



Comfort for the Grieving Heart

Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

November 2020

*"Each time we embrace a memory, we meet again with those we love...for the heart never forgets."
~ Flavia*

St. Luke's Hospice

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PLEASE NOTE: If you would like to be added or removed from our mailing list, or if you would prefer to receive an electronic copy, please contact Dawn at 484-526-2499.

This issue of "Comfort for the Grieving Heart" is devoted to our new 24/7 grief support video library. The educational support videos are there to help learn about and cope with grief after the loss of a loved one. These videos are from a company called Composing Life Out of Loss of which Dr. Joy Berger is the owner and CEO. Joy has had over 25 years experience in serious illness, hospice, and grief. She was a direct patient/family care professional with Hospice & Palliative Care in Louisville, Kentucky where she was honored with the National Heart of Hospice – Psychosocial/Spiritual Caregiver Award, given by the National Council of Hospice and Palliative Care Professionals. Joy was also the Director of Hospice Institute in Louisville and the Director of Education for Weatherbee's Hospice Education Network. Personally, she experienced the caregiving and deaths of her parents. Joy has devoted her professional life to teaching and writing here in the United States and internationally. She also is the author of Music of the Soul – Composing Life Out of Loss.

The video library can be found on St. Luke's Hospice Grief Support webpage. We encourage you to explore the various topics by going to the St. Luke's Hospice website and clicking the "Grief Support" link and then the "Want to Understand Your Grief? Video Library" link. The videos can also be accessed directly by using the following link: <https://www.slhn.org/vna>. Anyone can utilize this video library and you are not required to give any identifying information. All of our services are available to the community even if your loved one was not on our hospice service. The videos can also be shared with your long-distance family and friends. The only question that you will be asked is to indicate if (a) You are a family member or friend of someone who received care from St. Luke's Hospice, (b) Grieving the death of someone who did not receive care from St. Luke's Hospice, (c) An employee or volunteer of St. Luke's Hospice, or (d) Other. In total, there are twelve videos, each about 5-10 minutes long. The first video offered is on our current state of affairs and addresses COVID and grief. The others are as follows: "Holidays, Birthdays, and Anniversaries," "What is Grief," "Hope for Coping," "Care for Your Whole Self," and "Being In and Moving Through Mourning."

We hope that you find these videos helpful! As always, please feel free to give your feedback and provide suggestions about what you want to hear about. We would also like to hear about which videos were most helpful to you.

Tara George

From Our Video Library

In light of the topic of memorializing, let's focus on one of our grief support videos entitled "Being in and Moving Through Mourning Part 3 Remembering." This video highlights how memories help us put back together some parts of our lives that we feel are in pieces due to grief and loss. As a newly bereaved individual, well-meaning others will be offering a lot of advice and opinions about what is best for you (keep your loved one's belongings, put them away, or discard them). As the video suggests, we are often faced with two extremes, keep or discard everything. Maybe the answer is somewhere in the middle. Only you can make the decision that is right for you. The video suggests you might want to take each item and ask yourself "Why did my loved one hold onto this?" Then you can either store the item and/or keep the story that went with it by remembering and passing that memory along. The video also points out that, while some items might have served their purpose as they are, they also might be used to create a new purpose (i.e., taking clothing from loved ones and turning them into a quilt or memory pillow). We can also document what's occurring in our own lives at this time, to capture a moment and leave a legacy impacted by grief. As seen in the video, in this time of technology some people are choosing to memorialize in new and different ways through social media. The sky's the limit when it comes to memorializing! Be creative and choose something that is meaningful to you.



Annual Luminaria Lighting

Some of you have experienced our annual Luminaria Lighting in years past. Our annual Luminaria Lighting ceremony provides the opportunity for family and friends to honor the memory of their loved one. We also honor the memory of those who have served in recognition of Veterans Day. As always, all of our services are available to the community even if your loved one was not on our hospice service. This year our 8th Annual Luminaria Lighting will be held on November 7th from 5:30—6:30 PM at Becky's Drive-In, 4548 Lehigh Drive, Walnutport, PA 18088. It will be held rain or shine. We will be following CDC guidelines at this event. All attending will be able to remain in their vehicles and, if leaving their vehicles, will be required to wear a mask. Registration is required and can be completed online at sluhn.org/2020Luminaria or by calling InfoLink at 1-866-STLUKES (option 4). Please see the enclosed flyer.

The Luminaria Lighting is one of the multiple ways that St. Luke's Hospice honors and memorializes those who have died. Memorializing can be an important activity for anyone who has experienced a loss of a loved one. Many experience a form of memorializing through funerals, memorial activities, and/or celebration of life ceremonies. These memorializing activities can take place soon after a loved one dies or sometime in the future as determined by the bereaved. COVID has definitely impacted that way in which we memorialize our loved ones and when. We can memorialize in so many different ways including through photos, stories, memory boxes, special occasions, death anniversaries, birthdays, and holidays.

Coping with the Holidays

We will be offering our annual Coping with the Holidays workshops on three different dates and times to make them most convenient for the most amount of people. This year, due to the pandemic, all sessions will be held remotely. Holidays and other important days and events are a wonderful time to memorialize a loved one. On these important days perhaps we are thinking even more about our memories and family traditions. Our loved ones held their own special place in these days and their presence is irreplaceable. The pressure of what the holidays “should” look like is high. Well-meaning individuals give a lot of opinions and advice about what they think the right way to celebrate is. You are left with the questions of: Do I keep everything the same? Do I start some new traditions? or Can I just get through the day without celebrating? Let us help you navigate your feelings and wishes by providing education and support.

