



Comfort for the Grieving Heart

Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

January 2018

"It's lonely here and I miss your light"

Ranata Suzuki

St. Luke's Hospice

484-526-2499

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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.

Harry Nilsson was right on the mark when he wrote "One", the famous song that starts with the line, "One is the loneliest number that you'll ever do." Loneliness is a fundamental part of being human, one that is tied up with our desire for love, companionship or simply understanding from another person. Whether we are grieving the loss of a loved one, or experiencing life without integrating a loss, loneliness is a normal human experience that we all encounter at one time or another. Webster's Dictionary defines being lonely as being without company, being cut off from others and being sad from being alone. Feeling lonely, and subsequent loneliness, is one's perception that they don't have the amount or quality of social interaction they desire. The perception of feeling lonely is relative to what you feel would be personally fulfilling. One can still feel lonely even when surrounded by family and friends because they're missing the type of bond or amount of contact they feel desirable.

For anyone who has experienced the loss of a loved one, the stark realization that loneliness accompanies our grief journey is one that is often integrated later on in our grieving. Loneliness is sometimes one emotion that creeps up unexpectedly when we are grieving. We anticipate sadness. We anticipate heightened stress. We anticipate anger and frustration. But loneliness is often a part of grief that hits us only when we start to experience it. In the early stages of our grieving, we are often surrounded by family and friends, who are providing support and tangible help. But, commonly, this help dissipates after some time and what we are left with is the realization that we are not only now alone with our loss, but alone in the many tasks of which we need to adjust. We are now keenly aware that we are left to fill the quiet of an empty house and figure out how to schedule our daily routine. As one widower, Erin Deihl, put it, "I was so overwhelmed with loneliness I thought the huge chasm of pain would never be filled. The days were an endless maze of meaningless routine, and my emotions ran amok like a malfunctioning roller coaster. The nights were even worse. I couldn't sleep and spent the lonely hours trying to read and pray, or wandering from room to room seeking I knew not what. I was alone and my big, old Victorian house was filled with memories and heartbreaking reminders of our 43 happy years together. How would I ever make it alone?"

Being alone can be an opportunity to grow, develop and explore. It can be difficult and frightening, but may also be mixed with a sense of freedom in going through the process of developing a new routine and landscape. As you navigate this newness and learn how to incorporate loneliness into your new life, you may want to consider who is supportive in your environment, and what gives your life purpose and direction. This could be easy to identify – your family, your pets, coworkers, friends – or it could take some time to name. Look for those who will listen without judging you, or for those who have suffered a similar loss. Find time with others to talk, to touch, to receive support. It may also be helpful to identify your loneliest times, and think of how you can alter your routines and environment. Consider rearranging the furniture in a room; plan your weekends ahead of time; use your microwave for quick, easy meals. Developing a new normal and routine will take time and some experimentation, and allowing yourself the time and space to do so may be of great advantage.

Being alone does not have to mean being lonely.

-Mindy

Tips for Coping with Loneliness

Don't expect others to guess what you need. If you need help running errands, tell someone. If you need a hug, tell someone. If you need to be pampered, tell someone

Go somewhere and have a good, long cry.

Consider getting a companion animal (which can be a wonderful source of unconditional love), but only after you've investigated what kind of pet would suit you and your lifestyle.

If talking with your circle of family and friends seems scary, consider speaking with a professional counselor. Having one person to explore the impact of your loneliness is important to your emotional and physical well being. Talking to others may also help you find new ways to create a new routine and fill empty spaces left by the absence of your loved one.



I said to my soul, be still, and wait...
So the darkness shall be the light,
And the stillness the dancing.

T.S. ELIOT

Grief and Loss Support Group

Our 6 week Grief and Loss Support Group will start again in January 2018. This group is for adults grieving the loss of someone significant in their lives and provides an opportunity to come together with others who have experienced the loss of a loved one. The group guides participants in understanding the uniqueness of their grief and provides grief education and support. Please note that this is not a therapeutic group; this group provides support, resources and education on the healing process. The group will meet on Thursdays from January 18, 2018 through February 22, 2018 from 4:00 to 5:30 pm at the Education Center, located in front of the Priscilla Payne Hurd Annex of St. Luke's Hospital, 801 Ostrum Street, Bethlehem, PA 18015.

