



Comfort for the Grieving Heart

Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

June 2023

“If there ever comes a day when we can't be together, keep me in your heart. I'll stay there forever.”

~Winnie the Pooh

St. Luke's Hospice

Bereavement

Team:

484-526-2499

Vulnerable. Uncomfortable. Painful. Ugly...

But, also Beautiful—

Grief

Grief is not just about loss, it is about life. Your loved one's life and who you are because they existed. In the weight of it all, we tend to overlook the beauty or are just not in a place to see it. It is important to remember grief is not the absence of love, but what is experienced because that love existed and what it gave you.

We grieve because we love.

No doubt, you would trade away all that “beauty” in a moment to have them back. It is funny how when you lose someone you love, you grieve even their least loveable habits and can find yourself yearning for one more dish left in the sink, one more ill-timed phone call, one more discussion on how to work a smart phone, or maybe even one more Dad joke.

Grief affects every aspect of our lives and especially in the beginning we are left thinking of all we lost, not all we were given in having them. We are left thinking of what they and interchangeably we went through when they were sick and forced to face the end of such a meaningful life.

We need to give ourselves permission to grieve and even more we need to make time and space for it. Say aloud what you miss about them. Share memories with family, friends and little ones as to what they were like and how you want them to be remembered. Say their name and give others that same permission—to grieve alongside you. While how we grieve is individual, it is still something that needs to be shared... witnessed in a way by at least one other person.

Who is that safe space for you and how can you allow them to be there for you and share in your grief—both the ugly and the beautiful?

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



Helpful Hints

Helping Others Understand Grief

What is supportive can look different to each of us. Most have the best of intentions, but sometimes words, ignorance, or perhaps their own grief gets in the way. Surely, loss is something we all wish we did not have to go through. But, sometimes educating ourselves and others on what we are experiencing or need from them can help the process.

- **Let people know it is okay to talk about your loved one.** Just as you need to give yourself permission to grieve, sometimes others are waiting for your permission to share and be with you in your grief.
- **Ask for patience.** We are not our best self when we are grieving or maybe we are just all over the place with what we are feeling. Be more patient with yourself in this process and help others know you need patience from them, as well.
- **Educate on the loneliness of grief.** Grief is already a lonely process. Then, sometimes we feel abandoned by those we thought would be there for us. Let those who genuinely care about you know what you need from them. This can help you feel less isolated and also let people know you are open to support.
- **Ask me how I feel, only if you really have the time to find out.**
- **I am not strong. I'm just numb.**
- **I am not only grieving their death, but the loss of the person I was when I was with them.**
- **They are part of me and always will be, and sometimes I remember with joy and sometimes with tears. Both are okay.**
- **I don't have to accept this death. I have to understand it has happened and it is real, but there are some things in life that are just not acceptable.**
- **Please don't tell me I can find someone else or that I need to start dating again. I'm not ready and maybe I don't want to.**
- **When you tell me what I should be doing, I feel even more lost and alone. I feel badly enough, so please don't make it worse by telling me I'm not doing it right.**
- **I don't even understand what you mean when you say, "You've got to get on with your life." My life is going on. I've been forced to take on new responsibilities and roles. It may not look the way you think it should. This will take time and I will never be by old self again. So please, just love me as I am today and know that with your love and support joy will slowly return to my life. But, I will never forget and there will always be times I cry.**
- **Please don't say, "Call me if you need anything." I'll never call you because I have no idea what I need.**
- **I need to know you care about me. I need to feel your hugs. I need you to just be with me and I need to be with you. I need to know you believe in me and my ability to work through my grief in my own way and in my own time.**
- **Please don't judge me now. Remember I'm grieving. I may even be in shock. I am afraid. I may feel deep rage or even guilty. But above all, I hurt. I'm experiencing a pain unlike any I have ever felt before and one that cannot be imagined by anyone who has not walked in my shoes.**
- **Don't worry if you think I'm getting better and then I seem to slip backwards. Grief makes me behave this way, at times. And please don't tell me you know how I feel.**
- **Give Thanks.** Thank those who are genuinely there for you. Thank them for being your friend, for their patience for their help, prayers and patience.
- **Let them know.** When they need you, as you have needed them... You will understand and be there.

Grief Support for You

St. Luke's Hospice abides by CDC and Pennsylvania Department of Health guidelines for public gatherings during these challenging times. Here are support options we currently offer:

Individual support: Our bereavement counselors provide support and information **through video and telephone counseling sessions.** Contact information is on the front page of this newsletter.

