



Comfort for the Grieving Heart

Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

June 2022

“At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of the summer, we remember them.”

- Sylvan Kames & Rabbi Jack Riemer

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.

Another change in seasons knocks upon our doors. As we enter into the summer months, some may have a sense of excitement. The kids are out of school, vacation plans are being made, and the weather is looking up for those summer festivities. Let the swimming, fishing, walking, biking, boating, camping season begin!

But, for those of us who are grieving, the change in season can present one more hurdle for us to navigate—another riptide in the ocean of our grief—as we are washed over by the memories of our loved one and all we would do together this time of year. A new season renews memories and also can force our hand to think about things we were able to put off when Jack Frost was nipping at our nose. Although the winter did not freeze time, it did give pause to the question as to what summer would look like without them.

What word follows summer? Vacation. Perhaps you had a vacation planned of your own. One in which there was no thought but for your loved one to be present. The begrudging sting may be setting in that those plans will not happen or certainly will not happen as you had planned. Truly, it is not only the lack of the physical presence of your loved one lament but the plans you looked forward to sharing with them, as well.

It does not even need to be a vacation but the activities you used to do together that stop you in your tracks. Perhaps you are wondering if you can even participate in those activities—camping, fishing, gardening, a baseball game, yard sales, festivals, watching fireworks. Whatever it might be. Grief demands our attention and navigation for things we never gave a second thought to before.

The waters of your grief are everchanging and what works for one does not necessarily work for another. You do not need to have the answer and honestly there is not one to be had. How each of us grieve and what brings us comfort or heightens those familiar pangs of grief is unique to each of us, even amongst family members.

With the longer days, more opportunities present themselves, but what will you do with those extended hours? In the winter it was much easier to decline, skip or simply avoid socializing with friends and family. The summer offers more opportunity for such gatherings—what will you do with those offers and how will you take your loved one along with you?

Dip Your Toes

We are each in different places in our grief and that means there is a lot to consider as summer plans arise. Here are some ideas to help you navigate the waters.

- **Be Patient With Yourself.** You're not going to feel ready to do everything all at once. Give yourself time and listen to your head and your heart. When we are grieving, we are not the best to ourselves. Take a moment to recognize what you have gone through, what you are going through and give yourself credit for the hard work you are doing!
- **Try some of the activities you used to do with your loved one.** This may be hard, but dip your toes in the water. You may find the activity brings you comfort and makes you feel especially connected to your loved one.
- **Make changes.** If you do not feel comfortable doing the same activity without your loved one, you can always try changing it up a bit. You are going through a major change and sometimes a little modification can give a familiar activity a new take.
- **Try something new.** You are rediscovering yourself in this process. It can also be a time to try new things and make new memories. This does not mean that you are moving on from your loved one. They remain part of you and everything you do.
- **Make plans.** It presents the opportunity for storytelling which can be helpful to you and others who miss them. In time, you may find sharing brings more smiles to your face than tears to your eyes. Encourage yourself to accept invitations and remind others to be patient with you. Remember, you can always make changes or excuse yourself if the need arises.

In all you do, surround yourself with people you love, trust, and who are supportive of you.

Keep in Mind

Sometimes we find understanding and friendship with those who share our interests. If you are looking to increase your socialization, keep these in mind.

- **YMCA**
- **Senior Centers**
- **Churches**
- **Libraries**
- **School Events**

Missing You is Like the Ocean

Missing you is like the ocean. Sometimes the waves toss and churn, and sometimes all is calm as I float upon a glassy mystic surface. Sometimes the tide pulls me out to fearsome depths, or washes me up on golden sanded shores. Sometimes my stamina fails and I sink beneath the surface. And sometimes I feel my muscles stir with newfound strength as I learn to swim in that beautiful sea of memories.

- Author Unknown



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, June 9th 2022, 1-2:30PM

Wednesday, June 22nd 2022, 6-7:30PM

Video library: St. Luke's Hospice 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 halfway 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 Brodheads ville, 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 6, 2022** at 11 a.m. at Dinkey Memorial Lutheran Church, 1742 Dinkey Road, Lehighon, PA 18235. Rain date is **Sunday, August 7** 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 **Sunday, August 21** 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 or email at 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. 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 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.givinggriefavoices.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 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, call 484-747-6825 or email at 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 or 484-788-9440 or Tim Howe at 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.

Suicide Loss: The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention has excellent information on risk factors, statistics and education about suicide. Visit 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.