



**Our Lady
of Peace**

HOSPICE & HOME HEALTH CARE

ANXIETY IN HOSPICE

Our Lady of Peace Education Series

Feeling stressed is common for patients and families in hospice. It's normal. Fear, grief, and uncertainty are real emotions that can't be pushed aside by a patient approaching end of life. Patients can be fearful of the unknown journey of dying, so asking hospice caregivers what to expect can be helpful. Patients also often worry about unfinished business within relationships and other areas of life. Stress and nervousness can turn into agitation, restlessness, and even panic.

For the patient

Our Lady of Peace hospice nurse Kay Evenson recommends that a patient with anxiety find the places of meaning in their life by asking, what did I do well? What was my purpose? This can help identify where the anxiety is coming from. "Patients know the life they know will end soon and they're going somewhere else," she says. "They're dealing with mortality, and they're scared. They need reassurance and support from outside the family, but they often fear they will be a burden, if they ask for it. I encourage people to reach out for support because we're here to help. And if it's more than we're able to do, we'll refer them to sources that can help."

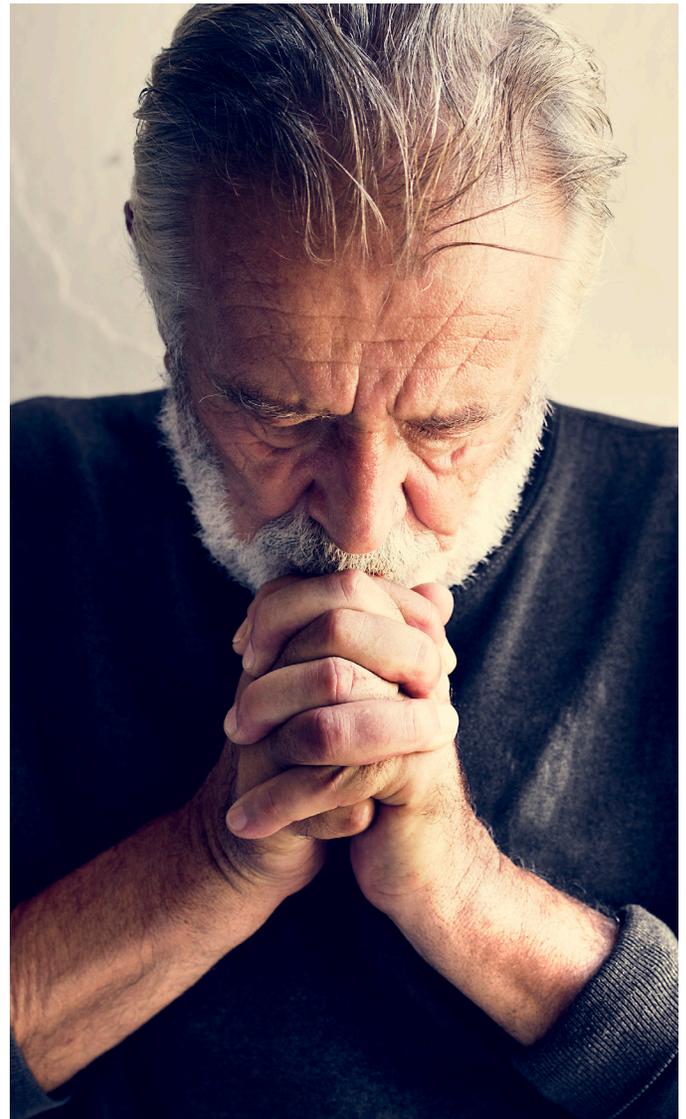
For the family

Family members shouldn't ignore what they're feeling either, especially under the added stress of supporting a loved one, amid their own sadness and additional daily responsibilities. For many, wrapping up affairs and making funeral arrangements for a loved one while working and managing their own life is stressful in and of itself. And it's important to determine specifically what causing the stress.

Sometimes stress release comes from allowing people to talk about what they think is causing their stress and validating that it's real. Being able to talk about stress and anxiety with a trusted person can help, and sometimes it's better to talk with someone outside the family, like clergy or a social worker.

Bereavement Services Director Amy Cotter says when dealing with anxiety, it's important to have your toolbox in order, and the tools are different for everyone. She offers these recommendations for patients and family members experiencing stress and anxiety:

1. Focus on your breath, breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth
2. Ground yourself through meditation, prayer, or other grounding techniques
3. Remember and practice techniques that have worked for you in the past
4. Don't be afraid to ask for help
5. Alert your care team to your circumstances because they can help



Stress and anxiety in hospice are real, and Our Lady of Peace wants patients and families to know that they don't have to go through it alone. We're here to help.



We're here for you.

We are passionate about community outreach.
We would love to meet you and discuss how
Our Lady of Peace can be a resource for you.

651-789-5030

