

The logo features a stylized blue and gold arch above the text. The word "the" is in a smaller, gold, lowercase serif font. "BRIDGE" is in a large, blue, uppercase serif font. "program" is in a gold, lowercase serif font.

the
BRIDGE
program

The Bridge Program is a comprehensive transitional guidance resource for end-of-life planning. The program has been designed to assist hospice caregivers introduce the conversation of funeral planning to patients and their families. When patients are under hospice care, making them as comfortable as possible is a priority. The Bridge Program is another part of that process - giving families the guidance and reassurance to know that their loved one will be taken care of when they pass on. In addition, The Bridge Program offers a unique service to hospice patients and their families who have not yet made definite funeral plans: at no cost to the families, Spicer-Mullikin Funeral Homes will remove and shelter the remains until a decision on a funeral home is made. This gives families peace of mind while they are making important decisions about memorializing their loved one.

Spicer-Mullikin Funeral Homes
Our Service Reflects Your Love

Spicer-Mullikin Funeral Homes and Crematory has been serving Delaware families since 1906. Its funeral homes, located in Newark, New Castle and Delaware City, provide complete funeral services including traditional burials, environmentally friendly burials and cremation services. Spicer-Mullikin is one of the few funeral homes in Delaware to employ a full-time grief specialist for post-service care.



302-368-9500

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A Transitional Guidance Program
Facilitating End-of-Life Planning

Prepared for hospice caregivers.

Why should caregivers start the conversation on funeral planning?

As a hospice caregiver, you are a reliable and trusted source of information for your patients and their families. Funeral planning is best managed before a person passes away. Everyone benefits when both patient and family can share in the conversation. This guide is designed to help hospice caregivers navigate the topic of funeral planning and bridge the gaps in your patients' end-of-life journey.

How to bring up the conversation

A funeral commemorates and honors the life that has been lived. It brings people together to provide one another with emotional support and a necessary sense of closure. Yet too often, end-of-life plans are left until the last minute because families are absorbed by their loved ones' final days.

Where to begin

We recognize that introducing the topic of funeral planning is a special challenge. If you find this difficult, the following approach may be helpful:

- Sit with the patient and family; introduce yourself to everyone in the room and make a personal connection
- Use language similar to this to engage your patient and family:
 - Have you written down any end-of-life plans?
 - How would you like to be remembered?
 - What special touches would you like to include in honoring your life?
- Remind families they may find it comforting to have funeral plans in place before their loved one passes, allowing them to devote all their time to each other
- This conversation may be difficult for the family; there could be some resistance toward the "messenger"

What hospice caregivers should look for in a funeral home:

Knowing the funeral homes in your area will help you guide your patients through the planning process effectively:

- Identify reputable funeral homes in your area
 - Ask for testimonials
 - Do they have roots in the community?
- Get to know local funeral directors and key staff, observe how they operate
- Ask if they are family-owned, members of the Better Business Bureau and/or a local chamber of commerce
- Prescreen the funeral homes for professional memberships and licensing
- Familiarize yourself with the funeral homes' policies and pricing

How to assist your patients select a funeral home that is right for them:

There are a number of questions you can ask patients and families to help them select the right funeral home for their needs, for example:

- Does the patient want a funeral service in a church, funeral home, or other location?
- Has the family thought about scattering the cremains or keeping them at home?
- What kind of burial or interment preferences do they have?
- Do they have cemetery space?
- Would they prefer a local, family-owned funeral home?
- Do they want memorial contributions to be made in their name?
- Are they to be buried or cremated?
- Do they have music and flower preferences?

Provide the patient and their family with contact information of local funeral homes— keep your recommendations neutral. Taking the time to assist patients and families think over these details will help to give them a sense of comfort at this time.

“If a hospice patient passes and the family has not made funeral plans, The Bridge Program will shelter the remains with dignity until the plans are created, no matter which funeral home the family chooses.”

– Matthew Smith