Monday, November 2nd from 4:00-5:30. If interested, please contact Tara George—484-523-0833.

Wednesday, November 11th from 2:00-3:30 pm. If interested please contact Ally Becker—484-635-0662.

Thursday, November 19th from 7:00-8:30 pm. If interested please contact Jean Francis—484-225-9269.



Grief Support for You

Individual Support: Our three grief counselors are available for telephone, video, or in-person (following CDC guidelines of social distancing and masking) counseling sessions to provide support and information. Names and phone numbers of each counselor are listed in the front page of the newsletter.

Drop-In Groups: Drop-In Groups enable participants to receive and provide support in a collaborative environment. We currently offer two groups and with the COVID pandemic, one of these groups is held virtually. Each group is facilitated by one or two grief counselors. Please note that we have combined the Monday and Tuesday monthly groups into one, which will be offered the second Tuesday of every month from 4:00-5:30 p.m. The next one will be on Tuesday, November 10th from 4:00-5:30. For information about this support group please contact Tara George or Ally Becker. The Brodheadsville Group meets in person at the Western Pocono Community Library, 131 Pilgrim Way, Brodheadsville 18322 on the third Tuesday of each month from 1:30-3:00 p.m. Participants must socially distance and wear masks. Please contact Jean Francis or Ally Becker for more information.

Monthly Newsletter: Our newsletter is available to anyone who can benefit from receiving it, regardless of whether their loved one died on our hospice, when, or how the death occurred. If you would like to stop receiving our newsletter you can do so at any time by calling 484-526-2499.

Additional Places to Find Support and Share Your Story

Below is a list of free bereavement services in the area. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many in-person programs and services are only being held in virtual formats. Contact individual resources for updates on programming being offered. If you are in need of additional information, please contact our bereavement department at 484-526-2499.

Adult Support Information

Bradbury Sullivan LGBT Community Center offers bereavement support for LGBT people who have experienced loss. Most programs and services are available through virtual formats. Visit their website at bradburysullivancenter.org and for more information contact Ariel at Ariel@bradburysullivancenter.org.

The Compassionate Friends offers support for parents, grandparents and adult siblings grieving the loss of a child, grandchild or sibling. Visit their website at www.thecompassionatefriends.org for information about child loss or to connect with their online communities. The web site can provide you with the closest chapter although most in-person chapter meetings are on hold due to the pandemic.

Doylestown Hospital Hospice offers a variety of support groups and programs that change seasonally. Visit www.dhospice.com or call 215-345-2079.

Gentle Yoga for Grief, Stress and Life Transitions is offered by Wendy Littner Thompson, M.Ed., LPC, RYT. Please contact her at 610-730-1992 or visit her website at www.givinggriefavoice.com to learn more. Please be sure to let her know if your loved one was a St. Luke's Hospice patient.

Grief Share is a faith-based grief support program offered at many locations in the Lehigh Valley. Visit their web site at www.griefshare.org and enter your zip code to find the location of a group near you. Web site provides contact person and indicates if meetings are held in person or through a virtual format.

Grand View Hospital Hospice offers many groups and services that change seasonally. Please call 215-453-4210 for more information.

GRASP is for families whom have experienced death due to substance abuse. The daytime support group meets at the First Presbyterian Church in Allentown, room 118 on the first Monday of the month at 12 noon. Please register with Jenny Kemps at 610-422-8490 or email jenkemps@ptd.net. The evening support group meets on the third Monday of the month from 7-8:30 pm. Please register with Nancy Howe at 484-788-9440 or email nancyhowe@ymail.com.

HALOS – CLC (Hope After a Loved One's Suicide – Child Loss Chapter) is for parents, grandparents and adult siblings who have experienced loss of a child or sibling to suicide. The group meets on the 4th Thursday of the month from 6:30– 8:30 pm at Hughes Library in Stroudsburg, PA. Call to register with Alice Keyes at 570-236-1168 or email at alicekeys00@gmail.com.

Lehigh Valley Health Network offers many groups and services that change seasonally. Please call 610-402-7481 for more information.

Lehigh Valley Home Care & Hospice Pocono's bereavement support group meets on the first and third Wednesdays of the month from 12 noon-1 p.m. Anyone who has experienced the death of a loved one is invited to attend. The support group meets at 502 VNA Road, Route 447, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301. Please call Tammy Hiestand at 272-762-3826 to learn more.

Suicide: The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention has excellent information on risk factors, statistics, education and local services. Visit their web site at www.afsp.org and enter your zip code to find the chapter nearest you. All chapters are run by people who have experienced the suicide of a loved one.

Support Information for Children

Lehigh Valley Health Network offers "Stepping Stones for Children" for ages 6 through 17. This is a combination of education, activities and support to help facilitate healthy grieving with others who are the same age. Please call 610-402-7481 to register. The group meets at 2024 Lehigh Street, Allentown, PA 18103.

Support Information in New Jersey

Karen Ann Quinlan Hospice 800-882-1117 www.karenannquinlanhospice.org/services/bereavement