



From Caregiver to Patient: Hospice Nurse Allyson's Final 39 Days

DESCRIPTION:

As hospice nurse Allyson navigated her final 39 days with brain cancer, her last wish was to transform her dying experience into a teaching tool that would spark meaningful conversations about death and dying. Participants will watch the award-winning short film *A Butterfly Has Been Released*, which follows Allyson's journey as she connects with family, friends, and hospice colleagues, hosts a living funeral, and chooses a natural green burial.

Following the film, Kenneth Doka, Natasha Fowlks, and Megan Heller, will discuss how the film illustrates issues such as the goals of end-of-life care in hospice and palliative care, as well as how the hospice interdisciplinary team can support patients and families by facilitating meaning making and ritual and how those processes can support grievers.

PROGRAM DETAILS

This 68-minute presentation features a short film documentary, "A Butterfly Has Been Released" followed by a moderated expert panelist discussion to further illustrate the learning objectives.

DATES AVAILABLE:	January 7, 2026 to January 6, 2027
LENGTH:	68 minutes
CEs:	1 hour for a variety of professional boards
CONTENT LEVEL:	The program is mainly for professionals already working in the field but is practical for all levels of education – entry level, intermediate or advanced.
TARGET AUDIENCE:	Health care clinicians, social service clinicians, and others working in the hospice, palliative care, counseling, hospital, or nursing home, funeral home, or faith community environments.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

This program is valid for 1 hour of continuing education for the following professional boards. CE certificates are available until January 6, 2027 – *unless otherwise noted*.

CLERGY

- **Association of Professional Chaplains**
Association of Professional Chaplains does not pre-approve programs; a Certificate of Attendance will be issued and may be submitted to the board for use in reporting continuing education hours

COUNSELORS

- **National Board for Certified Counselors**
Hospice Foundation of America has been approved by National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) as an Approved Continuing Education Provider, ACEP #5729. Programs that do not qualify for NBCC credit are clearly identified. Hospice Foundation of America is solely responsible for all aspects of the programs.

DEATH EDUCATION

- **Association for Death Education and Counseling (ADEC)**
The Association for Death Education and Counseling® has deemed this program as counting toward the continuing education requirements for the ADEC CT and FT programs.

FUNERAL DIRECTORS

- **Academy of Professional Funeral Service Practice (APFSP)**
APFSP Category B; Event Type: Online; 1 Contact Hour

NURSES

**Most states recognize ANCC Accreditation (via the MT Nurses Association) but please verify with your individual state board*

- **Montana Nurses Association (an accredited approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation)**
This nursing continuing professional development activity was approved by Montana Nurses Association, an accredited approver with distinction by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.
- **California Board of Registered Nursing**
Hospice Foundation of America (HFA) is an approved provider by the California Board of Registered Nursing.
- **Florida Board of Nursing. Florida Board of Nursing**
(General Credits; Prerecorded Broadcast)

PSYCHOLOGY

- **Florida Board of Psychology**
(General Credits; Prerecorded Broadcast)

SOCIAL WORK

- **National Association of Social Work Boards (NASW)**
This program is approved by the National Association of Social Workers for 1 Social Work continuing education contact hours. **Approval expires 11/30/2026***. Accepted/recognized in all states except NY & WV.
**Program and online CE process must be completed prior to expiration for NASW CE hours to be awarded.*
- **Florida Board of Clinical Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapy and Mental Health Counseling**
(General Credits; Prerecorded Broadcast)
- **New York State Education Department's State Board for Social Work**
Hospice Foundation of America SW CPE is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Social Work as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed social workers #0244. *Social workers participating in this program will receive 1 self-study contact hour.*

OTHER

- **Certificate of Attendance**
Many professional state boards will accept HFA's Certificate of Attendance for proof of CE hours. Please verify with your individual state board.

*Approval numbers will be provided on CE certificate

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

To view the program, you will need a computer and screen, reliable internet access, and speakers.

REGISTRATION / FEES

Registration includes continuing education and on-demand viewing through 1/6/27. Register online at: <https://hospicefoundation.org/product-category/from-caregiver-to-patient-hospice-nurse-allysons-final-39-days/>

\$45 Individual Viewing
One CE certificate included

Group Viewing

One organization/company location OR one in-person community group viewing event.

Up to 25 viewers - \$250 | 26-50 viewers - \$475 | 51-75 viewers - \$675
76-100 viewers - \$850 | 100+ viewers - contact HFA at butterfly@hospicefoundation.org

HFA members receive a 15% discount on registration.

Learn about HFA membership at <https://hospicefoundation.org/membership/>

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After this presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Explain how the hospice interdisciplinary team, including volunteer services, support end-of-life care by facilitating meaning making, storytelling, and legacy building.
 2. Describe the goals of care in hospice, including symptom management, the ethical balance of risks vs. benefits, and the importance of patient autonomy and dignity.
 3. Describe the benefits of reminiscence, continuing bonds, and ritual for patients, family, and intimate networks; and the individualized nature of grief.
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PROGRAM OUTLINE

1. Introduction and Welcome (1 minute)
 2. Presentation of Film Documentary, *A Butterfly Has Been Released* (36 minutes)
 3. Introduction of Panel (2 minutes)
 - a. Welcome and Panel Bios
 - b. Learning Objectives
 4. Role of the hospice interdisciplinary team role in meaning-making (9 minutes)
 - a. Examples and techniques to facilitate this process
 - b. Impact of this process on the dying person and the grievors
 - c. How do hospice professionals maintain healthy boundaries
 5. Goals of care in hospice (8 minutes)
 - a. Patient autonomy and dignity
 - b. Balancing the risks and benefits of symptom management
 6. Benefits of reminiscence, continuing bonds, and ritual in supporting grief (10 minutes)
 - a. Examples and techniques
 - b. Individual nature of grief
 - c. The role of the funeral in coping with grief
 7. Closing (2 minutes)
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COURSE COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

Participants must attend the entire 68-minute program (recorded film presentation and moderated panel discussion). Partial credit is not awarded. Participants must also complete the entire CE process online which includes a required evaluation form and exam. The exam must be completed at 80% or above (the exam may be re-taken, if necessary).

