



**TEXAS ~ NEW MEXICO**  
HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE ORGANIZATION

## **Hospice Chaplain & Bereavement Coordinator Conference** **July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026 - 8:30 am - 5 pm** **Victory Center, San Antonio, TX**

**Target Audience:** *Hospice Spiritual Care Coordinators, Chaplains, Bereavement Coordinators, Bereavement Managers, Social Workers, Licensed Professional Counselors, Administrators*

**Overview:** This is a 1-day intensive course for Hospice and Palliative Care Existential Care and Bereavement professionals. Each Session will have interactive components to it with plenty of space for dialog about how Chaplains and Bereavement professionals can best serve patients and families while keeping compliant with state and federal rules.

### **Schedule:**

**8:30 – 9:00 AM: Breakfast, Registration, and Networking**

**9:00 – 9:20 AM: Welcome and Table Introductions**

- Participants will share roles and key challenges.

**9:20 – 10:00 AM: The Role of Chaplain and Bereavement Coordinator in IDT Meetings**

**Janie Kelley, HS Lead Bereavement Coordinator, Angels Care Hospice & Danny Mack, Christian Care Communities**

This presentation will also address one of the most common challenges in IDG dynamics: What do you do when no one seems to want to hear from you? Participants will gain practical approaches for increasing influence, building credibility, navigating difficult team environments, and finding ways to contribute even when their voice feels overlooked. This session is designed to help chaplains and bereavement professionals move from simply having a seat at the table to becoming an essential voice within the care team.

**10:10 – 10:50 AM: Documentation That Holds Up: Review of Documentation Standards, Common Pitfalls, Audit Readiness, and Using AI in Documentation**

**Heidi Wall, RN, HealthCare ConsultLink & Jerry Fenter, System Director of Spiritual Counselors, Harbor Healthcare System**

This session offers a practical introduction to using AI in hospice chaplaincy documentation, with special attention to care plan development. Attendees will learn how AI can assist in turning visit details into focused goals, interventions, and outcomes that support the interdisciplinary team. The presentation will also address safe and ethical use of AI, reminding chaplains that technology may assist the writing process, but responsibility for the chart remains with the clinician.

Register at: <https://www.txnmhospice.org/product/hospice-chaplain-bereavement-conference/>

Contact us at [info@txnmhospice.org](mailto:info@txnmhospice.org) or call 512-454-1247



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### **11:00 AM – 11:40 PM: Communication in Difficult Moments: Addressing Silence, Anger, and Existential Questions**

**Janice Rodriguez, LMSW, Bereavement Coordinator, Peterson Hospice**

This session explores practical, compassionate approaches to some of the most challenging encounters in hospice care. Participants will learn how to respond skillfully to silence, support patients and families expressing anger, and accompany individuals facing deep existential or spiritual questions. Through real-world examples and guided reflection, attendees will build confidence in staying present, grounded, and effective in emotionally complex conversations.

### **11:40 – 12:15 PM Lunch**

### **12:15 – 1:00 PM: Engagement Session: Creative Aging and End-of-Life**

**Diana Muniz, Sunrise Hospice**

An interactive session using creative methods to explore grief, culture, and end-of-life topics.

### **1:10 – 1:50 PM: Toxic Empathy: When Compassion Goes Too Far**

**Jerry Fenter, System Director of Spiritual Counselors, Harbor Healthcare System**

This presentation will introduce leadership and management, as well as the professional caregiver to the concept of toxic empathy (also known as toxic altruism). While empathy and compassion are the backbone of effective hospice care, excessive or unregulated empathy can become harmful—to the care system, the team, patients and families, and the individual caregiver. The session will use real-world scenarios to illustrate how toxic empathy develops, the negative consequences that result when it's unchecked, and strategies to identify and manage these patterns for healthier, more resilient caregiving. Includes scripting exercises.

### **2:00 – 2:40 PM: Trauma-Informed Care**

**Danny Mack, Director of Spiritual Care, Christian Care Communities and Services**

A review of trauma-informed care theory, trauma manifestations, and trauma spiritual interventions in the hospice setting.

### **2:50 – 3:30 PM: Rethinking Bereavement through Connected Care**

**Cara Abbott, Founder, Betterleave**

Most hospice bereavement programs are built on approaches that made sense when they were established, but the landscape has changed, and some of those approaches may be quietly limiting your program's impact without you even realizing it. The way you reach families, who you're able to connect with, and what compliance actually requires are all worth taking a fresh look at. In this session, we'll examine some of the most common bereavement misconceptions, explore what the data and real family experiences actually tell us, and dig into what a modern, compliant, and deeply human bereavement program can look like in practice.

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**3:40 – 4:30 PM: “Communication Strategies Across the Stages of Dementia”**

**Hollie Lowe, MA, LPC, NCC, Director of Education and Family Support Services, James L. West Center for Dementia Care**

This session explores how communication abilities evolve throughout the stages of dementia and offers practical, compassionate strategies to support meaningful connection at every phase of the disease. Participants will gain insight into how dementia affects language, comprehension, and expression in the early, middle, and late stages, including both verbal and nonverbal communication changes. Evidence-based techniques will be shared to enhance understanding and reduce frustration, such as simplifying language, validating emotions, using visual cues, and incorporating supportive tone, touch, and body language. Real-world examples will demonstrate how thoughtful adjustments in communication can strengthen relationships, promote dignity, and improve quality of life for individuals living with dementia and those who care for them.

**4:30 - 4:45 PM Wrap up/Questions/Networking**

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**PAY BY CHECK REGISTRATION FORM For the Chaplain & Bereavement Conference July 10, 2026**

**REGISTRANT INFORMATION:**

**TYPE or PRINT the following information. Please complete a separate form for each participant.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Professional Designation (i.e., RN, LVN, MSW, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email (required) \_\_\_\_\_

**REGISTRATION FEES: Member \$85 / Non-Member \$115**

**MAIL PAYMENT TO: TNMHO, 1108 Lavaca, Suite 727, AUSTIN, TX 78701**

If paying by credit card, Register at: <https://www.txnmhospice.org/product/hospice-chaplain-bereavement-conference/>

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Cancellations received by email by a week before the conference will receive a refund minus the \$25 admin fee. Cancellations within 7 days of the conference may substitute a staff member, but no refunds will be made. Please email [kparker@txnmhospice.org](mailto:kparker@txnmhospice.org) for subs.

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