



# Comfort for the Grieving Heart

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Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

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

~Anne Roiphe

January 2023

St. Luke's Hospice

Bereavement

Team:

484-526-2499

As the holidays wrap up, we enter January 2023. For many this marks a new beginning, resolutions, and a brand new year. It is a time of hope, dreams, new ideas, and new possibilities. We begin to create goals to help us find ourselves, and accomplish what we want the next year to bring.

We flip the page of the calendar and suddenly another new reality hits us on multiple levels: it's a new year without our loved one. Depending on where you are in your grief journey, you may face the year with anxiety and longing for the comfort of the past. You may be fearful of what the new year may bring and wonder if you can handle any more challenges. Your emotions may be so raw that finding a way to get through one day is overwhelming; the notion of what to do with a whole year may seem unfathomable.

What does that mean for us physically, emotionally, socially, spiritually and cognitively? Time does move on; but we know, from our personal grief experience, that grieving doesn't work that way. We don't “move on.” We change. We reconcile. We look forward, in our own good time, and revise our hopes for our futures, with awareness that life as we knew it is no longer available to us. We cannot *un-experience the experience of our loss*. We will see our futures through the lenses of both life and loss and that changes who we are now, how we see the world and decisions related to who we will become – in the coming year and beyond.

As you prepare for a new calendar year, full of new experiences and memories to be made, there is a process of not only looking back, but also looking ahead. Grief can be a reminder of what is really important to us, what we value and what brings us joy. It reminds us that we are still here, we have a future, and that we can in fact have some control over our future. While much has been lost and changed, there is still much that remains.

The passage of time will always bring a new year. This year perhaps the focus is not on a resolution, but more of a new perspective to consider. Have hope that the challenge of this new year may turn into growth. Be patient with yourself and your grief.

**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.



# Helpful Hints

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## *New Year's Resolutions for the Bereaved*

This year, I resolve to....

- \* Not put a timeline on my grief. Loving someone means loving them for my lifetime whether they are physically present or not.
- \* Tell their stories, the happy & the sad, they will live on through me.
- \* Encourage others to share memories.
- \* Teach others that they cannot "make me cry", my tears are an outward expression of how I am feeling.
- \* Understand that crying or otherwise expressing my pain is healthy & normal. "Doing well" means I am expressing myself.
- \* Understand that others may not understand my pain and it isn't fair to expect them to do anything but listen
- \* Do something nice for myself every day.
- \* Know that if today I cannot do everything that needs to be done; tomorrow is another chance to get it done.
- \* Cry when I need to, laugh when I can, and not feel guilty about either one.
- \* Let go, bit by bit, of the guilt, regret, and anger because I know holding on to these can be damaging.
- \* Take a risk and let others into my life and heart.
- \* Take care of my physical, emotional & spiritual self.
- \* Reinvest in life a little bit each day....

*Adapted from Tanya Lord, The Grief Toolbox*

"When we look at the ocean, we see that each wave has a beginning and an end. A wave can be compared with other waves, and we can call it more or less beautiful, higher or lower, longer lasting or less long lasting. But if we look more deeply, we see that a wave is made of water. While living the life of a wave, the wave also lives the life of water. It would be sad if the wave did not know that it is water. It would think, 'Some day I will have to die. This period of time is my life span, and when I arrive at the shore, I will return to nonbeing.'

These notions will cause the wave fear and anguish. A wave can be recognized by signs -- beginning or ending, high or low, beautiful or ugly. In the world of the wave, the world of relative truth, the wave feels happy as she swells, and she feels sad as she falls. She may think, 'I am high!' or 'I am low!' and develop superiority or inferiority complexes, but in the world of the water there are no signs, and when the wave touches her true nature -- which is water -- all of her complexes will cease, and she will transcend birth and death,"

- Thich Nhat Hanh, [The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching: Transforming Suffering into Peace, Joy, and Liberation.](#)



### Grief Support for You

St. Luke's Hospice abides by CDC and Pennsylvania Department of Health guidelines for public gatherings during these challenging times. Here are support options we currently offer:

**Individual support:** Our bereavement counselors provide support and information **through video and telephone counseling sessions.** 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, January 12 2023, 1-2:30PM**

**Wednesday, January 18 2023, 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.slhn.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.

### Monthly Support Group

#### Brodheads ville

The Brodheads ville group meets the third Monday of the month from 10:00 -11:30 am at the Western Pocono Community Library, 131 Pilgrim Way, Brodheads ville, 18322.

It provides space for participants to receive and provide support in a collaborative environment. It is facilitated by a grief counselor.

For more information, contact Alexandra at (484) 635-0662 and if the weather looks threatening, call (484) 526-2514 and listen for an update on this phone line.

### A Fallen Limb

#### ~ Author Unknown

A limb has fallen from the family tree.

I keep hearing a voice that says "Grieve not for me."

Remember the best times, the laughter, the song.

The good life I lived while I was strong.

Continue my heritage, I'm counting on you.

Keep smiling and surely the sun will shine through.

My mind is at ease, my soul is at rest.

Remember all, how I truly was blessed.

Continue traditions, no matter how small.

Go on with your life, don't worry about falls.

I miss you all dearly, so keep up your chin.

Until the day comes we're together again.

## **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.

**Cancer Support Community of the Greater Lehigh Valley** [cancersupportglv.org](http://cancersupportglv.org)

Find an individual therapist at: **[Psychologytoday.com](http://Psychologytoday.com)**

We encourage you to call the **number on the back of your insurance card** to find resources paid by your individual insurance plan.

### **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).