

Joe's Hospice Story

Joe was just over sixty and a great person who was loved by all. One day, Joe offered to grab a jug of water from the office basement to put in the water cooler. After about 10 minutes, his co-worker, pregnant and very thirsty, went looking for Joe.

She went to the top of the stairs and yelled out to him. "Joe? Is everything alright down there?" She went down a few steps and saw Joe lying on the floor. She tried to rouse him, but Joe didn't respond. Finally, the ambulance came and took him to the hospital.

His daughter, Dawn, worked for a hospice provider as a receptionist. When her dad's co-worker called to say he fell and was found unconscious, she thought it may have been his blood sugar because he had diabetes. Later that afternoon, the doctor called from the hospital and told her that Joe had suffered from a hemorrhagic stroke.

Later that day, Dawn called requesting hospice services. The hospice team went to the hospital and got Joe admitted for care.

Joe lived only one week. He regained consciousness briefly, and thankfully his wife was there to say goodbye. After Joe died, his wife Joan was meeting with the bereavement staff,



and she was so thankful for the quick action of the hospice team.

Joan shared that the hospice staff told her the truth and coached her for the long week ahead. Hospice provided volunteers for Joan to leave for a few hours, shower and get some rest. Joan said she knew she only had a few precious moments when Joe regained consciousness. Joan was prepared and said all she could, and Joe died peacefully with family by his side.

How Do You Know When It's Time?

- > Dependent for most ADLs
- > Unable to speak or communicate intelligibly
- > Palliative Performance Scale $\leq$ 40%
- > Karnofsky Performance Scale $\leq$ 40%
- > Unintentional weight loss
- > Recurrent infections
- > History of aspiration pneumonia

General decline symptoms you might see include:

- > Aspiration pneumonia
- > UTI
- > Sepsis
- > Decubitus ulcers
- > Fever recurrent after antibiotics

Personalized Hospice Care

Stroke patients have specific care needs. Eventide Hospice can help.

When to Refer to Hospice Care

Signs of stroke progression toward customized hospice care:

- > Coma or severely reduced level of consciousness
- > Chronic stroke
- > Dysphagia leading to malnutrition
- > Progressive weight loss with or without a feeding tube
- > Recurrent UTI
- > Decreased alertness or orientation
- > Decrease in functional mobility and ADLs
- > Increase in muscle spasms or spasticity
- > Modified diet due to dysphagia

Customized Specific Care for Stroke Needs

- > Coordination of care between multiple medical professionals and family
- > Pain management and control due to immobility, muscle spasms/spasticity and joint or neurological pain
- > Symptom control managing difficulty with swallowing, breathing, or communicating
- > Skin care
- > Positioning techniques for bed and chair to promote comfort
- > Reducing anxiety with emotional and spiritual support
- > Family support and respite