



# Comfort for the Grieving Heart

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Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

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*Your grief path is yours alone, and no one else can walk it, and no one else can understand it.*  
- Terri Irwin

## 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.

A father recently asked us to provide support to his 17-year-old daughter whose mother recently died. He was concerned by her lack of tears and her reluctance to talk about her feelings. He worried that she was not “grieving the right way.”

In our culture, we are more adept at recognizing and acknowledging the person who expresses his or her emotions. We see the sadness creasing the face and tears streaming down the cheeks and we respond with kind words and hugs. But when someone is grieving in a way that doesn't match our preconceived notions of what is normal grieving and mourning, we question how they are processing the loss. Isn't this like telling someone they haven't used up enough Kleenex®?

Grief experts Kenneth Doka and Terry Martin first explored differences in the ways that men and women grieve. The more research they did, the more they discovered that these “male patterns” and “female patterns” were really more widely distributed than previously thought. Grief is manifested in many ways—physically, emotionally, cognitively, behaviorally and spiritually. The ways we grieve can be influenced by culture, gender, temperament and how we have been socialized. In other words, it's important to recognize that there's more than one way to grieve the losses we encounter.

People need to grieve in ways that are comfortable to them and for us to honor the individuality of grief expression. Grievers tend to be critical of their progress and consequently they tend to be more susceptible to allowing others to dictate how they *should* feel. Think of the various ways we express grief in terms of differences, not deficiencies. Turn to page 2 to learn what grieving style works best for you.

*Jean*

### Grieving Styles

Grieving styles are general ways that people adapt to losses and each style has its advantages and disadvantages

**The Intuitive Griever:** This person experiences strong affective reactions, often describing grief as occurring in waves of emotion. Adapting to loss involves both the ability to express and to explore feelings. Their expression of grief mirrors their inner experience of grief and they are able to respond freely to the question, “How do you feel?” When asked what helps them process their grief, they’ll often talk about finding a place — with a trusted friend, a support group, a therapist or in their own journaling or internal process — to sort through and examine their feelings.

**The Instrumental Griever:** This person experiences grief in more physical, cognitive or behavioral ways and to an outsider, their grief looks more like “doing” or “taking action.” The instrumental griever might say, “I can’t stop thinking about what happened” or “I felt like I couldn’t breathe.” Adapting to loss for them involves thinking and moving. Instrumental grievers respond best when asked what they *did* or what they *thought* rather than how they *felt*. They might say “I talked a lot about the person who died” or “I was very active in setting up a scholarship fund.” They may not always recognize these actions as expressions of grief. They may also be perplexed by what others consider to be their lack of emotion. What helps the instrumental griever most is the “doing.” An example is Eric Clapton who, after the tragic death of his young son, channeled his energy and composed the song, *Tears In Heaven*.

**The Blended Griever:** Most people — men and women — grieve somewhere along the continuum between intuitive and instrumental grief.

They are called blended grievers and they borrow coping tools from both ends of the spectrum.

It’s important to remember that while grieving styles may appear to fall along gender lines, there is evidence to the contrary. Some men are intuitive grievers just as some women are instrumental grievers. Problems arise when grievers try to adopt an approach that is counter to their natural style. For instance, an intuitive man may try to appear more manly by suppressing his emotions or an instrumental woman may think her lack of emotion indicates that she didn’t truly love the person who died. In these cases, the inner conflict can disrupt the natural grieving process for these people.



### How Children Grieve

Children grieve in small bits and pieces. They may cry for a time and then want to play. This is normal as children cannot handle intense periods of sadness. They grieve on their time frame and in their own way.

A child’s understanding of death is influenced by their level of psychological and cognitive development as well as the attitudes they encounter in their environment. That’s why it’s best to treat death as natural and survivable. Because it is.

Different approaches help the grieving child. Talking openly with them helps as does letting them use creative approaches such as play, art, dance, music and ritual. All are valuable modes of expression that allow them to say what words cannot.

### Workshop: Meals Made Simple

Everything changes after the death of a loved one. That includes eating habits. Grievers frequently report losing weight because they don't have an appetite. It's easier to skip a meal than to prepare one. Or they gain weight because when they *are* hungry, they choose convenient foods high in salt and fat. Or the griever doesn't know how to prepare a nutritious meal because the person who died did all the meal planning and cooking.

That's why we're introducing "Meals Made Simple" and we've enlisted the expertise of chef Charley DeLeva and dietitians Kate Kozak and Kim McKnight to provide ideas on preparing satisfying yet simple meals in minutes.

"Meals Made Simple" will be held at St. Luke's Anderson campus on Wednesday, July 17 from 7-8:30 p.m. in the Medical Office Building, conference rooms A and B in the lower level. The hospital address is 1872 St. Luke's Blvd, Easton, 18045. Please register by calling Dawn Cavanaugh at (484) 526-2499. If there's enough interest, we'll offer this workshop at other locations.

### We'd Like to Hear from You

We're always interested in learning how to best serve people who are grieving. Do you have an idea for a workshop or program that you'd like us to implement? We'd like to hear what you want and need to reconcile loss in your life. Let any member of the team know by calling or emailing us. Contact information is on the front of this newsletter and we welcome your feedback.

### Open/Drop-In Grief Groups

Our Open/Drop-In Grief Groups allow you the chance to receive and provide support in a collaborative environment. Groups are facilitated by a grief counselor and participants suggest topics for discussion. Come and meet others to discuss similar challenges and experiences following a death. No registration needed. Currently we offer two such groups with a third one beginning in August. Each group meets for 90 minutes:

**Easton: First Monday of every month from 4-5:30 pm** at St. Luke's Anderson Hospital Campus, 1872 St. Luke's Blvd, Easton, 18045. We meet in the Medical Office building next to the hospital in the lower level conference room A.

**Quakertown: Second Monday of every month from 6-7:30 pm** at St. Luke's Quakertown Hospital Campus, 1021 Park Avenue, Quakertown, 18951 in the cafeteria conference room (lower level of the hospital).



**Brodheadsville: Third Tuesday of the month from 1:30-3 pm** in the community room at the Brodheadsville ShopRite, 107 Kinsley Drive, Brodheadsville, 18322. The community room is near the entrance to the store. Follow signs and take the stairs or the elevator to the second floor.

## **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. **Please note the change in meeting day.** The group now meets on the 4th Tuesday of each month from 5:30-7:00 pm. Please register with [Ariel@bradburrysullivancenter.org](mailto:Ariel@bradburrysullivancenter.org).

**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](http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org) or contact these local chapters: Allentown chapter (call Dawn De Long at 610-837-7924), Easton chapter (call John Sabo at 610-866-5468), Lehightown chapter (call Patty Bisel at 610-826-2938) and Quakertown chapter (484-408-7314).

**Doylestown Hospital Hospice** offers a variety of support groups and programs that change seasonally. Visit [www.dhospice.com](http://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.givinggriefavoic.com](http://www.givinggriefavoic.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. There is a Grief Share program on Sundays from 2:30-4:30 p.m. at the Mt. Eaton Church in Saylorsburg, 18353. Call (570) 992-7050 for additional information. For other Grief Share locations throughout the area, visit the web site [www.griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org) and enter your zip code to learn the location of a group 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 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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.

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

### **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](http://www.karenannquinlanhospice.org/services/bereavement)