



# Comfort for the Grieving Heart

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Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

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“Some things cannot be fixed; they can only be carried. Grief like yours, love like yours, can only be carried.”

~Megan Devine

St. Luke's Hospice  
Bereavement

Team:

484-526-2499

Megan Devine is a therapist, grief advocate, and author of the book, *It's OK That You're Not OK: Meeting Grief and Loss in a Culture That Doesn't Understand*. Her quote above called to my heart for this month's newsletter.

Grief is uncomfortable and at times downright painful. Sometimes, it can feel like if you avoid the grief, you are sparing yourself the heartache. The truth about grief is that it is something that takes work and attention. It makes its impact on every aspect of our lives: physically, emotionally, cognitively, spiritually, behaviorally, and socially. Even when you think you are avoiding it, it finds its way and makes itself known.

Grief is nothing to be fixed. It is something you carry. It is not just the means to express your loss, but also your love. In your grief, you are called to remember, to mourn, to honor and to celebrate the life of someone who touched every aspect of your life. At times, the grief may feel so heavy, to the point you feel you are carrying a boulder. With time, support, grace, acknowledging your loss and giving yourself the right to feel what you are feeling; you are opening the door to healing.

You will forever carry a piece of your loved one. Their legacy lives on in you and through you. As you carry them with you, ask yourself how they would want to be remembered. Share their story and what was meaningful to them with others. In talking about them, saying their name, and reminiscing; you keep them alive.

Sometimes we get so caught up in our grief that we feel like we are the only one going through it. While grief is unique to each of us, you are not in this alone. Sometimes it is about having just one person in which you can say it exactly as you feel it. Having validation to know what you are going through is “normal” can make more of a difference than you realize. If you have considered attending our *Good Grief* virtual workshop or our in-person support group in Brodheadsville, please reach out to St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Team at 484-526-2499. Your grief may not turn into a feather, but we are here to help shoulder the boulder.

**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.



## *The Mourner's Bill of Rights*

~Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.

### **1. You have the right to experience your own unique grief**

- No one else will grieve in exactly the same way you do. So, when you turn to others for help, don't allow them to tell what you should or should not be feeling.

### **2. You have the right to talk about your grief**

- Talking about your grief will help you heal. Seek out others who will allow you to talk as much as you want, as often as you want, about your grief. If at times you don't feel like talking, you also have the right to be silent.

### **3. You have the right to feel a multitude of emotions**

- Confusion, disorientation, fear, guilt and relief are just a few of the emotions you might feel as part of your grief journey. Others may try to tell you that feeling angry, for example, is wrong. Don't take these judgmental responses to heart. Instead, find listeners who will accept your feelings without condition.

### **4. You have the right to be tolerant of your physical and emotional limits**

- Your feelings of loss and sadness will probably leave you feeling fatigued. Respect what your body and mind are telling you. Get daily rest. Eat balanced meals. And don't allow others to push you into doing things you don't feel ready to do.

### **5. You have the right to experience "griefbursts"**

- Sometimes, out of nowhere, a powerful surge of grief may overcome you. This can be frightening, but is normal and natural. Find someone who understands and will let you talk it out.

### **6. You have the right to make use of ritual**

- The funeral ritual does more than acknowledge the death of someone loved. It helps provide you with the support of caring people. More importantly, the funeral is a way for you to mourn. If others tell you the funeral or other healing rituals such as these are silly or unnecessary, don't listen.

### **7. You have the right to embrace your spirituality**

- If faith is a part of your life, express it in ways that seem appropriate to you. Allow yourself to be around people who understand and support your religious beliefs. If you feel angry at God, find someone to talk with who won't be critical of your feelings of hurt and abandonment.

### **8. You have the right to search for meaning**

- You may find yourself asking, "Why did he or she die? Why this way? Why now?" Some of your questions may have answers, but some may not. And watch out for the clichéd responses some people may give you. Comments like, "It was God's will" or "Think of what you have to be thankful for" are not helpful and you do not have to accept them.

### **9. You have the right to treasure your memories**

- Memories are one of the best legacies that exist after the death of someone loved. You will always remember. Instead of ignoring your memories, find others with whom you can share them.

### **10. You have the right to move toward your grief and heal**

- Reconciling your grief will not happen quickly. Remember, grief is a process, not an event. Be patient and tolerant with yourself and avoid people who are impatient and intolerant with you. Neither you nor those around you must forget that the death of someone loved changes your life forever.

### Grief Support for You

St. Luke's Hospice abides by CDC and Pennsylvania Department of Health guidelines for public gatherings during these challenging times. Here are support options we currently offer:

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

**Wednesday, March 8th 2023, 6-7:30PM**

**Thursday, March 30th 2023, 1-2:30PM**

**Wednesday, April 5th 2023, 6-7:30PM**

**Thursday, April 13th 2023, 1-2:30PM**

**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.

### Monthly Support Group

#### Brodheads ville

The Brodheads ville group meets the third Monday of the month from 10:00 -11:30 am at the Western Pocono Community Library, 131 Pilgrim Way, Brodheads ville, 18322.

It provides space for participants to receive and provide support in a collaborative environment. It is facilitated by a grief counselor.

For more information, contact Alexandra at (484) 635-0662 and if the weather looks threatening, call (484) 526-2514 and listen for an update on this phone line.

#### *Grief Reminds Me*

*To love more openly  
To express more freely  
To fell more deeply  
To live more fully*

#### *Grief Reminds Me*

*Of all that I have lost  
Ans all that I still have  
Of all that I was  
And all that I can be*

#### *Grief Reminds Me*

*The memories made  
The memories still to make  
Of what has been done  
Of what is left to do*

#### *Grief Reminds Me*

*That Love Never Dies*

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*~Tanya Lord*

## **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](http://www.bradburysullivancenter.org) or email at [reilly@bradburysullivancenter.org](mailto: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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.oasisbethlehem.org), call 484-747-6825 or email at [rhonda@oasisbethlehem.org](mailto: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](mailto:nancyhowe@ymail.com) or 484-788-9440 or Tim Howe at [howet60@yahoo.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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](http://cancersupportglv.org)

Find an individual therapist at: **[Psychologytoday.com](http://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](http://www.karenannquinlanhospice.org/services/bereavement).