



Comfort for the Grieving Heart

St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

484-526-2499

August 2025

Grieving in the Sandwich Generation

If you're part of the "Sandwich Generation" – those who are simultaneously raising children and caring for aging parents – you're already juggling immense responsibilities. You might be coordinating a parent's doctors' appointments while helping a teen with college applications, all while managing work and home life. Then, a profound loss hits – a parent, a spouse, a sibling, or a dear friend. When grief strikes, it doesn't just add to your plate; it can feel like a tidal wave.

Grief is tough enough on its own, but when you are caring for multiple generations there are layered challenges:

- **Grieving in Pieces:** Unlike others who might have more uninterrupted time, you're often forced to grieve in fragments. Moments of sadness can be cut short by a child needing attention, a parent's urgent call, or a work deadline. There is often little dedicated time and space to process your feelings.
- **More Responsibilities, Less Capacity:** Grief drains your energy, focus, and emotional reserves. Yet, your caregiving and parenting duties do not take pause; they might even increase after a loss. You may feel immense pressure to "hold it all together" for everyone else, leaving no room for your own feelings and emotions.
- **Role Reversal and Shifting Family Dynamics:** Losing a parent can drastically change family roles. You might suddenly become the primary decision-maker, responsible not just for your children but perhaps for your siblings or another parent. This means taking on substantial new roles while mourning the loss of familiar ones.
- **The "Shoulds" and Guilt:** A unique form of guilt often creeps in. "Should I be spending more time with my grieving child?" "Am I neglecting my other parent's needs?" "Am I grieving in the midst of all these demands and changes?" These internal questions can amplify your emotional pain.
- **Exhaustion and Burnout:** The constant physical and emotional demands of caregiving, combined with the exhausting work of grief, can lead to burnout. This makes it incredibly hard to handle daily life, let alone deep sadness.
- **Grieving the Loss of Future:** Losing a parent isn't just about missing their presence; it's also grieving the loss of future support, wisdom, and their role in your family's life. It can also be a stark reminder of your own mortality and the next stage of life.

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 (search - grief)

Finding Support Amidst the Squeeze

Even as you are caring for others, remember you need and deserve care, too. It is important to make time for yourself and your grief. Here are some ideas:

- **Acknowledge Your Unique Situation:** Your grief is complex and layered. Most likely you are not just feeling your grief, but maybe the grief of your parent, siblings, and children. Acknowledge when you yourself are feeling overwhelmed and need a shoulder to lean on.
- **Communicate Your Needs:** Let your children, your surviving parent, your siblings, or close friends know you are strained. Share your needs and express how they can take even one ounce of stress or weight from your shoulders.
- **Delegate and Accept Help:** This is a vital, but often most difficult step to take. Could a sibling help with parent care? Can friends or other family members assist with child-care, meals, after school activity carpooling, or errands? Every bit of support frees up precious emotional space.
- **Prioritize Small Moments of Self-Care:** Even 15 minutes of quiet time, a short walk, or listening to music can help replenish your energy. You can't pour from an empty cup.
- **Seek Support:** Bereavement groups can be helpful. They remind you are not alone in your grief and give you a specific time and place to feel safe in sharing with others.

Be Patient with Yourself: Grief has no set timeline, and for the sandwich generation, the path might be even more winding due to unexpected demands. Be kind and compassionate with yourself.



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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: Sept. 5; Oct. 3

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

Join us from 6:30-8pm: Sept. 16; Oct. 21

Brodheadsville Area Support Group

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

Join us from 1-2:30pm: Sept. 17; Oct. 15

Carbon/Schuylkill Area Support Group

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

Join us from 1-2:30pm: Sept. 10; Oct. 8

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: Aug. 7; Sept. 11

Join us from 6-7:30pm: Aug. 27; Sept. 9/24

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.

- **Weekdays 4-6pm—Anderson, Carbon, Miners (4:15pm), Monroe, Sacred Heart, Upper Bucks and Warren Campuses.**
 - **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

Community Bereavement Resources

Bradbury Sullivan LGBT Community Center offers bereavement support for LGBT people who have experienced loss. Visit bradburysullivancenter.org or email at reilly@bradburysullivancenter.org.

Cancer Support Community of the Greater Lehigh Valley provides professional programs of emotional support and education. Visit 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. 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 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 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 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.

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, call 484-747-6825 or email at 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 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.



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