



# Comfort for the Grieving Heart

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*Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program*

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**“I know that if we meditate on a dream sufficiently long and thoroughly, if we carry it around with us and turn it over and over, something almost always comes of it.”**  
- C.G. Jung

## **St. Luke's Hospice**

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**PLEASE NOTE: If you would like to be added or removed from our mailing list or prefer to receive an electronic copy, please contact us at 484-526-2499.**

It's quite common for those who are grieving the death of a loved one to dream about the person who has died. These dreams run the gamut, from an ordinary kind of dream to ones that are distressing sometimes. Dreams can comfort, can make us feel both happy and sad, or sometimes just leave us feeling confused.

Throughout recorded history, people have attached importance to dreams, seeing them as either messages from the divine or predictions of the future. Modern science has studied sleep and dreams for decades and many scientists believe that dreams are meaningful not so much as messages from the beyond but as expressions of what is going on in our minds. Whatever the experience someone has in their dreams, we can all acknowledge that they have the power to shape and change our emotional landscape, sometimes for a day and sometimes for a life time.

Surveys in the United States report that about 60 percent of women and 40 percent of men report having dreamed about deceased loved ones. Often these dreams provide clues as to where a griever may be stuck in the grief and mourning process. One way to respond to dreams of deceased loved ones or other losses is to work with your dreams on your own. Beware of various books or “guides” you may find on the internet or in supermarket checkout lines. Anyone who tells you certain images in dreams “always” mean the same thing – like dreaming about water always means you’re going to take a trip – will probably be wrong. Dreams and their interpretations are as individual and unique as each person who has them.

A good way to start working with your dreams is to record them in a journal. Keep a notebook and pen or even a small tape recorder by your bed to help you recall and record dreams. You will remember more details if you write down what you dreamed when you awaken. Then as you begin to develop a body of recorded dreams, you may begin to see connections between dreams and your waking life. People who work with their dreams often say that such work has reassured them that death and loss has not severed a relationship. It has made the relationship stronger. Whatever your experience in dreams is, it's important to just engage with this part of grief with compassion and curiosity. Like ever other part of grief, it requires grace and loving care for yourself throughout the process.

### Dream On

Not everyone dreams of deceased loved one or about other losses they've experienced. Just because you don't dream about a loss doesn't mean that there's something wrong with you. Just remember if you do dream, the dream you encounter is only important to you and can only be interpreted by you.

#### Consider these points as you assign meaning to your dreams:

1. The person who died does not have to appear in your dream in order for the dream to be relevant to the mourning process. If your loved one does appear in a dream, pay attention to their appearance. Do they look healthy? Do they appear as you remember them or are they much younger or older? Pay attention to any activity that they might be engaged in.
2. Don't overlook dream fragments. Sometimes you may simply catch a glimpse of your loved one in a dream. "What was Mom doing at the elementary school cafeteria?" Dream fragments are much like putting pieces of a puzzle together.
3. If you experience recurrent dreams, look for underlying themes. Often the same theme underlies each dream although the metaphors and images within a dream may vary.
4. It's quite common for grieverers to have dreams on or around the anniversary of the death of their loved one. This can be especially true for people who have not regularly dreamed of the deceased. Anniversaries other than their death such as a wedding anniversary, a birthday or any of the many other life transitions such as moving to a new house may also trigger such dreams.

### Still Held by John Mark Green

Words seem so feeble  
in moments like these.

Life is so precious,  
and death such a thief.

The depths of your pain  
I cannot comprehend,  
but I'll stand alongside you  
in the darkness, my friend.

Love is a bond that death cannot part.

Gone from your arms,  
but still held in your heart



### Grief Support for You

St. Luke's Hospice abides by CDC and Pennsylvania Department of Health guidelines for public gatherings during these challenging times. All support groups and workshops continue to be held virtually. Here are support options we currently offer:

**Individual support:** Our bereavement counselors provide support and information **through video and telephone counseling sessions**. Our contact information is on the front page of this newsletter.

**Good Grief Workshops:** These 90-minute workshops are offered virtually twice a month to provide you with a better understanding of what grief is, how it may affect you emotionally, physically, spiritually and psychologically, coping strategies and ways to reconcile the loss. For more information and to receive an invitation to join the meeting, call (484) 526-2499. You will be asked to download the Microsoft Teams app on your smart phone or computer. Workshop offerings include a daytime and an evening option each month:

**Thursday, May 12th 2022, 1-2:30PM**

**Wednesday, May 25th 2022, 6-7:30PM**

**Video library:** St. Luke's website includes a dozen short videos that provide information about the grieving and mourning process and ways to care for yourself after a loss. To view the videos, go to <https://www.slnh.org/vna> and click on the hospice heading. On the left side of the screen under the VNA heading, click on grief support. About half-way down this page, click onto the video library heading "Want to understand your grief?" Access the library by answering the question about your connection with St. Luke's Hospice (if any). Then view the videos from the comfort of your home.

