



# Comfort for the Grieving Heart

St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

484-526-2499

May 2025

## You're Not Doing It Wrong

Let's start with this: *There is no right way to grieve.*

Surprised? Many people worry they are not experiencing loss the way they are "supposed to". Maybe you expected to cry every day but you don't. Perhaps you thought you'd feel lost, but instead you feel okay. And then, guilt creeps in. Shouldn't I be more upset?

Despite what you may have heard, the emotions of grief do not follow a script. It's a very personal experience. Your relationship with the person who died, your personality, cultural background and family traditions all shape how you cope and what feelings you may have.

For some, grief shows up physically—maybe you feel exhausted, have trouble sleeping or have a change in your appetite. Others might not experience this at all, and that's normal too. Some people experience high levels of stress, which can lead to what's called "grief brain" - difficulty thinking, remembering or making decisions. It can also cause a higher heart rate and blood pressure. But for others, this may not happen.

Grief can also inspire positive changes. You may have expected to struggle with getting back to your routine, but instead you find yourself energized to try a new hobby or pursue different life choices. Maybe you are even taking part in activities that honor the legacy of the person who died. There is absolutely nothing wrong with any of that.

Here is one more thing to remember: there is no timeline to grief. It is not a linear process and it does not have a defined end. There is no rush to go through someone's belongings, hold certain rituals or find all the answers to life's big questions. Some days, grief may feel overwhelming; other days, it's just a distant thought. These fluctuations are a natural part of grieving.

Grief is full of contradictions. You can mourn deeply and still find moments of joy. You can miss someone terribly, but also continue to look forward to the future. You can honor their memory and still live fully.

So if you are feeling bad about not feeling bad, take a deep breath. You are not doing grief wrong. You are simply experiencing it in your own way and that is exactly how it should be.

**If you are worried about how your body is reacting to grief or unsure if it is affecting your health, it can be helpful to talk with your doctor.**

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)

## ***What We're Reading***

Here are some reading recommendations that may provide comfort and understanding.

**A Grief Observed** by C.S. Lewis is a classic book that provides poignant reflections on the author's personal experience with loss.

**Helping Teens Cope with Death** from The Dougy Center offers guidance for navigating grief with young people.

**The Grieving Body** by Mary-Frances O'Connor explores the connection between our physical experiences and emotional grief. It's a research-based perspective on how our bodies respond to loss.

**The Grieving Brain** also by Mary-Frances O'Conner, helps to explain how our minds process loss and find ways to heal.

**What's Your Grief** by Eleanor Haley and Litsa Williams reviews some of the most common grief experiences and suggests useful coping tools in a format that is easy to read and understand.

**Widow to Widow** by Genevieve Davis Ginsburg offers practical advice for navigating widowhood.



## **When You Want More Help**

Many people find that talking with a trusted friend or grief counselor is helpful in the early days of grief. As your grief changes with time, you might consider transitioning to a group setting such as St. Luke's Hospice's Good Grief Workshop or in-person support groups to connect with others. These groups offer the opportunity to share coping strategies and learn from others. You can learn more on page 3 of this newsletter.

Many people find that journaling, practicing mindfulness, spending time in nature and finding ways to be active are helpful when grieving. Creating a daily routine, prioritizing rest and healthy eating can help strengthen your body and mind. These gentle practices may help you find a path to relief.

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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:** May 2, June 6, July 11

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

**Join us from 6:30-8pm:** May 13, June 17, July 15

### Brodheadsville Area Support Group

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

**Join us from 1-2:30pm:** May 14, June 25, July 23

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

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

**Join us from 1-2:30pm:** May 7, June 4, July 2

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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 out from their loss. For more information, call 484-526-2499.

**Join us from 1-2:30pm: May 8, June 12**

**Join us from 6-7:30pm: May 21, June 25**

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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

## 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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