life changes fast. Life changes in the instant. You sit down to dinner and life as you know it ends."*

That's not to say everything familiar is lost. Some things about your old life are already gone, and some will necessarily change, but some parts will stay the same - you don't need to know which is which right now. Uncertainty is scary, but it's normal for things to be hazy. There are a lot of things you can't know right now, but they will become more evident over time.

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Also, there's a lot that probably hasn't sunk in just yet. Many people say the days following their loved one's death were a blur. You won't always feel this way. Actually, for many of you, what you're experiencing is probably more akin to a temporary acute stress response (<https://whatsyourgrief.com/acute-stress-response-in-grief/>) than grief.

It's okay to be in shock.

It's okay to feel numb.

It's okay to feel all the things you're feeling.

Grief is a lot of overwhelming things, but it isn't dangerous. Grief, in and of itself, won't harm you - though it does mean experiencing some pretty painful things.

As you become more familiar with grief, throw away any preconceived notions about it following a set of stages. Or about grief having a timeline with a beginning, middle, and an end. It's so tempting to believe in something that makes grief seem manageable. But how could anything unique to you and your relationship with your loved one possibly be so uniform?

I'm sorry to say; grief can be unruly and unpredictable. Sometimes you hear the rumble of thunder before the grief storms hit, and sometimes they bubble up out of nowhere, but they do always subside. And it's through weathering these storms time and again that they incrementally become more bearable. Until eventually, you learn it's safe to go outside even though there's always the chance grief could cloud your day.

Yes, "always". (<https://whatsyourgrief.com/grief-recovery-is-not-a-thing/>)

Your grief will forever be a part of you because your loved one is forever a part of you (<https://whatyourgrief.com/grief-concept-care-continuing-bonds/>) - and this is the last thing I want to tell you (for now). Your loved one is never really gone from this world. No, they aren't physically "here" to look at, talk to, or hold, and that hurts like hell. But in mind, heart, and spirit - as a part of the past, present, and future - they are here.

They are here as long as you remember them. Hold onto this truth and fight for it if you have to. It's the guiding light that will help you out of this place, and chances are it will be part of the foundation on which you build whatever comes next.



2022 Celebration of Life Ceremony

After two years of being unable to hold our annual ceremony in person we were finally able to gather together with families and loved ones to celebrate the lives of previous Hospice patients with a short ceremony and balloon release followed by a potluck dinner where we were able to reconnect with families and share memories with each other.



Thank you to our Hospice volunteers and HH&H staff members that helped to make this event a success!





Toni Schwarting, Hospice Advisory Board 2022 Vice President and Hospice Volunteer gave a warm welcome to everyone in attendance.

Hospice Volunteer Banquet

On November 17, 2022, Home Health and Hospice of Dickinson County was able to celebrate their volunteers in person after not doing so since 2019, with dinner being served by Lucinda's Katering.

A hospice volunteer may fill a variety of roles to patients and families, including such tasks as running errands, providing respite for the family caregiver, offering companionship to the patient by playing games, watching TV, reading, or sharing stories. Hospice volunteers can also be present during a patient's final hours of life. Many people can perform the tasks of a volunteer when it comes to helping with the day-to-day activities, but the task of holding someone's hand as they close their eyes for the final time takes a special kind of individual.



Sister Loretta Jasper of Neighbor to Neighbor, addressed the crowd with passion and wisdom from her many years of experience and spoke on Self Care and Volunteer Impact.



Pictured Left: Adrienne Unruh, Hospice Volunteer Coordinator and Dani Gantner, Director of Home Health and Hospice of Dickinson County, recognized volunteers years of service, including recognition for volunteers that were missed in 2021 & 2020 due to being unable to gather those years.



Special recognition was also given to members of The End of Trail Quilters Guild who were in attendance.





Volunteer Appreciation Bingo!

**National Volunteer Appreciation Week
April 16th - 22nd**

Memorial Health Systems and Hospice of Dickinson County Volunteers enjoyed a lively afternoon of BINGO in honor of the many hours of dedicated service that they contribute to help provide support to others in our community.



*Thank you
to all of our past and
present volunteers!*

*You truly are a integral
piece of the puzzle
that keeps these pro-
grams going!*



Hello Spring!



*Spring sang softly
as Winter died,
"I'll bloom for you;
while my heart
still cries."*

Angie Welland-Crosby

With the sun shining brightly, new buds on trees, the birds chirping joyfully, fresh green grass, and flowers beginning to bloom; the arrival of Spring is undeniable.

This time of renewal in nature seems to also have a way of bringing us out of our winter shell and is often accompanied by feelings of excitement and rejuvenation. The warmth, new color and fragrant scent of fresh flowers in the air can be refreshing and bring about new hopefulness for some. However, the grief experienced from the loss of a loved one can leave others feeling as though they are still covered with a blanket of snow.

The truth is, our grief does not magically melt away just because of the changing of the seasons, but we can take a lesson from nature and allow ourselves time to move through each season of our grief.

It is important to remember that like the changing of the seasons, grief has it's own rhythm. One day you may be feeling energetic and optimistic, the next you may feel tired and unmotivated. One day may be filled with tears, the next with laughter. Like the coming of spring after a long and cold winter, we too will slowly begin to move through our grief and find new growth within ourselves.

Take time today to step outside, look at the new growth of spring, and remind yourself that like a new spring flower it takes time to heal and grow after a long winter.

by: Adrienne Unruh

**In honor of National Nurses Week (5/6/23 - 5/12/23)
We would like to introduce you to a few of our nurses!**



Courtney Nelson RN has been working for Memorial Health System for 6 years and with Home Health & Hospice for the last 2 of those years.

