



Comfort for the Grieving Heart

Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

“Well, every one can master a grief but he that has it.”

- William Shakespeare

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St. Luke's Hospice
Bereavement

Team:

484-526-2499

You need to get away for a while. Have you thought about getting a pet? Are you sure you want to stay in that house? - It's going to be a lot to manage.

You shouldn't keep their things around the house, it's too hard on you.

Aren't you feeling better by now?

You shouldn't... You should... I would...



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.

You sure can hear a lot from others about your own grief. How you look, how you should be feeling, what you should be doing, what they did or (even better) what they would do. Sometimes, it feels like everyone else has the perfect formula to get you over your grief and back to “normal.”

The truth about grief is that it is as unique as a fingerprint to each of us and what is helpful for one person may not be helpful to someone else—even amongst family members. We each have our own unique personalities, social tendencies, and comfort levels. Losing a loved already throws you off balance and then it can just seem like the world is spinning with all the should's, should not's, new roles, added responsibilities, business side of things, family dynamics, and the list goes on and on.

Many have the best of intentions, but maybe you just are not in the place to hear it. It may also be that what others are suggesting is just not a fit for you. That is okay! Now, is not the time you should feel as though you have to please others. But, realize when the support and suggestions around you are genuine and coming from a place of love and care. It can help to have a different perspective aside from the voice in your own head because when we are grieving instead of being our own best friend, we tend to become our own worst enemy. Grief is work. It is not something you get over, but something you continuously work through. It takes time, effort, attention and energy. Qualities you may find in low reserve, at this time.



Helpful Hints

How Others Can be There for You

Oftentimes, people want to be of support, but words and fear get in the way. Here are some ideas you can share to let others know how they can be of help to you.

- ◆ Give them permission to talk about your loved one.
- ◆ Let them know grief is not something you recover from, but something life changing.
- ◆ Remind them you are not someone to be fixed and that the situation is not fixable, but something you are learning and having to adapt to every single day.
- ◆ Ask them not to judge your grief or tell you that you are doing it wrong.
- ◆ Ask them to be a supportive, patient, kind, compassionate and familiar presence in an unfamiliar and scary time.
- ◆ Let them know grief is not a linear process. There are going to be good days and bad days. Sometimes, more so good moments and bad moments.
- ◆ Let them know if you do not answer the phone or call them back it is not because of them, but that maybe you just do not know what you need.
- ◆ Encourage them to keep checking in with you.
- ◆ Ask them to love you as you are.
- ◆ Let them know how much their love, care, friendship and support means to you!

Being There for Yourself

We need to be better to ourselves as we grieve. Here are some ideas to help you.

- ◆ **Look after your physical and mental health.** Let your doctor know about your loved one's passing. Reach out to a friend or counselor to help process your loss. Consider joining a support group.
- ◆ **Acknowledge your grief and feel it.** Grief is nothing you can run from. Check in with your feelings and share them.
- ◆ **Be careful of expectations on yourself and others.** Expectations can be hard, especially when they are unrealistic to live up to or when others do not know what you expect of them.
- ◆ **Allow others to be there for you.** As you discover your needs, share them. Talk. Delegate. Be open.
- ◆ **Keep lists.** Give yourself credit as you complete tasks.
- ◆ **Don't compare your grief to someone else's.** Each loss is unique and so is how we grieve.
- ◆ **Plan ahead.** There are some days we just know are going to be hard. Make plans.
- ◆ **Have things to look forward to.**
- ◆ **Remember to take time for you.**
- ◆ **Find moments of gratitude.**
- ◆ **Take your loved one with you.** Talk about them. Share their legacy. Celebrate their life!

Grief Support for You

St. Luke's Hospice abides by CDC and Pennsylvania Department of Health guidelines for public gatherings during these challenging times. All support groups and workshops continue to be held virtually. Here are support options we currently offer:

Individual support: Our bereavement counselors provide support and information through video and telephone counseling sessions. Our 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, September 8th 2022, 1-2:30PM

Wednesday, September 21st 2022, 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.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.

How Do We Go On

How do we go on
after the unthinkable happens?
How can we carry the burden of knowing
the world can be cruel and dangerous,
the future so unpredictable?
How do we grieve with empty arms
and a head filled with echoing memories?

We are stronger than we know,
and this is how we show it:
Holding
each other,
giving comfort in the midst of pain.
Loving more fiercely,
through our actions and the things we say.
Making the world just a little bit better,
every single day.
Never taking life for granted,
knowing that it can be snatched away.

This world may bring deep darkness,
but we are the bearers of light.
We'll join our flames together,
and shine in the blackest of nights

~ John Mark Green

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.