



Hospice and Healing Touch

A match made in Heaven

by Karen Wood, HTCP/Inst. in training, CBS

Picture this: a beautiful four-storey Victorian home built in 1836. It is nestled on 2.2 acres of park-like setting on a quiet street in the heart of my hometown, London, Ontario. Welcome to the Hospice of London.

It is Wednesday, and it is my day to provide Healing Touch with Bereavement Support to a Hospice client. The snow and early morning sunlight make the Hospice House seem even more comforting and welcoming. I park my car in the back. I walk past the garden, now covered in winter. In the spring and summer it is lovingly tended and nurtured by volunteers, most of which are past bereaved clients themselves. They feel a need to give back...to help bring peace to others as it was offered to them. I stop to ponder the stillness. It is the earth's hibernation time. Much like what my bereaved clients are experiencing now in their journey through grief.

I enter the Hospice and Niki greets me with a big smile. She is a one of a handful of paid employees who run the Hospice House and its "day programs." There are a host of complementary therapists here to choose from. Clients book a treatment of their choice, and the therapists come in as needed. We have 3 in-house Healing Touch Practitioners, including myself. I combine Healing Touch with Bereavement Support. They fit like a glove.

It is 9:00 AM and my client will be here at 9:30. I sign in and proceed to walk up the spiral wooden staircase that leads to the third floor. I pass the bay window with its red, yellow and blue stained glass shining its colors of healing into the hallway. I stop

by the kitchen to get a couple of glasses of water. I enter my room, which is warm and has all the comforts of my own Healing Touch room at home. I light the candle and put on my *Angel Love* CD. I sit for a moment and connect with guidance knowing that it is always with me. My client enters, and we embrace. She has received several treatments with me over her one-year allowance with Hospice. "One year is not enough," she says. "It is not written in stone," I tell her. She looks relieved. She has avoided another loss.

We talk for an hour - maybe a little more. We do Healing Touch. She sleeps deeply. I gently touch her on her shoulder to signal that it is time to come back. "Rest where you are," I tell her. "There is no rush here." Smiling, her eyes glowing, we talk, we laugh, we cry, we hug. She wants to know how soon she may come back. She leaves a changed person. She was down when she came in this morning. She now has a smile on her face, a skip in her step and a twinkle in her eyes as she leaves. I write my notes and hand them into Jennifer, our day program manager. I leave the Hospice the same way I came in. The sun is shining. I have a smile on my face and a skip in my step. I think of all the Healing Touch Practitioners reading this who also serve the needs of their local Hospice...you know exactly how I feel in this moment.

Hospice is a "safe place" to rest. It is a philosophy of caring much like Healing Touch. It is a place to release and tell one's story. For some it can be life saving.

When a person is terminally ill or grieving a loss, it is the Spirit of the person that needs to be nurtured. Nurture the Spirit and the Heart will heal. Healing Touch is a vehicle that can help a person to connect with the spiritual self within – which is the true healer in all of us.

Healing Touch and Hospice is truly a match made in heaven.

About the author:



Karen has been involved in Healing Touch since 1993 and is currently a Level 1 Instructor in training. She has a certificate in Thanatology and Grief and Bereavement Studies from University of Western Ontario 2002. Karen was a Home Health Care Aid for 20 years and has been a Palliative Care volunteer since 1986. She has a home based practice in Healing Touch with Bereavement Support.