

In support of Hospice Bereavement Programs and a Residential Hospice, Yvonne Hamelin shares a very personal experience ...

Within a half hour, after arriving in a New York hospital to be by my son's side on a Thursday, I watch him quietly and suddenly slip into a coma.

Friday morning, my husband arrived and never saw our son conscious again.

Saturday, while we were sleeping in his dorm room at the university, we got a call that he had to be intubated.

Sunday, things went from bad to worse. We were alone in an intensive care unit with four other patients and their family members.

Monday, we were told Jeffery was brain dead with no hope of recovery. Same day, we talked to an organ donation team.

On Tuesday, our daughter arrived and was told the news. We kept asking for a private room. None available! We were the three of us, standing alone at his side in New York City, in shock!

We watched two other patients die in that same room. We were all exposed to each other's grief. All those strangers, all those machines beeping, all those tests ... and one chair to share. All that sadness in one room. There was no beauty to cast a gaze at, only white walls, white sheets, white-coated staff.

Finally, on Wednesday, just six days later we were given a private room around 10 am. At our request, Jeffery was taken off all life support. Though this room possessed no beauty, we were at least alone with him. Just the four of us ... no support ... just alone. For 8 hours we stood and sat until he breathed his last breath.

Now, looking back five years later, I have received so much help from individual and group sessions here at Hospice Huronia. And I have felt heard, loved and supported through this grieving process. The idea of having a space for families to come together comfortably in a homey setting, feeling supported during such a difficult time makes my heart happy. When the time is right, I look forward to becoming involved to help others by sharing some simple act of kindness, in order to ease their process as a loved one passes on to the other side of living!

Sincerely,

Yvonne Hamelin

