

Comfort for the Grieving Heart

Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

February 2019

*"Love is the vital core of the soul. And of all you see, only love is infinite."
~ Rumi*

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.

February is the month of love. While February 14th or Valentine's Day is typically thought of as a day for sweethearts, it did not become such until after Geoffrey Chaucer's poem in his "Parlement of Foule." In this poem Chaucer references love birds in the following verse translated to modern English: "For this was on Saint Valentine's Day when every bird cometh there to choose his mate." Today, in addition to the celebration of romantic love, we also celebrate Valentine's Day as a day devoted to love and friendship.

If you have lost a partner or spouse, you may feel that you have lost your second half, a piece of yourself. Partners often help us to feel complete. They are stronger in areas where we feel weaker and vice versa. Partners hold us up when we are down as we do the same for them. And, they are arguably the ones who know us best on this Earth. On Valentine's Day you might remember traditions that you shared with your partner, such as exchanging cards or gifts, eating a special dinner together, and/or going on a special date.

Whether you have lost a partner, another family member, or a dear friend on Valentine's Day you may feel solitary even in the company of others. You would never begrudge others the same experience of feeling loved, but when you see others celebrating the holiday, you may wish that you were able to celebrate with your loved one just as they are able to celebrate with theirs. The world is moving at its own pace and agenda. Time markers such as holidays occur, but part of you is in this world and the other part of you remains in the world where your loved one died.

Your mind may transport you to the traditions you had for this holiday as you were growing up. You may feel the loss of having all this love inside of you and not being able to dole out your love and express it. You may very well miss your loved one doling out love to you and expressing their love for you. As is illustrated so well in the above quote by Rumi, love never dies as it is eternal and everlasting. Our loved ones were surrounded by our love for them and now, they continue to envelop us in their love.

Lastly, please do not forget to love yourself on Valentine's Day and all the other days of the year. Be gentle with and kind to yourself. We are all worthy of love now and forever.

~ Tara

On Valentine's Day and always...

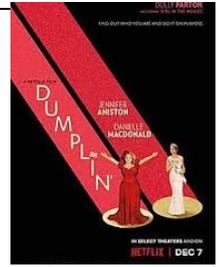
Think about what is right for you - You may choose to keep traditions the same, change them, or not partake. All of these choices are okay! Well-meaning loved ones may invite you to be with them. You can try it out, stay as long as you wish, and/or take a raincheck. It is okay to have some time in your own head or even in silence. Going to nature might be a wonderful spot to be with yourself and reflect. Even on a cold day, it can feel other-worldly to experience the sun on your face. And, in nature humans can experience something bigger than them.

Your loved ones are a part of everything you do as they are a part of you. As you go through life, taking one breath at a time and putting one foot in front of the other, it is normal and natural to think of your loved ones. Tell stories about them. People who care about you may be afraid that if they talk about your loved one, they will make you sad. Elicit stories from your family and friends and reassure them that you are thinking of your loved one all the time anyway. Maybe you will also want to look at and show pictures from the past. These pictures have captured some beautiful moments in time.

Love yourself. You are worthy of love. Think about how much your dear loved one loved you! Try not to be harder on yourself than you would another person. It is okay to treat yourself to something healthy that feels good to you. Some ideas are a massage, bath, special coffee or food treat, yoga/exercise, meditation, journaling, reading, movie watching, etc. You know yourself best. Pick something special just for you!

Remember, love is eternal. The love you have for your loved one and the love he/she has for you transcends time. The tie and bond you have with your loved one can never be broken. Your loved one will always be a part of you. Together you are pieces of a greater whole.

Movie Review



The story of “Dumplin’” on Netflix might be particularly appealing to teenagers, but is entertaining to adults as well. The main story behind the film is about a plus-size teenager named Willowdean who joins her former pageant winning mother, Rosie’s, small town beauty pageant in protest. The back story is about Willowdean’s loss of her maternal aunt, Lucy, who played a vital role in raising her. Aunt Lucy was a fun-loving, confident, plus-sized woman who had a love for the music of Dolly Parton. The film addresses Willowdean’s grief process and how her mother’s grief over the loss of her sister does not impact her immediately, but later on. Willowdean has been openly grieving since the death of her aunt. Their grief processes are as individual as they are.



Open/Drop-In Groups

Open/Drop-In Support Groups are designed to offer support to grieverers who have attended grief and loss programs through St. Luke's Hospice. These groups enable participants the opportunity to receive and provide support in a collaborative environment. Groups are facilitated by a grief counselor, but are directed by group members in terms of topics for discussion. Currently we offer two such groups:

Easton: First Monday of every month from 4-5pm at St. Luke's Hospital-Anderson Campus, Medical Office Building, 1700 St. Luke's Blvd., Easton, 18045 in the lower level conference room A.

Quakertown: Second Monday of every month from 6-7pm at St. Luke's Hospital-Quakertown Campus, 1021 Park Avenue, Quakertown, 18951 in the cafeteria conference room (lower level).

Loss of a Spouse Group

The Loss of a Spouse Support Group is a new group offering designed to provide support to those who have lost a spouse/partner. All potential members need to call to register and speak with the grief counselor who will be facilitating the group prior to attending.

The group will be held for 6 weeks from **6:00-8:00pm** on the following Tuesday evenings: **March 5, March 12, March 19, March 26, April 2, and April 9**. All 6 sessions will be held at St. Luke's Hospital-Anderson Campus Medical Office Building, 1700 St. Luke's Blvd., Easton, 18045. To register for this 6-week session please call 484-526-2514 and speak with Jean Francis.



Additional Places to Find Support and to Share Your Story

This is a list of free bereavement services in the area. Please call the bereavement office at 484-526-2499 if you are in need of something more or for referrals to other services.

Adult Support Information

Bradbury Sullivan LGBT Community Center— The center offers a professionally led monthly bereavement support group for LGBT people who have experienced loss. The group meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month from 5:30-7:00 pm. Please register with Ariel@bradburysullivancenter.org.

Doylestown Hospital Hospice offers a variety of support groups. 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. Let her know if your loved one was a St. Luke's Hospice patient.

Grief Share is a faith-based grief support group program. Several locations are provided within the Lehigh Valley. Visit www.griefshare.org to find a location near you.

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 support group meets at the 1st 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. A second 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.

Healing Hearts Loss, Grief and Bereavement Center in Emmaus is offering two 6-week survivors of suicide loss support groups, one for adults and one for teens beginning Wednesday, September 5, 2018 from 6-7 pm. Please call 610-421-8625 to register. Suggested \$10 donation.

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 215-453-4210 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. Visit their website at www.thecompassionatefriends.org or contact these local chapters: Lehigh Valley (484-597-0240), Quakertown (267-380-0130) and Easton (610-866-5468).

Virtual Grief Support is offered by Dr. Don Eisenhauer. Don has a background in counseling and pastoral ministry and he runs monthly tele-grief groups and chat room support. Participants either dial in via phone or log in via computer to speak and share with other grievers. For more information about the dates and times for these opportunities, contact Don at onlinegriefcommunity@gmail.com.

VNA Hospice of Monroe County provides an adult support group to anyone who has experienced the death of a loved one within the past year. These groups are held on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month from 12:00 noon—1:30 pm at 502 VNA Road, Route 447, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301. Please call 570-421-5390 to learn more.

Pocono VNA offers a support group for those who have experienced the death of a loved one within the past 12 months. These groups are held on 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Fish Hill Rd., Tannersville, PA 18372. The group begins at 7:00 pm. Call 570-629-1992 for more information.

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