



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

Supporting those who are grieving

Aug. 30 is National Grief Awareness Day

HIGHLAND— When a friend or family member is grieving, it can be difficult to know what to say or do. Many people are afraid of saying or doing the wrong thing, but helping in small ways can be a source of comfort.

HSHS Director of Post-Acute Care Amy Frederking, RN, BSN, explained, “What most people need after a loss is comfort and caring from family and friends; it doesn’t take much. Truly listening, acknowledging their feelings, running errands or simply being present for them are some ways you can support a grieving friend or family member.”

According to [National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization](#) (NHPCO), it is important to remember that there is no right way to grieve. Please be careful not to impose your ideas, beliefs and expectations on someone else, no matter how much you think it might help. Understand that the way a person might respond to a loss will reflect the cultural and family traditions that are unique to them.

HSHS Hospice offers the following suggestions from the NHPCO on ways you can support a friend or family member who is grieving:

- **Acknowledge that life won’t “feel the same” and the person may not be able to “get back to normal.”** When they are ready, help your friend or family member to renew interest in past activities and hobbies, or to discover new areas of interest. Offer specific suggestions such as, “Let’s go to the museum on Saturday to see the new exhibit,” but be completely accepting if your offer is declined.
- **Be specific in your willingness to help.** Offer to help with chores such as childcare or meals. For example, suggest, “I’ll bring dinner on Thursday; how many people will be there?”

- **Identify committed friends who might be willing to help with specific tasks on a regular basis.** Performing tasks such as picking up the kids from school, grocery shopping or refilling prescriptions can be a tremendous help.
- **Check on your friend or relative as time passes and months go by.** Your friend or family member will need your support and presence in the weeks and months to come after others have retreated. Periodic check-ins can be helpful throughout the first two years after the death. Stay in touch by writing a note, calling, stopping by to visit, or perhaps bringing flowers or a special treat they like.
- **Be especially sensitive to holidays and special days.** For someone grieving a death, certain days may be more difficult and can magnify the sense of loss, such as anniversaries and birthdays. Some people may want to be with family and friends, while others may wish to avoid traditions and try something different. Extend an invitation to someone who might otherwise spend time alone during a holiday or special day and recognize that they may or may not accept your offer.

For more tips from the NCHPO on helping someone through grief and loss, visit caringinfo.org/planning/grief-and-loss. For more information on HSHS Hospice services, visit hshshospice.org.

Local Grief Support

For those looking for local support, GriefShare has grief and loss support groups both in-person and online. To learn more or search for a group in your area, visit griefshare.org.

For more information about HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital Highland, visit stjosephshighland.org.

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About Hospital Sisters Health System

Hospital Sisters Health System's (HSHS) mission is to reveal and embody Christ's healing love for all people through our high-quality Franciscan health care ministry. HSHS provides state-of-the-art health care to our patients and is dedicated to serving all people, especially the most vulnerable, at each of our physician practices and 15 local hospitals in two states – Illinois (Breese, Decatur, Effingham, Greenville, Highland, Litchfield, O'Fallon, Shelbyville and Springfield) and Wisconsin (Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, Oconto Falls, Sheboygan and two in Green Bay). HSHS is sponsored by Hospital Sisters Ministries, and Hospital Sisters of St. Francis is the founding institute. For more information about HSHS, visit hshs.org. For more information about Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, visit hospitalsisters.org.