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• **Houston Solari Hospice Care**  
• **NEWS RELEASE**  
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## **Houston Solari Hospice Care Helps Survivors Battle Holiday Blues**

**Houston, Tex. – Nov. 23, 2011** – The upcoming winter holidays are often touted as “the most wonderful time of the year.” However, for people who have lost loved ones – either recently or sometimes several years ago – it’s not necessarily a time to “be of good cheer.” Instead, it can be a time filled with sadness, loneliness and grief.

“The holidays can be bittersweet, especially the first year after you lose someone,” says Jim Mayer, chaplain, Houston Solari Hospice Care. “All of the usual merrymaking activities bring back memories – not only of the person, but of traditions and celebrations as well.”

To help individuals find healthy ways to cope, Houston Solari Hospice Care wants to remind the community that they offer a *free* ongoing weekly Grief Support Group that meets every Tuesday, from 11 a.m. to noon, at the Houston Solari Hospice Care Inpatient Home, 9714 S. Gessner Rd. All members of the public are welcome.

“We don’t tell people how or what to feel, because each person’s situation is as individual as a snowflake,” says Mayer, who leads the Grief Support Group. “However, we can listen and offer words of reassurance to help people work through the pain. It’s comforting to share a story with others who truly know what you’re going through. Participating in a Grief Support Group gives people a sense of connection and camaraderie.”

Mayer notes that it’s not good to hide from grief, but to find productive ways to express it. He offers the following basic guidelines to help individuals who are mourning.

- **Think about your loss.** Don’t suppress thoughts or emotions. Grieving is a natural process. Give yourself permission to be sad. It’s okay to skip a holiday party if you’re having a tough day, and it’s equally okay to go even if you’re not in a festive mood.
- **Talk about your loss.** Surround yourself with people who care. Find friends, family members any other individuals who are willing to lend an ear. Don’t completely isolate yourself. Get out of the house, even if it’s hard at first.

- **Write about your loss.** Put your thoughts down on paper. For some individuals, it helps to keep a journal. For others, it can be beneficial to write poetry or letters, draw pictures, or create scrapbooks.
- **Cry about your loss.** Don't let your grief stay bottled up inside. "Tears release a lot of emotions," says Mayer. "Men, especially, have a tough time doing this, but learning to let feelings go and tears flow can actually alleviate a lot of stress."
- **Make space and time to grieve.** Don't get so caught up in the holiday hustle and bustle that you are too busy to grieve. Pay a visit to the cemetery or return to the place where you spread a loved one's ashes. Sit quietly alone for a few minutes at sunrise or sunset. Find a comfortable place to be with your thoughts.
- **Reconnect with your faith or spiritual practices.** Some people derive great strength from being part of a religious community, or by praying or meditating.
- **Take care of your health.** Eat a well-balanced diet. Get plenty of rest. Exercise regularly.
- **Get help if you need it.** Don't live in despair. If you notice signs of deep depression, seek out professionals experienced in grief management. The sooner you do, the better you will feel.
- **Do it your way.** "Grieving is an individual process. There are no shoulds or shouldn'ts," says Mayer. "What works for one individual may not work for another. Do what feels right to you."

For more information about the Grief Support Group offered by Houston Solari Hospice Care, contact Jim Mayer, Chaplain Services, at 713-664-7120.

Houston Solari Hospice Care is devoted to helping people live with dignity and comfort by providing trusted and professional hospice care in the Houston community. Focused on enhancing the quality of life for patients and their loved ones, Solari's exemplary team of physicians, pharmacists, registered nurses, certified nursing aides, social workers, administrative staff and counselors are specially trained to offer the most compassionate and comforting care designed for each patient's unique needs. To learn more about Houston Solari Hospice Care, please visit [www.solarihospice.com](http://www.solarihospice.com), e-mail [info@solarihospice.net](mailto:info@solarihospice.net) or follow @SolariHospice on Twitter or Facebook.