



Comfort for the Grieving Heart

Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

April 2024

"There is a sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues. They are the messengers of overwhelming grief, of deep contrition, and of unspeakable love."

- Washington Irving

St. Luke's Hospice

Bereavement Team:

484-526-2499

As we step into the season of renewal and new beginnings, we are met with a juxtaposition of emotions. Spring brings forth vibrant blooms, warmer weather, and the promise of growth, yet for those navigating grief, it can also stir feelings of longing and loss. You may find yourselves grappling with the complex interplay of grief and the vibrant energy of spring.

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.

Through this season of renewal and growth, it is okay to feel the weight of your grief. Just as flowers bloom after a harsh winter, your heart will find its way to healing. Remember, each day is a step forward, no matter how small it may seem. Embrace the beauty around you, and know that you are not alone in this journey.

As you do journey through the season of spring, you may find moments of solace, connection, and renewal amidst the complexities of grief. Remember, it's okay to embrace both the joy and the sorrow that this season brings, for it is through our experiences of loss that we cultivate a deeper appreciation for the beauty of life.

This April will bring holidays, rain, and a shift from being cooped inside to a sudden desire to be outside. Many may host parties, invite you to outings, and have more energy than you feel at this moment.

During your springtime grief, it's essential to acknowledge and validate your emotion, even if they don't align with the season's outwardly positive atmosphere. Seeking support from friends, family, or a therapist can provide a safe space to process your feelings and find comfort during this challenging time. Additionally, finding ways to honor and remember your loved one can help you navigate grief while still embracing themes of growth and renewal in your own time and way.



Helpful Hints

Spring and grief can intertwine in various poignant and meaningful ways, reflecting the complex nature of human emotions and the cycles of life. Here are a few ideas:

Renewal Amidst Loss: Spring symbolizes renewal and rebirth with its blossoming flowers and budding trees. Explore the theme of finding moments of renewal and hope amidst the grieving process. Individuals could discover that even in the midst of grief, there are signs of new life and growth around them.

Metaphorical Resurrection: Use the imagery of spring as a metaphor for the resurrection of hope and joy after experiencing loss. Just as plants emerge from the ground after a long winter, individuals experiencing grief can find strength and resilience to emerge from their sorrow.

Seasonal Contrasts: Highlight the contrast between the external beauty and vibrancy of spring with the internal turmoil and sadness of grief. This could create a powerful juxtaposition, underscoring the complexity of emotions during times of loss.

Memories in Bloom: Spring can serve as a reminder of past memories and moments shared with loved ones who are no longer present. Individuals might find solace in revisiting these memories as they navigate their grief, finding comfort in the beauty of the natural world that surrounds them.

Symbolism of Flowers: Explore the symbolism of flowers in the grieving process. Different flowers could represent various stages of grief or emotions, such as daisies symbolizing innocence or lilies representing purity and rebirth. Individuals could find solace in creating floral arrangements or tending to a garden as a way of processing their emotions.

Seasonal Rituals: Develop rituals or traditions specific to spring that individuals use to cope with grief. This could include activities like planting a tree in memory of a loved one, participating in a spring-time festival as a form of celebration and remembrance, or simply taking walks in nature to find solace and peace.

Healing Through Nature: Nature can serve as a powerful healer during times of grief. Individuals might find comfort in the sights, sounds, and smells of spring, allowing them to connect with something larger than themselves and find a sense of peace amidst their pain.

Acceptance of Change: Spring is a season of change, as winter gives way to warmer temperatures and longer days. Individuals could experience a parallel journey of accepting the changes that come with loss, ultimately finding growth and transformation in the process.

Remember:

Your grief is your own. It may sneak up in moments that feel inconvenient. But the loss of someone you love was never something that was convenient. So your grief won't be either. You will grieve. You will cry. You will break down. You will be a mess. But you don't owe anyone an apology for how you choose to grieve. Grief is messy. Grief is unkind. Grief comes bearing a heaviness you didn't know about before. But in that grief what you find is the kind of people who will at least try to lighten the load of what it is you're carrying. No one can bring them back or make that pain go away. But on the other side of this coin is that grief is so much love for someone who left too soon.

~ Kirsten Corley

Grief Support for You

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, April 10th 2024, 6-7:30PM

Thursday, April 25th 2024, 1-2:30PM

Thursday, May 9th 2024, 1-2:30PM

Wednesday, May 22nd 2024, 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

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.

Virtual

A virtual group will be held via Microsoft Teams the first Friday of every month from 10:00-11:30 am.

This group will provide a space for therapeutic and supportive conversation to process grief. Topics will vary based on attendance. It is facilitated by a grief counselor. For more information, contact Katie Ruf at (484) 225-9269 .



Additional Places to Find Support and Share Your Story

Below is a list of free bereavement services in the area. 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.

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 *Hopeful Hearts* 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 occasionally offered in-person. For dates and times, visit www.oasisbethlehem.org or call 484-747-6825. Advanced registration is required, please email 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.