



Comfort for the Grieving Heart

Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

"The loss is immeasurable but so is the love left behind" ~Unknown

April 2022

St. Luke's Hospice

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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.

As spring begins it is a reminder of the cycle of death and life. This is a time of year many people begin to get a surge of energy as the warmth of a sunny spring day shakes off the chilly cold winter. However, you may still be feeling lethargic, sad, numb, and unmotivated. Many going through grief see those around them perking up and begin to wonder if what one is going through is normal?

While spring can give many a jolt of energy it may not bring a feeling of renewal. You may be feeling ambivalent and that is okay. Many things may affect how one grieves. With all of this considered it is fair to expect that everyone grieves differently. It may feel unpredictable and last longer than anticipated. One may also experience grief physically, emotionally, cognitively, behaviorally, spiritually and socially.

Bearing in mind your unique grieving experience, spring can bring hope. You may still feel like your days are cold, and overwhelming. However, spring is an opportunity to move into your next stage of grief. Trying to move on from focusing on the last weeks with your loved one and begin to reconnect to all the good memories you experienced together. The days you took a trip and laughed together, cuddled on the couch watching a movie, helping them move into their new home, cooking together, or planting flowers in the garden.

Energy and being excited for spring may not be where you are at. But you can take this shift in season and be mindful of the good times you had with your loved one. You can sit outside and just watch the small changes in life around you as rain falls giving life to flowers. This slow observation and mindfulness may allow you to take a short break from the hard work grief brings, and give a reminder of all the beauty around you.

There are many ways you can allow yourself to be present in your grief and also begin to take care of yourself as the weather is warming up. There are many mindfulness practices that range from yoga, to meditation, to sitting outside with a cup of tea and just observing your surroundings. It may also bring comfort to start some typical spring cleaning and organizing your home. Or doing some activities to connect with your loved ones such as taking a walk, or gardening. As you continue to remember your loved one, and continue to connect with them please remember to take care of you as spring brings a little bit of hope and life.

Mindful Activities as Spring Blooms

Sit outside– Sit on your porch with your favorite drink and observe the trees, animals, wind, and smell of spring.

Go for a walk– Whether its for 5 minutes or an hour. Any time walking outside is beneficial for your mental and physical health.

Go camping– If its warm enough gather a group of family and friends and enjoy some time in nature. With fires and smores!

Gardening– Connecting with nature, and planting flowers, fruits and/or vegetables can be very soothing. As spring and summer progress you will see all your hard work flourish.

Cherry Blossoms– Find something local, or go visit D.C. for their annual cherry blossom festival.

Water– While it is not too hot visiting the beach and just mindfully sitting on the sand. It wont be too busy and you can enjoy the view of the vast ocean. Or you can visit a local river or creek.

Food– Eat and drink spring food. Maybe go to your farmers market and get some strawberries, apricots, sugar snaps, or spinach!

Senses– The sense of smell is closely connected with memory. If you and your loved one did activities like cooking, or sitting around a camp fire these could be some great spring activities to start up again.

Outdoor Time– If an opportunity arises enjoy nature. Such as admiring a rainbow, trees coming back to life, flowers blooming, listening to the rain, watching bees be busy, or walk barefoot in the grass.

Animals– Enjoy the animals at the zoo, aquarium, or wildlife sanctuary.

Creativity– Create something. Paint a picture, upcycle some furniture, try something new like whittling.

Read a book– This is a helpful low energy activity, you can still enjoy and take care of yourself.

Crochet/Knit– Make a blanket, stuffed animal, flow-ers, or some new slippers.

Pamper– Paint your nails, take a bubble bath, get your hair done, and/or buy some new clothes.

DIY– Have fun with a project. Pinterest has some ide-as if you need.

Meditation– There are so many different meditation practices. These include: mindfulness, spiritual, fo-cused, movement, mantra, transcendental, progressive relaxation, love-kindness, and visualization.

Boundaries– It is okay to say no. As you continue to grieve, move at your own pace.

Set Routine– Create regular routines in your daily schedule. It's easy to begin with a regular morning or bedtime routine. Some ideas may be waking up, brushing your teeth, take a shower, eat breakfast, and sit with a cup of coffee or tea. At night you can brush your teeth, read a book, while drinking some chamomile tea.

Virtual Support– Attend the Good Grief Work-shop facilitated by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Counselor.

Last, all spring take actions and steps that feel right for you.



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, April 14th 2022, 1-2:30PM

Wednesday, April 20th 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.slhn.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.

Still Held by John Mark Green

Words seem so feeble
in moments like these.

Life is so precious,
and death such a thief.

The depths of your pain
I cannot comprehend,
but I'll stand alongside you
in the darkness, my friend.

Love is a bond
that death cannot part.
Gone from your arms,
but still held in your heart



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.givinggriefavoices.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.

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.