



Comfort for the Grieving Heart

Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

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Grief is in two parts. The first is loss. The second is the remaking of life.

~ Anne Roiphe

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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.

Stand beside a quiet pool of water and watch what happens when a stone is tossed into the water. The stone splashes and then settles to the bottom. Little waves ripple outward from the point of the stone's entry and disturb the water in ever increasing spheres of motion.

Death causes a similar ripple effect as it sets off upheaval our lives. The death of someone we loved is a major event. We call this the primary loss, the stone—so to speak—that lands in the pool of water. But the experience of loss doesn't end with a funeral or memorial service. Instead it sets into motion a series of subsequent losses known as secondary losses, losses that occur as the result of this death. Secondary losses create a sense that we are losing everything we have ever had or known in life and they create the impression that the pain of loss will continue forever. Secondary losses are not usually anticipated by those who are grieving the death until they are living through these other losses. And these secondary losses are usually not well understood by the other people in a griever's life.

Yet this is precisely why grieving and mourning the death of someone we loved takes time and work. Because death changes our world, part of the work of griever is learning how to adjust to the new world we've been thrust in. Grieving secondary losses is a normal and healthy part of learning to live in a changed world. It's important to acknowledge the losses that have already taken place, to recognize those that are currently happening, and to envision losses that the future will bring. We need to know that each identified secondary loss will require its own grief response in its own way and in its own time.

Family and friends also need to be mindful of secondary losses and the associated grief they cause. In wanting to see us happy and "getting on with life," family and friends may unwittingly deny our real feelings of grief. Awareness, patience and understanding will enable us to move through these losses. Turn to page 2 to read how to identify your secondary losses.

Identifying Secondary Losses

There are many examples of secondary losses you could be experiencing after the death of a loved one, family member or friend. This isn't a comprehensive list, so be aware that you may be grieving losses not mentioned. Inasmuch as each loss causes grief, secondary losses need to be individually mourned.

Most obvious is the loss of concrete things—loss of family structure, income, financial security, familiar lifestyle and support systems. Another secondary loss that's difficult to immediately identify is the loss of identity. This comes from the change in how one defines oneself, as well as certain roles lost as the result of the death. These could include the loss of relational identity (Am I still a mother after my only child died?), loss of the caregiver role, loss of purpose as well as confidence.

Secondary losses unfold over time. You may have been acutely aware of these losses immediately following the death while others arise weeks and months later, such as the loss of memories, loss when giving away the deceased's belongings and the pain of watching others grieve, such as small children and elderly parents.

It may be helpful for you to identify secondary losses by writing them down. Try this:

When (name of person) died, I lost

...my caregiving role

...my sense of humor

...my dance partner

...financial security

...the person whose advice I trusted



Times of Remembrance

We celebrate the lives of patients who died on hospice service during Times of Remembrance. We offer these Times of Remembrance throughout the year, and although conducted in houses of worship, they are not religious in nature. Instead they offer us the opportunity to hold onto the value of each life and to bear witness to the legacies of each one, as we read each person's name in a reflective setting, framed by words and music. If you would like to bring a photo of your loved one for our photo memorial table, please do. We'll be reading the names of patients we've served at the Hospice House and on our Bethlehem Home Hospice team between November 1, 2019 and February 29, 2020. If you would prefer not to have your loved one's name read, let us know by calling Dawn at (484) 526-2499.

6-Week General Grief Group

This general grief group is open to anyone experiencing the loss of a parent, sibling, friend, spouse or other significant relationship. In this group, you'll have the opportunity to process your thoughts and feelings as you learn how to cope and redefine who you are now. We will provide information to help you understand grief and loss.

The group will be held on six Mondays beginning May 11th from 5:30-7:30 pm at St. Luke's Hospital - Allentown Campus, 1736 Hamilton Street, Allentown, 18104. Meeting dates are May 11, 18, June 8, 15, 22, and 29. Do note we skip the Mondays between May 18th and June 8th. If interested, please commit to attending all six sessions. To register, call Tara George at (484) 526-2314.

6-Week Spouse/Partner Loss Group

Our upcoming spouse/partner loss group is available to anyone who has lost a spouse, partner or significant other. Losing someone we chose to spend our life with poses unique challenges of loneliness, fear for the future and having to navigate new roles in the family as well as the household. During this group, participants will explore coping strategies and the unique relationship they had with their partner or spouse.

Our next spouse/partner group will be held on Tuesday evenings from 6-8 pm beginning April 7th at St. Luke's Anderson Hospital Campus, 1872 St. Luke's Blvd, Easton, 18045. Meeting dates are April 7, 14, 21, 28, May 5 and May 19. Do note there is no meeting on May 12. Meetings include information about the grieving process as well as discussion and sharing. Please plan to attend all six sessions as each session builds upon the previous one.

Pre-register early as this group is quite popular and fills up quickly. All St. Luke's bereavement groups and programs are open to the community. To register, call Jean Francis at (484) 526-2514.

Weather Updates



Snowy and icy roads may mean cancelling a bereavement group or meeting. To learn the status of an upcoming event, call the grief counselor in charge of the program and listen to the outgoing message on their office phone. If there's a cancellation, you'll hear about it here.



Drop-In Groups

Drop-In Groups enable you the chance to receive and provide support in a collaborative environment. They are for people who have experienced all different types of losses—the death of a parent, spouse, friend, sibling, etc. Groups are facilitated by a grief counselor and participants are invited to suggest topics for discussion. No registration is needed, hence the name “drop-in.” You are invited to meet others and explore the challenges often faced after the death of a loved one. Here are the locations for our current drop-in groups:

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. Meeting are held in the Medical Office building, lower level conference room A. For more information, contact Tara George at (484) 526-2314.

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). For more information, contact Jean Francis (484) 526-2514.

Brodheadsville: Third Tuesday of the month from 1:30-3 pm at the Western Pocono Community Library, 131 Pilgrim Way, Brodheadsville 18322. For directions or more information, contact Jean Francis at (484) 526-2514.

Additional Places to Find Support and 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 at 522 W. Maple Street, Allentown 18101 offers a professionally led monthly bereavement support group for LGBT people who have experienced loss. The group meets on the 4th Tuesday of each month from 5:30-7:00 pm. Please register with Ariel@bradburysullivancenter.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 or contact these local chapters: Lehigh Valley chapter (484-891-0823), Carbon County chapter (484-719-6753), Easton chapter (call Bailey Benner at 610-515-3526) and Quakertown chapter (484-408-7314).

Doylestown Hospital Hospice offers a variety of support groups and programs that change seasonally. 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. Please be sure to let her know if your loved one was a St. Luke's Hospice patient.

Grief Share is a faith-based grief support group program offered at many locations in the Lehigh Valley. 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 their web site — www.griefshare.org — and enter your zip code to find 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. 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.

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 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 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.

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