



Comfort for the Grieving Heart

Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

February 2016

Making Room

St. Luke's Hospice

484-526-2499

"It's hard to lose the person you thought would always be with you...it's like your life has become some sort of game where they changed all the rules in the middle. But, it's not the end. My mama used to say that when you lose something from your life it just means that you're making room in your heart for something new."

Loralee, The Sound Of Glass by Karen White

Bereavement Team:

Mindy Watson, MSW

Bereavement Coordinator and Counselor

Mindy.Watson@slubn.org

(484) 526-2314

Suzann Ditzel, MSW

Bereavement Coordinator and Counselor

Suzann.Ditzel@slubn.org

(484) 526-2514

Nan Sell-Parry, LCSW

Family Services Manager

Rev. Anne G. Huey

Spiritual Services Manager



Dawn Cavanaugh

Bereavement Assistant

Dawn.Cavanaugh@slubn.org

(484) 526-2499

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

Death and life are inextricably linked; the touch of death is now a part of you, reluctantly woven into the tapestry of your new and unfolding experience. At the onset of loss, one experience we may be faced with is the desire to shut down, close off, and withdraw from everything and everyone. It is an important part of the grieving process, and there is a time and place for us to do so, so that we may really face the darkness of loss, to look deep into the face of death and ultimately the meaning of human life. But there also comes a time to come out of the shadows to remember that in nature, there is always a life and death cycle, followed by rebirth—rebirth of the spirit, of the breath of life, of our knowing that we are not alone, and most of all, that we can once again experience joy. Our task moves from one of walking backwards to one of living forwards.

To make room for loss, we must try to make emotional room in our hearts to honor and remember our loved one, to do what we can to fill our hearts with love and appreciation. In doing so, we make room for grief to settle in and lead us on our journey to healing. Research shows that having moments of gratitude, a sense of awe, and even a real smile or chuckle helps us with our sorrow as we continue our grief journey. In the beginning, you might not even know what makes you feel a moment of joy or puts a smile on your face, so you may have to try different things. These do not have to be major projects or events, rather, they can be simple things. Get outside and be in nature...practice good self-care...write in a journal...spend time with those you love...share your memories...watch funny videos. If these tasks seem daunting you may have to get down to basics and simply just accept that grief is here to stay; an unwanted but permanent resident in the corners of your life and one that you have to make room for and make friends with in all its forms. You must learn to simply sit with and feel the anger, sadness, despair, but also allow space for hope, love and the bittersweet joy of memory that grief will lead you to. This dual activity of making room for both grief and joy may feel contradictory and puzzling; grief can make us feel that way.

But grief can also open our hearts in ways that are unimaginable. Try to make room.

-Mindy

Service of Remembrance

We gather periodically as family members of our patients and as a Hospice staff to remember those who have died. Our Services of Remembrance are inter-faith and are offered as a way in which we may take time to reflect, remember, and celebrate the lives and legacies of those who have passed from ours. The names of the deceased will be read at these services unless we are notified that you prefer otherwise. Please bring your family and friends and join us for this time of remembrance. For patients served by our **Bethlehem office and Hospice House**, who died between **November 1, 2015 and February 29, 2016** the Service of Remembrance will be held on **Sunday, April 3, 2016 at 3 pm** at Wesley Church, 2540 Center Street, Bethlehem, PA 18017, 610-865-5715.



Grief & Family Dynamics Workshop

Traditionally, the focus of grief has been on the individual, where support and treatment is focused on the individual's coping and adjustment. But grief does not have to be solely an individual process; along with our culture and religion, our family unit teaches us about death, dying and grief. Understanding grief from a family perspective allows family members to engage in grief work together, and to work on the healing process not only for the individual, but for the family as a whole. If you are interested in learning more about how families grieve, what are some causes of family discord during the grief process, and ways to work together as a family unit, please join us for a workshop on Wednesday, March 30, 2016 from 6:00 - 8:00 pm at The Pricilla Payne Hurd Education Center, St. Luke's Hospital, Bethlehem Campus, 701 Ostrum Street, Bethlehem, PA 18015 in **Room- 104**. *Pre-registration is required:* Mindy.Watson@sluhn.org or 484-526-2314.

Drumming Group

Healing Rhythms, a drumming group, is a unique approach to loss, grief and support in life transitions. The use of the drum is a vehicle of expression when you may not be able to put your thoughts and feelings into words. Research indicates that drumming accelerates physical healing, boosts the immune system and produces feelings of well-being, a release of emotional trauma, and reintegration of self. Drumming circles also provide a sense of connectedness with others and interpersonal support. No experience is necessary and the drums are provided for you.

Our Healing Rhythms drumming group is led by a Remo HealthRhythms endorsed facilitator. The group will run on Saturday mornings from 10am to 12pm from April 2, 2016 through May 7, 2016. This group will meet at the Lehigh Valley Friends Meeting-house, 4116 Bath Pike (Route 512) Bethlehem, PA 18017. Please pre-register with Mindy at Mindy.Watson@sluhn.org or at 484-526-2314.



Open /Drop-in Support Groups

Our first Open Group meets on the **first Friday of each month** from **10-11am** at St. Luke's Hospice House (2455 Black River Road, Bethlehem.). Our next meeting will be on **February 5, 2016**.

Our second Open Group meets on the **first Wednesday of every month, from 7-8:00 pm** at St. Luke's Hospital, Quakertown Campus, 1021 Park Avenue, Quakertown, PA. We will meet in the Cafeteria Conference Room. The first group will be **Wednesday, February 3, 2016**.

What we have once enjoyed and deeply loved we can never lose, for all that we love deeply becomes a part of us.