When asked what she loves about her job, Courtney said "I love hospice and I love helping our community. I grew up in this area so I love being able to help care for this community and offering additional support to them through hospice services."

Courtney has two kids: Hollis who is 2 and Morgan who is 6 months old. Courtney stays PLENTY busy in her off time with her family.

Courtney's favorite candy is Tootsie Rolls. Her favorite snack is corn nuts, her favorite ice cream flavor is Dairy Queen ice cream cake. Her favorite soda is Dr. Pepper.



Ashley Burleson has worked for the Memorial Health System for a total of 18 years with the last two here at HH&H! Ashley began her career as a CNA working at Village Manor. She later went on and obtained her LPN and RN. "Sherri Kohman is who inspired me to become a hospice nurse after my mom was on hospice and she took care of her," says Ashley.

"Creating special bonds with my patients and their families and being able to give back to my community" is what Ashley says is her favorite part of working at HH&H.

Some of Ashley's favorites are chocolate and Diet Dr. Pepper. Her birthday is January 14th and her Zodiac sign is Capricorn.



Autumn has worked for HH&H since 2017. She began her career with us as a Home Health Aide (HHA) and advanced her education and became a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) in 2022.

Autumn reports that she loves creating bonds with her patients and their families which is one of her favorite parts of working in HH&H.

Autumn's favorite snack is Nutella and bananas. Her favorite ice cream flavor is cookie dough and her favorite soda is Coke. Her birthday is January 23 and Zodiac sign: Aquarius. Autumn has two adorable babies who are the light of her life!



Melissa Peterson has been an RN for Home Health & Hospice for 7 years and took over the role of Clinical Manager in December of 2021.

When asked what she enjoys about her job, Melissa said "I love the day-to-day critical thinking required to care for our patients & the relationships formed along the way."

Melissa's favorite candy is dark chocolate sea salt caramel (anything). Her favorite ice cream is chocolate chip cookie dough. Her favorite soda is Dr. Pepper or Diet Cherry Limeade. Her birthday is June 30th and Zodiac sign is Cancer.



Today we would like you to meet Kristen Hajek RN. Kristen has worked for Home Health & Hospice for 9 years and is one of our team members that works out of our Herington office.

"Building relationships and making a difference in the lives of those in our community" is Kristen's favorite part of working for HH&H.

Kristen's favorite snacks are brownie brittle or chips and queso. Her favorite ice cream is Dairy Queen ice cream cake and her favorite soda is Diet Dr. Pepper w/cream soda. Kristen is the mother of three beautiful children and is always up for an adventure. Her birthday is July 16th.

Kristen's motto is "Laughter is the best medicine" and we greatly appreciate all of the joy and laughter that she brings into every relationship she builds. Thank you for keeping us smiling

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 Greg & Lynette Sare

 Thank You For
 Your Donation
 & Helping Make A Difference

Coming up...

GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

GriefShare is a special weekly seminar and support group designed to help you rebuild your life after losing a loved one. Our group is led by caring people who have experienced grief and want to help you through the difficult days ahead.

We know it hurts, and we want to help.
Contact Us Today

Wednesdays 6:30pm – 8:30pm
August 2nd - October 25th, 2023
Home Health & Hospice, 263-6630
1111 N Brady, Abilene
for questions or to register visit
http://mhsks.org/home_health_hospice/

GRIEF SHARE

Grieving the death of a spouse?

Or do you know someone who is?

Your life has changed forever. The daily emotions and challenges can seem too hard to bear.

Find help at a Loss of a Spouse seminar.

GRIEF SHARE
LOSS OF A SPOUSE

Call today for more information
(785) 263-6630
Sponsored by Community Bible Church &
Home Health & Hospice
of Dickinson County

May

3rd - GriefShare Group - 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Community Bible Church - Last meeting

11th - Hospice Advisory Board - 12:00 p.m.
Abilene HH&H Conference Rm

18th - Volunteer Meeting - Abilene - 6:00 p.m.
Abilene HH&H Conference Rm

25th - Volunteer Meeting - Herington - 2:00 p.m.
Herington HH&H Conference Rm

June

8th - Hospice Advisory Board - 12:00 p.m.
Abilene HH&H Conference Rm

15th - Volunteer Meeting Abilene - 6:00 p.m.
Abilene HH&H Conference Rm

22nd - Volunteer Meeting Herington - 2:00 p.m.
Herington HH&H Conference Rm

Volunteer Note: If you are interested in helping with the Tri-County Free Fair please sign up by June 1st. We will be looking for volunteers to help with float planning, being in the parade & to sit at the booth.

TCFF 2023: July 6th-8th;
Parade is July 7th, line-up @ 5:15 p.m.

To sign up call (785)263-6630 or email Adrienne at adunruh@mhsks.org

July

6th - 8th - Tri-County Free Fair - Herington
Parade on the 7th

13th - Hospice Advisory Board - 12:00 p.m.
Abilene HH&H Conference Rm

Volunteer Note: If you are interested in helping with the Central Kansas Free Fair please sign up by July 1st. Looking for volunteers to help with float planning & walking in the parade. Also considering have a combined booth with The End of Trail Quilters Guild this year.

CKFF 2023: August 1st-6th.
Parade is August 3rd, line-up time TBA

To sign up call (785)263-6630 or email Adrienne at adunruh@mhsks.org



MEMORIAL HEALTH SYSTEM

Home Health & Hospice of Dickinson County

ABILENE  Salina Regional Health Center

*To be honest with you, I don't have the words
to make you feel better, but I do have the arms
to give you a hug, ears to listen to whatever
you want to talk about, and I have a heart; a
heart that's aching to see you smile again.*

~ Laura Ortiz