



# Comfort for the Grieving Heart

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Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

August

2024

*"Grief is in two parts. The first is loss.*

*The second is the remaking of life." — Anne Roiphe*

St. Luke's Hospice  
Bereavement Team

484-526-2499



August, with its fading summer days and hints of autumn's arrival, can be a poignant time for those coping with grief. The transition from the vibrant warmth of summer to the cooler, more reflective days of fall often mirrors the journey of grief—an ebb and flow of emotions that shift from the intensity of loss to quieter moments of inner thoughts.

Coping with grief can be particularly challenging in this window of time. This month often carries a sense of nostalgia, as it marks the end of carefree summer days and the beginning of a new season. For those grieving, this transition can intensify feelings of loss, as the changing seasons may serve as a reminder of the passage of time and the absence of a loved one. However, August also offers unique opportunities for healing and reflection.

One way to cope with grief during this time is to embrace the natural world. August is a month of harvest and abundance, where gardens and fields are full of life. Engaging in outdoor activities such as gardening, hiking, or simply sitting in a park can provide solace and a sense of connection to the cycle of life. The act of nurturing plants or walking among trees can be deeply therapeutic, offering a reminder that life continues to grow and change, even in the face of loss.

Another approach is to create new rituals that honor the memory of a loved one. This could involve lighting a candle at sunset, writing a letter to the departed, or organizing a small gathering of friends and family to share stories and memories. These acts of remembrance can provide comfort and a sense of continuity, helping to integrate the loss into the fabric of everyday life.

Seeking support from others is also crucial. August often brings social events and family gatherings, and while these can be bittersweet, they also offer opportunities to connect with others who can provide support and understanding. Sharing your feelings with trusted friends or joining a community opportunity can help alleviate the sense of isolation that often accompanies 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.

# Tips and Things to Try

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## Root to Rise

Gardening can be a therapeutic way to cope with grief, offering both physical and emotional benefits. Here are some tips for using gardening as a tool to manage grief:

**Start Small:** Begin with a manageable space, whether it's a small section of your yard, a few potted plants, or a window box. This ensures you don't feel overwhelmed and can gradually expand as you become more comfortable.

**Choose Meaningful Plants:** Select plants that have personal significance. This could be your loved one's favorite flowers, plants that symbolize remembrance (like forget-me-nots or lilies), or herbs and vegetables that you can nurture and watch grow.

**Create a Memorial Garden:** Dedicate a specific area of your garden to the memory of your loved one. Include elements like a bench, a stepping stone with a meaningful quote, or a birdbath. This can be a peaceful place to reflect and remember.

**Engage Your Senses:** Choose plants that appeal to your senses, such as fragrant flowers like roses or lavender, colorful blooms like marigolds, or textured plants like lamb's ear. The sensory experience can provide comfort and a sense of grounding. sense of peace. bloom of the season or a successful harvest.

**Set a Routine:** Establish a regular gardening routine. The consistency can provide structure and a sense of purpose. Even simple tasks like watering or weeding can be meditative and soothing.

**Involve Others:** Gardening doesn't have to be a solitary activity. Invite friends or family members to help with planting or maintaining the garden. This can create new, positive memories and provide additional support.



**Document the Process:** Keep a gardening journal where you can record your thoughts, feelings, and observations. Documenting the growth and changes in your garden can be a metaphor for your own healing journey.

**Practice Mindfulness:** Focus on the present moment while gardening. Pay attention to the details—the texture of the soil, the sound of birds, the scent of flowers. Mindfulness can help alleviate anxiety and bring a sense of peace.

**Allow Yourself to Grieve:** Use gardening as a time to process your emotions. It's okay to cry, reflect, or simply sit quietly in the garden. Allowing yourself to feel and express your grief can be an important part of healing.

**Celebrate Progress:** Acknowledge the growth and changes in your garden as a reflection of your own progress. Celebrate small milestones, whether it's the first bloom of the season or a successful harvest.

Gardening can provide a nurturing environment that supports the healing process. By creating a space that honors your loved one and allows you to connect with nature, you can find comfort and a sense of renewal amidst your grief.

## Grief Support for You

**Individual support:** Our bereavement counselors provide support and information through video and telephone counseling sessions. Contact St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Team at 484-526-2499



### Good Grief

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:

### Workshops:

#### Good Grief:

**Thursday, August 8th, 1-2:30pm**

**Thursday, September 26th, 1-2:30pm**



## Monthly Support Group

### Bethlehem In-Person

### Support Group

**The Bethlehem support group** meets on the first Friday of the month from 10:00am to 11:30am at the Wesley United Methodist Church 2540 Center Street (Route 512) Bethlehem, PA 18017. This group provides a safe and collaborative space to process your grief journey with others in a similar situation. Together we will review a topic that meets the need of the group that day. This group is facilitated by a grief counselor. For more information, please contact St. Hospice Bereavement Team at 484-526-2499.

### Brodheadsville In-Person

### Support Group

**\*\*RETURNING FALL 2024\*\***

For more information, contact the St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Team at 484-526-2499 .

**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.**

**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](http://www.bradburysullivancenter.org)

or call 610-347-9988

**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](http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org). Enter your zip code to locate the local chapter and contact person near you.

**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](http://www.givinggriefavoic.com) or call 610-730-1992. Be sure to indicate if your loved one was a St. Luke's Hospice patient.

**St. Luke's Psychiatric Associates** is offering a grief support group. This group provides a safe place to discuss, express, and experience grief for a loved one, as well as provides the opportunity to gain a toolbox to help cope in the most challenging moments. The group is held in Bethlehem. For more information please call Nicholas Reilly at 484-658-7773 or Daniel Phillips at 484-658-6782.

**Doylestown Hospital Hospice** offers a variety of support groups and programs that change seasonally. Visit their website at [www.doylestownhealth.org/hospital/services/bereavement](http://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](http://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](http://www.oasisbethlehem.org) or call 484-747-6825. Advanced registration is required, please email [rhonda@oasisbethlehem.org](mailto: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@gmail.com](mailto:nancyhowe@gmail.com) or 484-788-9440 or Tim Howe at [howet60@yahoo.com](mailto:howet60@yahoo.com) or (646-401-4455).

**Suicide Loss:** The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention has excellent information on risk factors, statistics and education about suicide. Visit [www.afsp.org](http://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](http://cancersupportglv.org)

We encourage you to call the **number on the back of your insurance card** to find resources paid by your individual insurance plan.

Find an individual therapist at: **[Psychologytoday.com](http://Psychologytoday.com)**

**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](http://www.karenannquinlanhospice.org/services/bereavement).