

Comfort for the Grieving Heart

Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

July 2023

“The world changes from year to year, our lives from day to day, but the love and memory of you, shall never pass away.

~ Unknown

St. Luke's Hospice

Bereavement

Team:

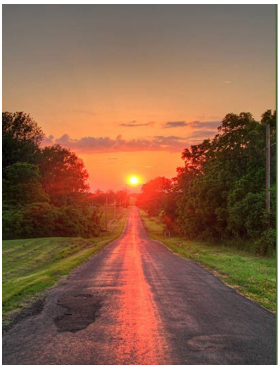
484-526-2499

July. It's a time of year that activities and vacations are planned to enjoy the hot summery weather. Celebrations of Independence Day, time by the pool, camping, family get togethers and more. All these things you may once have enjoyed can now trigger your grief.

Summer gives you time to see the variety of flowers, birds following their moms, buds appearing on the branches and green spreading life everywhere. It is a constant reminder of the cycle of life and death. In darkness there is hope, the return of beauty after a season of chilly, gray and dark days. Nothing feels better than the warmth of summer after a long cold winter. From death to life. From darkness to light. From despair to hope. From gray to vibrant colors. But it is because of the cold chilly winter that the sun's warmth is such a comfort, and the grays and browns that make the greens so green. It is darkness that makes the light so vibrant.

When one is grieving, life feels as if it has lost its color and warmth. The world seems lifeless and overwhelming. It feels as if there is no way out, as if it will always feel this way where there is nothing that will shed light on our struggle. Summer has a lot to teach us about grief, about waiting for the cold chill to become the sun's warmth, or the dull grays to become vibrant reds. But it also has something to teach us about watching... about noticing the little changes and shifts in life, be it a baby goose, a geranium filled pot on a neighbor's porch, or evenings that stay light longer. Summer teaches us to watch, to look, to go a little slower and to take breaks. A reminder to rest from our work a little more. Grief is work, emotionally draining work, and something we all need to remind ourselves to take little breaks from. It is important to care for yourself, tend to the things you need to, remember to rest or eat or breath. This will allow you to have a moment to refill, so when you are ready you can return to the important work of grief, in hopes that it shifts and changes, and the colors may return.

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.



How To Deal With Grief During The Summer

Figuring out how to deal with grief can be extremely difficult. At times the smallest thing can trigger a memory and create an unexpected wave of emotions. Summer is no exception. Many are unsure how to handle the opposing emotions of wanting to have fun, while still feeling their grief. Here are some tips for how to deal with grief in the summer.

- **Let yourself feel the pain.** In order to learn how to deal with your grief, it is important to recognize that grieving is an important part of healing. Avoiding your feelings will only prolong your grief. One of the most important parts of the grieving process is to actually allow yourself to feel your feelings. You may not be able to control the feelings when they arrive, but you can control how you react to them. It may be helpful to have supportive caring people around who can help support you through these waves of emotions.
- **Choose which summer events to attend.** During this difficult time you don't want to completely avoid being social with your loved ones, but you don't need to attend every event either. Choose the events you think you can handle, and allow yourself to say "no" to the ones that may be more difficult for you.
- **Do something to honor their memory.** Take advantage of the season and try to find new ways to keep the memory of your loved ones alive, such as planting a tree in their honor. You can make their favorite dish at a barbeque. You can release sky lanterns. Any way of memorializing your loved one will help keep their memory with you as you grieve.
- **Remember that everyone grieves differently.** Allow yourself to grieve the way you need to grieve. Let your friends and family know what you need to get through your grieving process. Have patience with yourself and your family as you learn to navigate what helps you and what does not help.

We Remember Them

~ Sylvan Kamens & Rabbi Jack Riemer

At the rising sun and at its going down; We remember them.
At the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter; We remember them.
At the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring; We remember them.
At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer; We remember them.
At the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of the autumn; We remember them.
At the beginning of the year and when it ends; We remember them.
As long as we live, they too will live, for they are now a part of us as We remember them.

When we are weary and in need of strength; We remember them.
When we are lost and sick at heart; We remember them.
When we have decisions that are difficult to make; We remember them.
When we have joy we crave to share; We remember them.
When we have achievements that are based on theirs; We remember them.
For as long as we live, they too will live, for they are now a part of us as, We remember them.

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, July 13th 2023, 1-2:30PM

Wednesday, July 26th 22nd 2023, 6-7:30PM

Wednesday, August 9th 2023, 6-7:30PM

Thursday, August 24th 2023, 1-2:30PM

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.

Monthly Support Group

Brodheadsville

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



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.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 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.

Cancer Support Community of the Greater Lehigh Valley cancersupportglv.org

Find an individual therapist at: **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.