Good Grief Workshops: These 90-minute workshops are offered virtually twice a month to provide you with a better understanding of what grief is, how it may affect you emotionally, physically, spiritually and psychologically, coping strategies and ways to reconcile the loss. For more information and to receive an invitation to join the meeting, call (484) 526-2499. You will be asked to download the Microsoft Teams app on your smart phone or computer. Workshop offerings include a daytime and an evening option each month:

Wednesday, June 7th 2023, 6-7:30PM

Thursday, June 22nd 2023, 1-2:30PM

Thursday, July 13th 2023, 1-2:30PM

Wednesday, July 26th 2023, 6-7:30PM

Video library: St. Luke's website includes a dozen short videos that provide information about the grieving and mourning process and ways to care for yourself after a loss. To view the videos, go to <https://www.slhn.org/vna> and click on the hospice heading. On the left side of the screen under the VNA heading, click on grief support. About half-way down this page, click onto the video library heading "Want to understand your grief?" Access the library by answering the question about your connection with St. Luke's Hospice (if any). Then view the videos from the comfort of your home.

Monthly Support Group

Brodheads ville

The Brodheads ville group meets the third Monday of the month from 10:00 -11:30 am at the Western Pocono Community Library, 131 Pilgrim Way, Brodheads ville, 18322.

It provides space for participants to receive and provide support in a collaborative environment. It is facilitated by a grief counselor.

For more information, contact Alexandra at (484) 635-0662 and if the weather looks threatening, call (484) 526-2514 and listen for an update on this phone line.

Winnie the Pooh

"If ever there is tomorrow

when we're not together...

there is something you must always remember.

You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem and smarter than you think.

But the most important thing is,

even if we're apart...

I'll always be with you."

~ A.A.Milne

Additional Places to Find Support and Share Your Story

Below is a list of free bereavement services in the area. Because of the pandemic and the need for physical distancing, many resources may only be offered virtually. Please contact our bereavement department at 484-526-2499 if you need additional support.

Adult Support Information

Bradbury Sullivan LGBT Community Center offers bereavement support for LGBT people who have experienced loss. For more information, please visit their website at www.bradburysullivancenter.org or email at reilly@bradburysullivancenter.org.

The Compassionate Friends offers ongoing support for parents, grandparents and adult siblings grieving the loss of a child, grandchild or sibling. Visit www.thecompassionatefriends.org. Enter your zip code to locate the local chapter and contact person near you.

Doylestown Hospital Hospice offers a variety of support groups and programs that change seasonally. Visit their website at www.doylestownhealth.org/hospital/services/bereavement or call 215-345-2079.

Gentle Yoga for Grief, Stress and Life Transitions is currently being offered virtually by Wendy Littner Thompson, M.Ed., LPC, RYT. Visit www.givinggriefavoice.com or call 610-730-1992. Be sure to indicate if your loved one was a St. Luke's Hospice patient.

Grand View Hospital Hospice offers groups and services that change seasonally. For more information, call 215-453-4210.

Grief Share is a faith-based support group offered throughout the Lehigh Valley. Visit their website at www.griefshare.org and enter your zip code to find the contact person and program near you.

OASIS Community Center offers a variety of support groups to those grieving a loss due to substance related causes. Therapist-led meetings are held in-person and virtually for bereaved parents and young adults (siblings, partners, friends, etc.). Groups for bereaved youth ages 7-17 and bereaved caregivers raising bereaved children are offered in-person. For dates and times, visit www.oasisbethlehem.org, call 484-747-6825 or email at rhonda@oasisbethlehem.org to register.

GRASP (Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing) currently offers two virtual evening meetings per month, plus an afternoon meeting at the Oasis Center. Call 484-788-9440 or Call/Email at nancyhowe@ymail.com or 484-788-9440 or Tim Howe at howet60@yahoo.com or (646-401-4455).

Lehigh Valley Health Network offers many groups and services for adults and children between the ages of 6-17. For more information, call 610-402-7481. For information about program offerings in the Pocono area, call 272-762-3826 or email Bryson.Boes@lvhn.org.

Suicide Loss: The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention has excellent information on risk factors, statistics and education about suicide. Visit www.afsp.org and enter your zip code to find the chapter/contact person near you. All chapters are run by people who have experienced the suicide of a loved one.

Cancer Support Community of the Greater Lehigh Valley cancersupportglv.org

Find an individual therapist at: **Psychologytoday.com**

We encourage you to call the **number on the back of your insurance card** to find resources paid by your individual insurance plan.

Support Information in New Jersey

Karen Ann Quinlan Hospice offers support to those who are grieving the death of a loved one. For more information, call 973-948-2283 or visit www.karenannquinlanhospice.org/services/bereavement.