



What the Media Said about End-of-Life Care This Week March 8, 2021 A Service of Your State Association

DEATH DOULAS AND HOSPICES CAN SERVE PATIENTS SIMULTANEOUSLY

"Meeting People at the End: Embracing the role of the death doula for your hospice patients" appears in the March issues of *HomeCare*. The author describes the role of a death doula, elaborates on the services a doula provides—to patient and family, and explores why hospice providers should partner with death doulas.

Death doulas are becoming more popular, says the article, and the doula may serve as a companion and advocate in a role that "is holistic and highly personal." These needs have grown as families are less present to care for the dying patients. From active listening, the provision of comfort, discussing end-of-life issues, and being present to family and patient needs, the doula offers the services most needs. Family members, says the article, often refer to the "death doula as a calming, supportive presence in the process."

What about hospice's role and relationship with a death doula? The doula, says author Daniel Morris, "will listen to both your agency's needs and the patient's need" in order to create the best end-of-life plan. Hospices with experience with doulas say "It's great for enhancing the end-of-life experience." It is the work of the doula to coordinate efforts among patients, families and professional caregivers. Working together, best efforts are reached for positive end-of-life care.

Finding a death doula that works well with the hospice is important. "Consider hiring a death doula," says the author, "to get the emotional support your patients need during their transition from life to death." (*HomeCare*, 3/2021) [Read more....](#)

DEATH IS FREQUENT TOPIC OF TV SERIES

TalkDeath defines itself as "the hub for a changing death-conscious public." They work, they say, "to bridge the gap between death professionals and the general public, helping people make informed end-of-life decisions. Wonder what media presentations are portraying about death? Last year, *TalkDeath.com* published "10 Death Positive TV Series to Stream Now."

Saying that “death and grief are complex experiences, and are unique to each individual,” the website offers recommendations for ten shows that they recommend for streaming. *The Good Place*, a comedy, takes place in the afterlife. Characters get assigned scores based on their morals during life. “The show has been celebrated for its exploration of morality, philosophy, and questions around what it means to be a good person.” *Forever*, also a comedy, explores the possibility that a married couple remain a married couple “in suburban afterlife.”

After Life “is a British black comedy-drama series.” It explores the life of Tony, played by Ricky Gervais, who becomes suicidal after his wife’s death. Instead, he decides to live and “to punish the world by saying and doing whatever he likes.” His friends and families try to help him return the nice guy they have known.

The Leftovers is a “supernatural mystery drama” that explores the lives of those who are left on earth after two percent of all the world’s population die. “Critics lauded the series as taking a deep dive into the existential questions on life and death we all wrestle with, and that have not simple or clear answers.” *The Russian Doll* is described as a comedy-drama that “tackles issues of grief avoidance and death denial in a creative way that is both entertaining and a kick to the gut.”

Dead to Me is a dark comedy that explores grief, loss and forgiveness. Two women, each grieving lost loves, meet in a therapy group and become close despite their different ways of handling grief and loss. Liz Feldman created the show and says she used her own experiences in the show. “The facts are made up,” she says. “The feelings are real.”

Fleabag, another British comedy-drama, follows a woman whose friend has committed suicide. Her mother has also died. The character is “angry and grief-ridden, and rejects any help that is offered to her.” The struggles she encounters are visible for viewers. *Sorry for Your Loss* “tackles grief.” It is a two-season drama that follows a young woman after the sudden death of her husband. People around her are “uncomfortable with her grief and want her to move on, but she is not the same person and realizes that everything is different.” The show reveals “how messy grief can be.”

This is Us offers “a realistic take on how grief work can be a long term challenge for many of us.” *HBO Autopsy* explores the “science around death and decomposition.” A real-life forensic pathologist conducts autopsies, and offers revelations of forensic evidence. The post offers one bonus update. “*Never Have I Ever*” is “part teen comedy, part meditation on grief; how we avoid it, and how we ultimately have to face it.” The series explores the main character whose father has just died. Instead of grieving, she “attempts to micromanage every aspect of her own life, and the lives of those around her.”

The post concludes, “There is something very raw and relatable in watching characters grapple with death and grief in all its messiness and difficulty.” The shows display “the wildly divergent ways to avoid, wrestle, and eventually comfort our fear and pain in death and dying—just like real people.” (*TalkDeath*, 4/2020) [Learn more...](#)

HOSPICE NOTES

* Florida is a certificate of need state for hospice providers. In February, the state Agency for Health Care Administration “announced a need for four new hospice programs.” Nine letters of intent expressed interest in serving the Northeast region, and nine expressed interest in serving in Pinellas County. Eight letters of interest came for opening a program in Brevard County. And four letters were accepted from providers who wish to serve in Miami-Dade and Monroe. And, though the agency did not indicate needs in other areas of the state, they accepted four other letters of interest in other areas of the state. “Providers lining up for new hospice facilities in Florida” appears in *Fox 35 Orlando*. (*Fox 35 Orlando*, 2/27) [Read more...](#)

