

Massage is offered to hospice patients to help bring them comfort and relaxation. Massage can also aid in pain management, help monitor and alleviate pressure sores, enhance self-image, encourage communication and ease fear and tension. Various modalities can be used, including Swedish, Rosen Method Bodywork, Reiki, Healing Touch, energy work, gentle stretching, and holding. The individual patient's needs and wants determine the course of a session.

If giving touch to someone you are caring for:

Make your touch conscious, focused, gentle and caring.

Begin with the attitude of "less is more." Simple touch with the intention of bringing comfort is more important than trying to "do certain moves" and "fix" the person's problems.

Be present as you touch. Pay attention to any tension in your own body and let it go. Keep your hands soft. Maintain a comfortable position during the session. If you are uncomfortable, the patient will not benefit as much as if you are comfortable.

Watch for changes in the patient's breathing, facial expressions, and positions (tense or relaxed?) that will indicate if the patient is relaxing and enjoying the touch, or is tensing up in anticipation.

Avoid contact with rashes, open sores, tumor sites, bandages or duralgesic patches.

A patient need not remove clothing. A lot of comfort measures can be experienced through clothing and blankets.

If a patient is not open to having "massage" you may offer to apply lotion to the hands and feet to help keep the skin healthy. The human contact is what is most important, not the technique.