



Comfort for the Grieving Heart

Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

April 2023

“There is no wrong way to grieve. You will feel everything and nothing at the same time. There is no wrong emotion, so never apologize for what you feel in the moment.”

~Jessica Grillo

St. Luke's Hospice

Bereavement

Team:

484-526-2499

As winter thaws and spring begins to bloom, this may be a hard transition for you. Winter may have felt like a time where you could cuddle under a blanket, avoid social events, and grieve with little pushing from those around you. Spring now may feel like a time when everyone is starting to be social, and there may be expectations your grief is not going to stop you from participating.

With this perception that spring is a time of renewed life there may be a lot of pressure. Pressure to “unthaw” yourself. Pressure to be present and live your life. Pressure to be “normal” in spite of this extreme struggle you may be feeling. Spring may feel very contrary to your grief. Grief is not predictable like the seasons; it can be messy, painful and shocking. While you are going through your journey of grieving through anger, numbness, sadness, anxiety, being overwhelmed, guilt and more. Trust that in time your Spring will come. You will begin to feel that thawing of winter and freshness of spring. You will begin to feel respite and warmth in the memories, activities, and conversations about your loved ones.

A common phrase we hear this time of year is “spring cleaning”. When those around you are focused on shaking off the hibernation of winter as animals come out, trees and flowers start to bud, people are cleaning and feeling fresh; you may feel focused on your grief. Some around you may be encouraging you to embrace the spring and “move on”. Remember that your grief process is your own, and it is okay to embrace what that journey may bring for you.

Some may encourage you to do some “spring cleaning” of your loved one’s belongings. This may be constructive for you. It can be a review of the life you shared with your loved one. For some, grieving this may be helpful and make you feel connected while you mourn. For others, you may not be ready for this process yet, and that is okay, too. Our loved ones belongings and looking through them is a deeply personal experience. You should move at the pace that works for you and your grief.

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.



Helpful Hints

Spring Cleaning Considerations

- * Consider if an item is a memento or a linking object.
- * A memento serves a purpose, and may be worth keeping. This could be things such as pictures, awards, clothing or jewelry that bring sentimental value. Whether it is comforting or practical, if it brings positive connection, it may be worth keeping.
- * A linking object is something that does nothing but produce grief. They typically have no useful purpose and produce continuous grief.
- * Consider that one person's comforting reminder of a loved one may be another's grief-ridden object. It may be beneficial to go through a loved one's belongings with others to decide what is a memento or what is a linking object.
- * If you are thinking about beginning your spring cleaning consider:
 1. Am I ready? The first year you lose your loved one is hard. And making these decisions may be difficult for you. Make the decision for yourself if you are ready to decide which belongings to keep or not.
 2. Who might be able to help you?
 3. What will you do with the belongings? Will you give them to family and friends? Donate them? Have a garage sale? Throw them out? It may feel overwhelming, but it is good to have a list of places you are willing to give your loved one's things.
 4. How do you value something? For bigger items, it may be helpful to reach out to an appraiser, antique dealer, or an estate sales person. Smaller items you may be able to look up online, or ask friends and family.

When I Go

By: Donna Ashworth

From "LOSS"

**When I go,
don't learn to live without me,
just learn to live with my love,
in a different way.**

**And if you need to see me,
close your eyes,
or look in your shadow,
when the sun shines,**

I'm there.

**Sit with me in the quiet and you will
know,
that I did not leave.**

**There is no leaving when a soul is
blended with another.**

**When I go,
don't learn to live without me,
just learn to look for me in the mo-
ments.**

I will be there.



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 coordinators 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 5th 2023, 6-7:30PM

Thursday, April 13th 2023, 1-2:30PM

Thursday, May 11th 2023, 1-2:30PM

Wednesday, May 24th, 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.

Monthly Support Group

Brodheads ville

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

"I think it's brave that you get up in the morning, even if your soul is weary and your bones ache for a rest.

I think it's brave that you keep on living, even if you don't know how to anymore.

I think it's brave that you push away the waves rolling in every day, and you decide to fight.

I know there are days when you feel like giving up, but I think it's brave that you never do."

~ Lana Rafaela Cindric

"This Is How You Survive"

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.