



# Comfort for the Grieving Heart

St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program 484-526-2499

## HALTING at The Edge of The Rabbit Hole

April 2025

Many grieverers have been there: Your day is going okay. You've managed to get up and get moving. Maybe you've pushed yourself to shower and get dressed, or make it to work, gotten out of the house for a walk, or perhaps you've mustered the strength to run an errand. And then, all of the sudden, you find yourself staring into the rabbit hole of grief. You know the one. The rabbit hole that has your brain searching for answers, questioning decisions, and longing for what was or what could have been. It's easy to get lost in the darkness of the rabbit hole, falling further and further into anxiety, anger, sadness, or regret.

Although it is seasonally appropriate as we move into Spring, maybe the rabbit hole imagery doesn't resonate with you. Many people describe these moments as a wave that knocks you down and holds you under, a ton of bricks that buries you and leaves you totally incapacitated, or a spiral that unravels you- body, mind, and soul. However you imagine or experience it, so many of us know the feeling of that sudden onslaught of grief that catches us off guard, drags us in, carries us away, and makes it hard to catch our breath and move on with our day.

Here's a little acronym to help ground you and guide you through a simple self-assessment to ask yourself some questions and identify what may have triggered your "ton of bricks" moment, and how to move through it with grace for yourself and others.

If you find yourself starting to spiral, or on the edge of the rabbit hole, or staring up at a massive wave of grief about to crash down on you, don't forget to **H.A.L.T...**

### **H**—"Am I HUNGRY?"

"Have I eaten something within the past 4-6 hours? Have I had enough water in the past 2 hours? Am I eating foods that make me feel good?" These may sound like silly questions to be asking yourself, but many people who are grieving experience a disruption in their eating patterns. Some may forget to eat, eat sporadically, have an increased appetite for certain kinds of foods (like sweets), or have no appetite at all. Grieving takes a lot out of us and expends a lot of energy. Being hungry or not adequately nourished can make a hard thing feel even harder. Now is the time to care for yourself by giving your body what it needs to heal, inside and out.

For more information about the services offered by the St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program or if you would like to be added or removed from our mailing list, please contact us at 484-526-2499. Newsletters are also available electronically by calling our office or online at [www.sluhn.org](http://www.sluhn.org) (search - grief).

## A--“Am I ANGRY?”

We live in a culture that tells us that anger is “bad,” but it is often one of the many complex feelings that make up our grief experience. It is okay to feel angry, but it is important to recognize and acknowledge it so it doesn’t consume us. Ask yourself, “Has someone said something that upset me? Has someone done or not done something that frustrates me? Who am I really angry at? Am I angry at the person I am grieving for dying or for the choices they made? Am I angry at myself for not saying or doing something differently? Am I angry at others who are not grieving in the same way I am? Am I angry at God? Am I angry at the world for going on normally when I am barely able to function? Am I angry about the support I have or have not received from family and friends? Consider writing a letter about your anger. You will likely never send it, but it will help you to express and process all you are feeling. Find a physical activity that helps to release some of that built up anger. Anger can often mask other emotions, like fear, sadness, loneliness, and guilt. Getting to the root of what you are feeling is where the healing begins.

## L--“Am I LONELY?”

Grief is an isolating experience. Once the funeral is over, the family goes home, the calls and cards stop coming, and weeks pass by; most people around us have moved on with their lives and may expect us to do the same. Ask yourself, “Do I feel isolated in my grief? How long has it been since I was with other people? Have I reached out to anyone today? Do I feel abandoned? Do I feel like I can’t talk to anyone because of the differences in our experiences of the same death?” Connecting with others is important, but your loss may change the way you connect. Find a person who feels safe and easy to talk to and be around. This could be a friend or family member who simply meets you where you are with no expectations of being “better” or “back to normal.” Many people find hope and meaning in grief support groups. Being around others who are also grieving may provide a space of understanding, compassion, and affirmation. It is okay if you would rather spend time alone, but it is often our connection with others that gives us the support and strength to get through each day. Find a way to connect that works for you in this season you are in.

## T--“Am I TIRED?”

It is not uncommon to have changes in your sleep. Either you can’t fall asleep, can’t stay asleep, or always feel sleepy. In whatever way your sleep has been impacted, it can be very disruptive to your life and your emotional capacity. If you find yourself feeling like your fuse is extra short and your patience is extra thin, pause to ask yourself, “Did I sleep last night? Am I staying overly busy and running myself into the ground? Do I need to make time to rest?” Much like making sure we eat, paying special attention to the amount and quality of sleep/rest we are getting is part of self-care that can make a world of difference. If you are consistently struggling with sleeplessness or sleepiness, try going for a walk, doing some light exercise, or moving your body in some way throughout the day. Set a routine for yourself to help your body and mind to welcome rest more easily. Limit your “screen time” close to bedtime to allow your mind to wind down. Ask for help and talk to your doctor about your concerns. Our bodies and minds need sleep to process through and give us the strength to bear all that we are carrying.