Registration is required: please call Suzann at (484)526-2514 or email Suzann.Ditzel@sluhn.org.



Newly Bereaved Workshop

This one-time workshop is for those who have a lost a loved one within the past 1-3 months and will provide education on the first few weeks and months of grief following a death. We will cover understanding common grief reactions, coping strategies, self-care throughout the grief process and beyond, and the uniqueness of your grief experience. These workshops are offered on a bi-monthly basis. We will meet on **Wednesday, February 21, 2018 from 6:00 - 8:00 pm** at the Priscilla Payne Hurd Education Center, St. Luke's Hospital, Bethlehem Campus, 801 Ostrum Street, Bethlehem, PA 18015 (building is located in front of Priscilla Payne Hurd annex of the hospital).

Registration is required: please call Suzann at (484)526-2514 or email Suzann.Ditzel@sluhn.org.

Open /Drop-in Support Groups

Our Drop-In groups are designed to offer continued support to bereaved individuals who have already attended grief and loss programs through St. Luke's Hospice. Drop-In groups afford participants the chance to continue with supportive services. This group is facilitated, but directed by group members in terms of content and discussion. We currently offer the following Drop-In Support Groups:

Easton: First Monday of every month from 4:00 -5:00 pm at St. Luke's Hospital-Anderson Campus, Medical Office Building (MOB), 1872 St. Luke's Blvd, Easton, PA 18045 in Conference Room A. **** NO GROUP ON 1/1/18, GROUP WILL MEET ON 1/2/18 INSTEAD****

Quakertown: Second Monday of every month from 6:30-7:30 pm at St. Luke's Hospital-Quakertown Campus, 1021 Park Avenue, Quakertown, PA 18951 in Taylor B Conference room.

Bethlehem: Cancelled

Allentown: Watch for new time and place to be announced.



Lehighon News :

Lehighon Open Group: We meet for our Drop In/Open Group on the **Third Monday of every month from 3:00 - 4:00 pm** at Dinkey Memorial Church, 1742 Dinkey Road, Lehighon, PA 18212. All members of the community who are in need of bereavement support are invited to attend.

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 the Bereavement Office at (484) 526-2499 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. www.thecompassionatefriends.org

TCF of Lehigh Valley meets at Sacred Heart Hospital, 2nd floor, 421 W. 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 267-380-0130.

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.

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.givinggriefavoic.com

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 social gatherings for widowed individuals to provide opportunities to connect with others in a positive, caring, and supportive environment. For more information, contact Sonja Handwerk at 610-297-0057 or soaringspiritslvpa@yahoo.com.

HALOS - CLC is for parents, grandparents and adult siblings who have experienced the loss of a child or sibling to suicide. The group meets every 4th Thursday from 6:30-8:30 pm at Hughes Library in Stroudsburg, PA. Register with Alice Keyes at (570) 236-1168, alicekeys00@gmail.com

Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Center offers an Open Group on the 4th Wednesday of each month from 5:30-7:00 pm. Registration is required, contact Ariel at (610) 347-9988 or ariel@bradburiesullivancenter.org. The Center is located at 522 W. Maple St., Allentown, PA 18101. There is no charge for the group.

GriefShare Groups are a faith-based 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.

GRASP - For families who have experienced a death due to substance use. Group meets every 3rd Monday of the month at 1st Presbyterian Church in Allentown, Room 118. Please register with Nancy Howe (484) 788-9440

Stepping Stones for Adolescents is a group for teens ages 11-16 that meets at Lehigh Valley Hospice for teen peer support. Call (610)402-7481 for more information. They also offer Stepping Stones for Children, for ages 5-10

Grand View Hospital Hospice offers many groups and services that change seasonally. Please call 215-453-4210 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 Celia Blum, 215-345-2079.

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.

New Jersey: Compassionate Care Hospice provides bereavement support groups at Warren Hospital on a rotating basis. Call 973-726-7510 for more information.