Helen Keller

Featured Website:

www.hellogrief.org

Hello Grief provides information and resources about grief in order to break through the current culture of avoidance that surrounds death and loss. Hello Grief addresses bereavement head-on for those who are helping others cope, as well as those who need support on their own personal journey with grief. Hello Grief offers a free online grief and bereavement community. Think Facebook for those with a loss. In the online grief community, members create profiles, share photos, connect via stories, create memorial walls, join and create groups, and seek support in the forums.

The online grief community serves as a grief social network, where community members learn first hand that they are not alone in their grief and bereavement.

But, the Hello Grief online community also knows that grief and loss do not define who we are. So, while it is a place to connect with others living with loss, groups and forum conversations are also formed around non-loss and non-grief related topics, such as hobbies, sports, volunteering, being a parent, being a teen, school, work, etc. The organization also has a nice collection of grief-related articles and resources listed state-by-state.



**Ain't no shame in holding on to
grief... as long as you make
room for other things, too**

Bubbles, The Wire

For the Young Ones



If you know of a child who has experienced the loss of a parent, the website www.familyliveson.org will be a valuable tool. Statistics show that 1 in 20 children experience the death of a parent before the age of 16 - that's one in every classroom, and two on every school bus. Family Lives On's Tradition Program helps these young people and their families continue family traditions as a therapeutic support to move beyond the death story and to celebrate the life story of the loved one who has died. The Tradition Program encourages the healthy emotional development of parentally bereaved children and teens by providing annual opportunities for intentional remembering, creating a safe haven for grief, communication and celebration.

When you check out their site, you will see examples of how the Tradition Program supports the mission of helping children stay connected with their deceased loved one. Some examples of how the organization has helped children include:

- Funding for annual portraits
- Funding to continue traditions that children participated in with their parents, such as seeing plays, taking vacations, and planting flowers each spring
- Funding to purchase materials for special projects, such as ingredients for annual baking

Once a child is enrolled, two trained volunteers conduct a Skype "Family Meeting" with the children and surviving parent or guardian to discuss traditions that the child shared with his or her deceased parent. This process not only conveys to the family the value of remembering, but also helps the child/teen to choose a tradition that he wants to continue. Subject to program guidelines, Family Lives On arranges and pays for the entire tradition request for each child annually until the child turns 18. If you are interested in learning more, or are considering enrolling your child in the program, visit www.familyliveson.org to verify eligibility and enroll.

Honoring the Journey

Additional Places to Find Support and Share Your Story

This is a listing of free bereavement resources in the area. If you have a need for something and don't see it on this list, please call Mindy at (610) 997-7139 for referrals to other services.

Cancer Support Community of Lehigh Valley is a local non-profit organization providing emotional and social support to family members and caregivers. They offer support groups, educational workshops and mind/body classes in their Allentown, PA office. Programs are free, but registration is required. Call 610-861-7555 or email info@cancersupportglv.org to register or for more information.

The Compassionate Friends offers ongoing support groups for parents, grandparents, and adult siblings grieving the loss of a child, grandchild, or sibling.

TCF of Lehigh Valley meets at Sacred Heart Hospital, 2nd floor, 421 Chew Street in Allentown. The group meets the 2nd Monday each month at 7pm. For more information, call 484-597-0240.

TCF of Quakertown meets at St. Luke's Hospital, ground floor, 1021 Park Ave in Quakertown in Taylor Conference Rooms A&B. This group is held the 2nd Tuesday each month from 7:30 – 9pm. For more information, call 215-536-0173.

TCF of Easton meets the 2nd Thursday each month from 7-9pm at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 2115 Washington Blvd. in Easton. For more information call 610-866-5468.

TCF of Carbon County meets the 1st Wednesday each month from 6:30 – 8:30pm in the Palmerton Community Ambulance Association, 501 Delaware Ave in Palmerton. Please call 610-826-2938 for more information.

Gentle Yoga for Grief, Stress, and Life Transitions offered by Wendy Littner Thomson, M.Ed., LPC, RYT. First session offered for free to caregivers whose loved one recently received hospice services from St Luke's Hospice. For location, times, or more information, please call 610-730-1992 www.givinggriefavoice.com

St. Francis Retreat House holds monthly grief support groups on the first Tuesday from 9:30-11:00 am or the first Thursday from 7:00-8:00 pm. Located at 3918 Chipman Avenue, Easton PA. Please call 610-515-9028 for more information.

Free Spirits is a group of more than 2 dozen older widows who go out to lunch once a month to keep active and offer support to each other--and to newer widows. Most are members of Church of the Manger UCC, Bethlehem. Call 610-866-8223 for more information.

Soaring Spirits Regional Group Lehigh Valley is planning to hold monthly social gatherings for widowed individuals to provide opportunities to connect with others in a positive, caring, and supportive environment. For more information, please call Sonja Handwerk at 610-297-0057, email soaringspiritslvpa@yahoo.com, or follow on Facebook at Soaring Spirits International Group Lehigh Valley.

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

GriefShare Groups are a faith-based, evangelical approach to grief and loss. GriefShare groups are provided at several locations in the Lehigh Valley. To find a location near you, please visit www.griefshare.org.

Lehigh Valley Health Network offers grief support services in the form of counseling, support groups, and workshops for adults and children, as well as a lunch club for women. For information, please call 610-969-0330.

VNA/Hospice of Monroe County offers a support group the 1st and 3rd Wednesday each month at noon. Call 570-421-5390 for more information.

Doylestown Hospital Hospice offers a variety of support groups, including a widow/widower group, a young survivors group, and an adult loss group. Visit www.dhospice.com or call 215-345-2838.