



Comfort for the Grieving Heart

Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

July 2022

“Grief is real, and is suffered. You're not crazy if you feel it; it means you loved someone deeply.” ~ Alicia H. Clark

St. Luke's Hospice
Bereavement

Team:

484-526-2499

As summer begins you may begin to question how long your grief is going to last. Many people around you may be going on vacation, having BBQ's, and enjoying time by the pool. This may make grieving particularly hard. You have probably heard you are supposed to go through Elizabeth Kubler-Ross stages of grief. However later in life she discussed these stages were not meant to be linear, but rather a process to use the stages as a way to help normalize a non-normal time. She also said that grief means doing it our own way.

Therese Rando, author of *How To Go On Living When Someone You Love Dies*, suggests that the grief experience takes longer and requires more energy than people typically think. It may impact several areas of your life including psychologically, socially, physically and spiritually. Dates, events, certain stimuli, and seasons may bring upsurges in grief.

With summer being here, there are some things you can keep in mind. It is okay if you are not in the spirit of summer celebrations. If you need to set boundaries and say no, that is okay. On the opposite end of that spectrum it is also okay to participate in them. It does not mean you have stopped loving or missing your loved one if you do enjoy yourself this summer.

You may have had traditions that you and your loved one participated in each summer. It may be helpful to continue these, which can help you to continue to feel connected to them. You may also consider beginning new traditions. Keep in mind healing comes through taking care of yourself. Vitamin D from the sun is very important, and spending time outside is invaluable to your mental health.

As you grieve through the summer remember to be kind and generous to yourself and this process. Allow yourself the space you need to feel how you feel, and experience your grief in a way that is right for you. I hope you are able to find some peace during this summer season.

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.



News & Events

Some possible summer activities:

Bubble Messages: Bubbles are a great way to share memories and messages in a group or on your own, while also being outside. As a group, invite people to say a memory or a message to the person who died out loud or to themselves while they blow a bubble. This is also a good option for children to do on their own whenever they want to say something to the person who died.

Sidewalk Chalk Memories: For this activity all you need is a sunny day, some chalk, and a sidewalk or driveway. Whether as a family or individually, people can draw pictures of summer memories with the person who died or write messages. For those who struggle with painful images or regrets, they can write or draw those and then use a hose or a bucket of water to wash them away. Acknowledging and then intentionally erasing those images and regrets may help lessen their intensity.

Participate in traditional activities you may have done in previous summers such as camping, hiking, swimming, biking, walking, fishing, having picnics, yoga, or cooking your favorite summer foods.

There's an elephant in the room.
It is large and squatting,
so it is hard to get around it. Yet we squeeze
by with,
“How are you?” and, “I’m fine,”
and a thousand other forms of trivial chatter.

We talk about the weather;
we talk about work;
we talk about everything else—
except for the elephant in the room.

There's an elephant in the room.
We all know it is there.
We are thinking about the elephant
as we talk together.

It is constantly on our minds.
For, you see, it is a very big elephant.
It has hurt us all, but we do not talk about
the elephant in the room.

Oh, please, say her name.
Oh, please, say “Barbara” again.
Oh, please, let's talk about
the elephant in the room.

For if we talk about her death,
perhaps we can talk about her life.
Can I say, “Barbara” to you
and not have you look away?

For if I cannot,
then you are leaving me alone
in a room—with an elephant.

~ Terry Kettering

Grief Support for You

St. Luke's Hospice abides by CDC and Pennsylvania Department of Health guidelines for public gatherings during these challenging times. All support groups and workshops continue to be held virtually. Here are support options we currently offer:

Individual support: Our bereavement counselors provide support and information **through video and telephone counseling sessions**. Our 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:

Thursday, July 7th 2022, 1-2:30PM

Wednesday, July 27th 2022, 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 halfway 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.

Grief Reading Suggestions

About Grief by Ron Marasco

The Courage to Grieve, by Judy Tatelbaum

Don't Take My Grief Away, by Doug Manning

Facing Death & Grief, published by Prometheus Books

Good-bye, My Son, Hello, by Adolfo Quezada

Grief, Dying and Death, by Therese A. Rande

Grief Work, by Juanita Ponce-Montoya

How it Feels When a Parent Dies, by Jill Krementz

Living When a Loved One has Died, by Earl A. Grollman

Loss and How to Cope with it, by Joanne E. Bernstein

Recovery from Bereavement, by C. M. Parkes

Caregiving: The Spiritual Journey of Love, Loss and Renewal by Beth Witrogen McLeod

Death in Slow Motion: A Memoir of a Daughter, her Mother, and the Beast Called Alzheimer's by Eleanor Cooney

Disenfranchised Grief: New Directions, Challenges, and Strategies for Practice by Kenneth J. Doka, Editor

Final Gifts: Understanding the Special Awareness, Needs and Communications of the Dying by Maggie Callahan and Patricia Kelley

Fireflies – Nothing can Ease the Pain of Losing a Beloved Child. Nothing but a Miracle by David Morrell

Good Grief by Lolly Winston

This Thing Called Grief: New Understandings of Loss by Thomas M. Elli

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.