

Comfort for the Grieving Heart

Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

Nov 2023

"In November, grief whispers in the rustling leaves."

St. Luke's Hospice

Bereavement Team:

484-526-249



Experiencing grief and loss is often a deep experience, characterized by a unique blend of emotions that can mix with the changing seasons. The month of November can symbolize both loss and renewal, much like the falling leaves that gently carpet the ground. As the days grow shorter and the air colder, those who are grieving may find solace in the reflective solitude that November provides. Other may find these shorter days are heavy to walk through

In November, the natural world undergoes a profound transformation, mirroring the process of mourning. The trees, once resplendent with vibrant foliage, shed their leaves, creating a somber and contemplative atmosphere. Similarly, those grieving may feel a sense of detachment and loss as they navigate the changing landscape of their lives without their loved ones. The gray skies and fading light can mirror the feelings of sorrow and grief that may surround a loss

November marked by traditions of remembrance, with events like All Souls' Day and Veterans Day, which pay tribute to those who have passed away. These observances can offer an opportunity for those in mourning to honor their own loved ones and find a sense of belonging in the wider community.

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.

Just as the trees will eventually bud anew in the spring, those who are grieving can find hope and healing in time. It's a month that invites people to embrace the bittersweet symphony of life, where memories of the departed coexist with the faith of renewal as the year winds down. This tension between opposites can be almost impossible to hold at times. The weight of loss and the work of grief can be hard labor and feel like something we just don't always have the energy to do day in and day out.

But we can look to the natural space around us and remember that we do not have to do every part of our process all at once. We are in a season of life and we can only do its work one moment at a time.

Dealing with grief in November, or during any time of the year, can be challenging, but there are several tips that may help you navigate this difficult period:

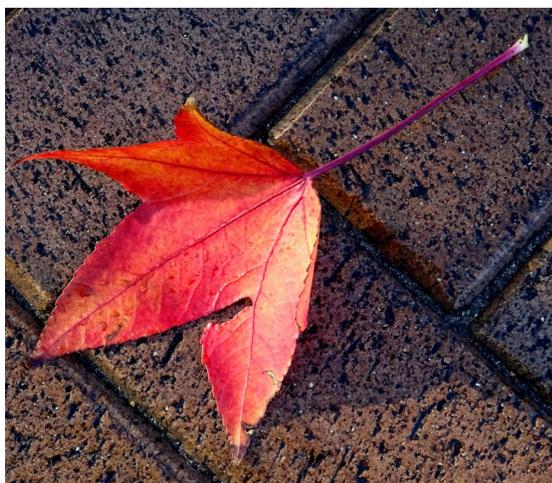
- ◆ **Acknowledge Your Feelings:** It's essential to recognize and accept your feelings of grief. Allow yourself to feel sad, angry, or whatever emotions come naturally. Grief is a personal journey, and there is no right or wrong way to experience it.
- ◆ **Seek Support:** Reach out to friends, family, or a support group. Talking to others who have experienced loss can be comforting and reassuring.
- ◆ **Self-Care:** Take care of your physical and emotional well-being. Get enough rest, eat healthily, and engage in activities that bring you joy and relaxation.
- ◆ **Memorialize:** Consider creating a memorial or participating in remembrance activities to honor your loved one. Lighting a candle, visiting a gravesite, or making a memory box can help you celebrate their life. Reflect on the positive memories and moments you shared with your loved one. This can bring comfort and a sense of connection.
- ◆ **Express Yourself:** Journaling, art, music, or any creative outlet can be therapeutic for processing your emotions and memories.
- ◆ **Take Things One Day at a Time:** Grief doesn't follow a strict timetable. Be patient with yourself, and understand that it may ebb and flow.
- ◆ **Routine and Structure:** Maintaining a routine can provide stability during difficult times. Simple, regular activities can help you regain a sense of normalcy.
- ◆ **Professional Help:** If you find it particularly challenging to cope with grief, consider seeking therapy or counseling to help you navigate your emotions and develop coping strategies.
- ◆ **Mindfulness and Meditation:** Practices like mindfulness and meditation can help you stay grounded and reduce anxiety and stress associated with grief.
- ◆ **Celebrate Holidays Mindfully:** November often includes holidays. It's okay to modify your traditions to accommodate your grief. You can choose to participate in holiday festivities or opt for a quieter, more reflective approach.
- ◆ **Lean on Your Faith:** If you're religious, your faith and spirituality can provide guidance and comfort during times of grief.

Remember that everyone's grief journey is unique, and it's okay to seek help and support when needed. Grief can be a long and challenging process, and it's essential to be patient with yourself and allow your feelings to evolve over time.

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 November 2nd 2023, 1-2:30
Wednesday, November 15th 2023 6-7:30
Thursday, December 7th 2023 1-2:30
Wednesday, December 20th 6-7:30

Monthly Support Group

Brodheadsville Group

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