### Times of Remembrance

As we begin to return to in-person gatherings, we are offering three outdoor Times of Remembrances this summer. These gatherings provide an opportunity to renew the connection between families and hospice staff. At each Time of Remembrance, we will remember and celebrate the lives of the people we served in our hospice program through reflective readings, the reading of each patient name, and a butterfly release. If you prefer that we not read your loved one's name, kindly let us know by calling (484) 526-2499.

Join the hospice staff for the Stroudsburg Time of Remembrance at 11 a.m. on **Saturday, July 23, 2022** at Chestnut Hill Township Park, 221 PA-715 in Brodheadsville, Pa 18322. Rain date is **Sunday, July 24** at the same time and location. Families and friends of patients who died on St. Luke's Hospice services between **July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022** are invited to attend.

Families and friends are invited to the Lehighon Time of Remembrance on **Saturday August 6th 2022** at 11 a.m. at Dinkey Memorial Lutheran Church, 1742 Dinkey Road, Lehighon, Pa. 18235. Rain date is Sunday, August 1 at the same time and location. We will gather to commemorate patients who died between **July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022**.

Join the hospice staff for the Bethlehem Time of Remembrance on **August 20, 2022** at 11 a.m. at Dimmick Park, 570 Durham St., Hellertown, Pa. 18055. Rain date is August 22 at the same time and location. We will be reading the names of patients we have served through our Bethlehem office and Hospice House. We will gather to commemorate patients who died between **March 1st 2022 and June 30, 2022**.

## *Additional Places to Find Support and Share Your Story*

Below is a list of free bereavement services in the area. Because of the pandemic and the need for physical distancing, many resources may only be offered virtually. Please contact our bereavement department at 484-526-2499 if you need additional support.

### **Adult Support Information**

**Bradbury Sullivan LGBT Community Center** offers bereavement support for LGBT people who have experienced loss. For more information, please visit their website at [www.bradburysullivancenter.org](http://www.bradburysullivancenter.org) or email at [reilly@bradburysullivancenter.org](mailto:reilly@bradburysullivancenter.org).

**The Compassionate Friends** offers ongoing support for parents, grandparents and adult siblings grieving the loss of a child, grandchild or sibling. Visit [www.thecompassionatefriends.org](http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org). Enter your zip code to locate the local chapter and contact person near you.

**Doylestown Hospital Hospice** offers a variety of support groups and programs that change seasonally. Visit their website at [www.doylestownhealth.org/hospital/services/bereavement](http://www.doylestownhealth.org/hospital/services/bereavement) or call 215-345-2079.

**Gentle Yoga for Grief, Stress and Life Transitions** is currently being offered virtually by Wendy Littner Thompson, M.Ed., LPC, RYT. Visit [www.givinggriefavoice.com](http://www.givinggriefavoice.com) or call 610-730-1992. Be sure to indicate if your loved one was a St. Luke's Hospice patient.

**Grand View Hospital Hospice** offers groups and services that change seasonally. For more information, call 215-453-4210.

**Grief Share** is a faith-based support group offered throughout the Lehigh Valley. Visit their website at [www.griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org) and enter your zip code to find the contact person and program near you.

**OASIS Community Center** offers a variety of support groups to those grieving a loss due to substance related causes. Therapist-led meetings are held in-person and virtually for bereaved parents and young adults (siblings, partners, friends, etc.). Groups for bereaved youth ages 7-17 and bereaved caregivers raising bereaved children are offered in-person. For dates and times, visit [www.oasisbethlehem.org](http://www.oasisbethlehem.org), call 484-747-6825 or email at [rhonda@oasisbethlehem.org](mailto:rhonda@oasisbethlehem.org) to register.

**GRASP** (Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing) currently offers two virtual evening meetings per month, plus an afternoon meeting at the Oasis Center. Call 484-788-9440 or Call/Email at [nancyhowe@ymail.com](mailto:nancyhowe@ymail.com) or 484-788-9440 or Tim Howe at [howet60@yahoo.com](mailto:howet60@yahoo.com) or (646-401-4455).

**Lehigh Valley Health Network** offers many groups and services for adults and children between the ages of 6-17. For more information, call 610-402-7481. For information about program offerings in the Pocono area, call 272-762-3826 or email [Bryson.Boes@lvhn.org](mailto:Bryson.Boes@lvhn.org).

**Suicide Loss:** The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention has excellent information on risk factors, statistics and education about suicide. Visit [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org) and enter your zip code to find the chapter/contact person near you. All chapters are run by people who have experienced the suicide of a loved one.

### **Support Information in New Jersey**

**Karen Ann Quinlan Hospice** offers support to those who are grieving the death of a loved one. For more information, call 973-948-2283 or visit [www.karenannquinlanhospice.org/services/bereavement](http://www.karenannquinlanhospice.org/services/bereavement).