* New York’s *Spectrum News* has an article exploring how to get underserved populations to talk about death and dying and to engage in advance care planning. Jeanne Chirico, president and CEP of Hospice and Palliative Care Association of New York State, says New York utilization rates of hospice rank 50th in the nation. And, among minority groups, eight percent of New York hospice users are Black, and three to four percent are from other minority groups. Solutions don’t come easily, says Chirico. Statewide issues to address disparities in care don’t address end of life. The written article and the interview video with Chirico is online. (*Spectrum News*, 3/8) [Learn more...](#)

* “Colorado’s ‘last responders’ are exhausted after a year of coronavirus goodbyes,” appears in *The Colorado Sun*.” The article examines the toll that COVID has placed on chaplains during the pandemic. “Across the state,” says the article, “from small-town hospice facilities to big metropolitan hospitals, clinicians and spiritual counselors trained to offer choices and dignity through illness at the end of life are learning a new way of giving grace.” Because loved ones have not been able to be with dying COVID patients, and because so many have died, chaplains those who deal with the end-of-life concerns of these patients and family have faced unprecedented challenges. Dr. Phil Ramos, medical director for Halcyon Hospice, says of his vocation, “It’s medicine, but it’s humanity.” (*Star Herald*, 3/6) [Read more...](#)

* *Community Healthcare of Texas* is sponsoring a LBGTQIA+ online grief support group. The program will continue for six weeks, beginning on 3/11. Registration and participation is at no cost to anyone who would like to attend. Details are online at the link. (*Community Healthcare of Texas*, 3/2021) [Learn more...](#)

PALLIATIVE CARE AND END-OF-LIFE NOTES

* The central role of palliative nurses during COVID-19 is the focus of an article in the *Journal of Hospice and Palliative Nursing*. Additional resources for nurses have been posted on the [American Association of Colleges of Nursing website](#). (*Journal of Hospice and Palliative Nursing*, February/2021) [Read more...](#)

* At his confirmation hearings, nominee for US Department for Health and Human Services, Xavier Becerra, says “that he looks forward to working on an end-of-life care pilots designed to improve patient and family satisfaction while reducing costs.” Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) says improving care at the end-of-life is important to him. Whitehouse “underscored the need to allow patients to remain at home and ensure that they are not dying in intensive care units if they do not wish to be there.” Whitehouse asked Becerra to work with him “on a pilot project, through the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMA,” ‘that will show, when you treat people at the end of their lives with more humanity, everybody’s happier and it saves money.’” (C-TAC, 2/25) [Read more...](#)

* Leaders of the Montana Senate “narrowly defeated” a bill to “make it illegal for doctors to help terminal patients take their own lives.” The bill that was defeated would have made it possible for physicians to face homicide charges if they prescribe medication their patients request in order to end their lives. The bill vote was 25-25. (*Independent Record*, 3/2) [Read more...](#)

* “The Father” is a movie about a dementia patient who lives at home with a caregiver employed by his daughter. Originally written as a play, the movie is likely to “receive some Academy Award nominations on March 15,” says an article in *Next Avenue*. The movie explores the role of being a dementia patient and, also, the role of being a dementia patient’s caregiver. (*NextAvenue*, 2/26) [Learn more...](#)

* *End of Life University* posted a podcast titled PEACH: Palliative Education and Care for the Homeless with Dr. Naheed Dosani. Dosani shares about his work. (*End of Life University*, 3/1) [Learn more...](#)

ADVANCE CARE PLANNING AND OTHER NOTES

* *The Chinese American Coalition for Compassionate Care* is offering “Heart to Heart Cards: A Novel, Culturally Tailored, Community-Based Advance Care Planning Tool for Chinese Americans.” The webinar will be offered twice – once in Mandarin/Cantonese and once in English. Registration is required and available online at the link below. (*Conversation Project*) [Learn more...](#)

* “Where Do the Dead Go in Our Imaginations?” appears in the *New York Times*. The article reflects on the question of how and if we will be remembered. It also shares the author’s experiences on remembering those who have died. The author, Anakana Scholfield, is the author of a novel, “Bina,” a book “which explores female friendship and the right to die.” Scholfield says the dead “continue to live with us in the moments when we are sad and terrified. They cheer for us. They give us unbelievable strength and the courage we lack to carry on in situations. They coax us through. They lead us where we need to be, to experience the joy and capability that was them. They who have been with us in life manage to teach us how and where in death we can listen for them and find their voices and essence again.” (*New York Times*, 3/6) [Read more...](#)

* “There Is No Vaccine for Grief” appears in the *New York Times*. The article explores the grief that the pandemic has created and offers ideas for dealing with grief. (*New York Times*, 3/2) [Read more...](#)

* A group of healthcare providers are working as a coalition to “change the way policymakers think about the home as a site of clinical service.” The coalition, called *Moving Health Home*, includes Intermountain Healthcare, Ascension, Landmark Health, Amazon Care, Signify Health, Dispatch Health and Elara Caring. The group wants the home to be a “clinical site of care.” And this need increases, says the group, as the nations’ elder population continues to go. The group’s website, at <https://movinghealthhome.org/>, shares about the work that they plan to do. (*mHealthIntelligence*, 3/3) [Learn more...](#)

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