



Comfort for the Grieving Heart

Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

August 2023

"The song is ended but the melody lingers on."

-Irving Berlin

St. Luke's Hospice

Bereavement Team:

484-526-2499

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.



The summer is often filled with traditions and milestones in life, from family gatherings and vacations to graduations and weddings. For those impacted by loss, these events may bring a sense of absence and a reminder of unfulfilled emotions. The warmth of the sun and the vibrant colors of nature may contrast starkly with the weight of loss. We might feel pressure to use more energy than we have access to right now. We might feel more sensitive or need more support than we are used to needing. Maybe we want to stay busy and keep the mind off of how we are feeling.

Grief may transform the way traditions are celebrated, incorporating new rituals to pay homage to the departed. Warm evenings and golden sunsets can offer opportunities for quiet reflection and cherished memories. They can also bring up deep sadness and loneliness. A new relationship with favorite summer activities, especially ones once shared with departed loved ones, can become overwhelming. Engaging can be a way to honor their memory. Engaging in rituals or visiting meaningful places can provide a sense of connection, allowing the bereaved to feel the presence of their loved ones in the beauty of the season. Or it can feel too intense and might not be of service to you this season. There is no correct way to grieve. It also does not mean a commitment to always doing it in this new way. Perhaps it is an invitation to listen deeply and intimately to what feels correct, in this moment, on moment at a time.

By acknowledging the complex feelings that might arise during this season and embracing moments of remembrance, we can find soothing and peace amid the warmth of summer's end.

We can know that, no matter how we are showing up in our grief, we are doing it right and best we can.

August Blues: Tips to Support Your Grief Journey

- ◆ Acknowledge your feelings: It's essential to recognize and accept your emotions during this time. Grief may intensify during the summer due to the stark contrast between your internal struggles and the external liveliness. Allow yourself to grieve without judgment or guilt.
- ◆ Create a summer remembrance ritual: Embrace the season as an opportunity to honor the memory of your loved one. Consider creating a remembrance ritual, such as releasing balloons with messages or visiting a special place, to celebrate their life and cherish the memories you shared during past summers.
- ◆ Seek solace in nature: Spend time outdoors and find solace in the beauty of nature. Take peaceful walks on the beach, hike in the mountains, or sit by a tranquil lake. Connecting with the natural world can provide a sense of peace and renewal.
- ◆ Modify summer traditions: Recognize that grief might change the way you approach summer traditions. It's okay to modify or skip certain activities if they feel overwhelming. Allow yourself to participate in the ones that bring comfort and joy while being gentle with yourself if you need to take a step back.
- ◆ Surround yourself with understanding company: Seek the support of friends and family who understand and respect your grieving process. Surrounding yourself with empathetic individuals who allow you to express your feelings can provide immense comfort.
- ◆ Create new summer activities: Consider incorporating new activities into your summer routine. Engage in hobbies that you find comforting or explore new interests. Creating positive experiences during the summer can help balance the weight of grief.
- ◆ Practice self-compassion: Be kind to yourself and practice self-compassion during this time. Allow yourself to take breaks when needed and prioritize self-care. Remember that grief is a process, and healing takes time.
- ◆ Join a grief support group: Connecting with others who are experiencing similar feelings can be incredibly validating and reassuring. Consider joining a grief support group, either in-person or online, to share your journey and learn from others.
- ◆ Seek professional help if needed: If your grief feels overwhelming and is significantly impacting your daily life, consider seeking help from a mental health professional experienced in grief counseling. They can provide guidance and support tailored to your needs.
- ◆ Remember, there is no right or wrong way to grieve, and everyone's journey is unique. Be patient with yourself, and know that healing is a gradual process. With time, support, and self-compassion, you can navigate grief during the summer and find moments of peace and healing.



Grief Support for You

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:

Wednesday, 8/9/2023 6-7:30PM

Thursday, 8/24/2023, 1-2:30PM

Thursday, 9/7/2023, 1-2:30PM

Wednesday, 9/27/2023, 6-7:30PM

Monthly Support Group

Brodheads ville Group

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

This group provides space for participants to receive and provide support in a collaborative environment.

This group 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.



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.

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.givinggriefavoic.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 nan-cyhowe@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.