MODERATOR

Frank Sesno, is Director of Strategic Initiatives, The George Washington University School of Media & Public Affairs, a former anchor for CNN, and a longtime moderator of the *Living with Grief*[®] program. He is an Emmy-award winning journalist and creator of PlanetForward.org, a user-driven web and television

project that highlights innovations in sustainability, and he is the author of *Ask More: The Power of Questions to Open Doors, Uncover Solutions and Spark Change*.

EXPERT PANELISTS

Kenneth J. Doka, PhD, MDiv, is Senior Vice President of Grief Programs at Hospice Foundation of America (HFA) and the recipient of the 2019 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association of Death Education and Counseling (ADEC). He is professor emeritus, the Graduate School of The College of New Rochelle. A prolific author and editor, Doka serves as editor of HFA's *Living with Grief*® book series, its *Journeys* newsletter, and numerous other books and publications. He has been a panelist on HFA's *Living with Grief*® program for 30 years. Doka is a past president of ADEC, a former board member of the International Work Group on Death, Dying and Bereavement, and an Advisory Board member to the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS). He is the recipient of The International Work Group on Death, Dying, and Bereavement's prestigious Herman Feifel Award and ADEC's Award for Outstanding Contributions in the Field of Death Education. In 2006, he was grandfathered in as a Mental Health Counselor under New York's first state licensure of counselors. Doka is an ordained Lutheran minister.

Natasha Fowlks, RN, is the Executive Director of Hospice Atlanta, part of the Visiting Nurse Health System, where she leads hospice and palliative care services with compassion, clinical expertise, and a strong commitment to end-of-life advocacy. With more than a decade of experience in hospice care, she is a Certified Hospice & Palliative Nurse (CHPN) and maintains active nursing licenses in both New York and Georgia. Her leadership extends beyond her organization. Natasha has served on the Board of Directors for the Georgia Hospice & Palliative Care Organization (GHPCO), active hospice council member for the National Alliance for Home Care, and is an active member of the leadership team at the Adult Children for Aging Parents (ACAP), where she contributes her expertise to advancing hospice and community-based healthcare at both the state and national levels. She also serves on the Board of the Hospice & Palliative Nurses Association (HPNA), Compliance leader with the Southern Care Collaborative, and is a member of Chi Eta Phi, Inc., a professional nursing sorority dedicated to excellence and service. Natasha is also an active speaker and community advocate, frequently engaging in educational events, professional conferences, and outreach initiatives to raise awareness about hospice and palliative care, nursing leadership, and equitable access to quality end-of-life services. Through these efforts, she amplifies the voice of patients, families, and caregivers while fostering greater understanding of the vital role hospice plays in healthcare.

Megan Heller, LCSW, maintains a clinical practice at Awaken Counseling in Marietta, Georgia, where she provides grief counseling and bereavement support to individuals and families navigating loss. She holds additional certifications in specialized therapeutic techniques and utilizes evidence-based interventions to address psychological and social needs, with particular focus on complicated grief and traumatic loss across the lifespan. Ms. Heller completed hospice social work training, developing competencies in psychosocial assessment, advance care planning, and interdisciplinary team collaboration. Through this role, she gained experience conducting biopsychosocial assessments, providing emotional support to terminally ill patients and families, and coordinating community resources, establishing her foundation in palliative care principles and social work's role within hospice teams. Ms. Heller appears in "A Butterfly Has Been Released" documenting her role when her mentor, Allyson Zalva, received a terminal diagnosis, during which she coordinated the living funeral while navigating the intersection of professional training and personal loss. This experience demonstrates practical application of hospice principles and illuminates the challenges healthcare professionals encounter when providing end-of-life care to colleagues.

REVIEWER

Angela Novas, MSN, RN, CRNP, *Senior Medical Officer*, Hospice Foundation of America

REFERENCES

“A Butterfly Has Been Released” website: <https://www.tgbeyond.com/our-documentary>

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SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITY (ADA)

Reasonable accommodation may be made available, on an individual basis. To request accommodation, please contact HFA via email at educate@hospicefoundation.org or call 800-854-3402, or write to HFA, 1707 L Street NW, Suite 220, Washington, DC 20036.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Planners (Panelist and Review Committee Members) disclose no conflict of interest relative to this educational activity. None of the planners or presenters for this educational activity have relevant financial relationships to disclose with ineligible companies.

FOR QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, OR ADDRESSING GRIEVANCES

Please contact Hospice Foundation of America (HFA)

1707 L Street NW, Suite 220, Washington, DC 20036

educate@hospicefoundation.org / 1-800-854-3402 toll-free / (202) 457-5811 phone
/(202) 457-5815 fax