You know that none of these things...**Hunger, Anger, Loneliness, or Tiredness** are the root causes of your grief, but any of them, or a combination of them, can make you more vulnerable to feeling worse in your grief. As you are so painfully aware, there is so much that we cannot control, and life and loss can be so difficult. **HALTing** won’t make the pain or sadness go away or stop, but it may help to meet yourself at the edge of the rabbit hole and offer yourself kindness, compassion, space, and grace as you find your way forward.

Adapted from *HALTing a Grief Spiral at thelifeidn'tchoose.com*



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## Our Monthly Support Groups

Our bereavement support groups are facilitated by one of our grief counselors. We provide a safe and collaborative space to process your grief journey. For more information, call us at 484-526-2499.



### Bethlehem Area Support Groups—

Wesley United Methodist Church, 2540 Center St., Bethlehem, PA 18017

Join us from **10-11:30am**: April 4, May 2

**NEW!** Hanover Township Community Center, 3660 Jacksonville Rd, Bethlehem, PA 18017

Join us from **6:30-8pm**: April 15, May 13

### Brodheadsville Area Support Group

Western Pocono Community Library, 131 Pilgrim Way, Brodheadsville, PA 18322

Join us from **1-2:30pm**: April 16, May 14

### **NEW!** Carbon/Schuykill Area Support Group

St. Luke's Miners Campus, 360 W. Ruddle St. Coaldale, PA 18218

Join us from **1-2:30pm**: April 9, May 7

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## Good Grief Workshops

These virtual 90-minute workshops are offered monthly to provide you with a better understanding of what grief is. How it affects us emotionally, physically, cognitively, spiritually, and socially, and providing ways to understand, process, and work through your grief. This workshop is informational, interactive, and a good starting point towards entering our in-person support groups. Sign -up is recommended for those 4-6 weeks following a loss. For more information, call 484-526-2499.

Join us from **1-2:30pm**: April 24; May 8

Join us from **6-7:30pm**: April 9; May 21

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## St. Luke's Senior Meals

St. Luke's University Health Network provides healthy, affordable meals for seniors (65 or older).



It's a great opportunity for a great meal at a great price (under \$5 for an entrée, salad, side, veggie, dessert and drink) and enjoy meeting new people.

- **Anderson, Carbon, Miners, Upper Bucks Campuses:** M-F, 4-6pm
  - **Monroe Campus:** 7 days a week, 4-6pm
  - **Bethlehem Campus:** Thursdays, 4-6pm (Speaker on the first Thursday)
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## 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.sluhn.org/vna/hospice>. Scroll down to "Grief Support".

Click onto the video library heading "Want to understand your grief?" at the bottom of the page.

Then view the videos from the comfort of your home.



## Other Places to Find Support

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)

### Community Bereavement Resources

**Bradbury Sullivan LGBT Community Center** offers bereavement support for LGBT people who have experienced loss. Visit [bradburysullivancenter.org](http://bradburysullivancenter.org) or email at [reilly@bradburysullivancenter.org](mailto:reilly@bradburysullivancenter.org).

**Cancer Support Community of the Greater Lehigh Valley** provides professional programs of emotional support and education. Visit [cancersupportglv.org](http://cancersupportglv.org).

**The Compassionate Friends** offers ongoing support for parents, grandparents, and adult siblings grieving the loss of a child, grandchild, or sibling. Visit [thecompassionatefriends.org](http://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 [doylestownhealth.org/hospital/services/bereavement](http://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 [givinggriefavoice.com](http://givinggriefavoice.com) or call 610-730-1992. Be sure to indicate if your loved one was a St. Luke's Hospice patient.

**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.

**Grand View Hospice** offers groups & services that change seasonally. Call 215-453-4210.

**Grief Share** is a faith-based support group offered throughout the Lehigh Valley. Visit [griefshare.org](http://griefshare.org) and enter your zip code to find the contact person and program near you.

**Lehigh Valley Health Network** offers many groups and services for adults and children between the ages of 6-17. Call 610-402-7481. For information about program offerings in the Pocono area, call 272-762-3826 or email [Bryson.Boes@lvhn.org](mailto:Bryson.Boes@lvhn.org).

**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.). Visit [oasisbethlehem.org](http://oasisbethlehem.org), call 484-747-6825 or email at [rhonda@oasisbethlehem.org](mailto:rhonda@oasisbethlehem.org).

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

### 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 [karenannquinlanhospice.org/services/bereavement](http://karenannquinlanhospice.org/services/bereavement).

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