

Comfort for the Grieving Heart

Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

March 2024

“Sometimes we need someone to simply be there. Not to fix anything, or to do anything in particular—but just to let us feel that we are cared for and supported. ”

~ Unknown

St. Luke's Hospice

Bereavement Team :

484-526-2499

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.

“How are you doing? What do you need? How can I help?”

These questions probably seemed so much easier to answer, in what may feel like, a lifetime ago. People tend to have the best of intentions when reaching out, but sometimes you just don't know how you're doing, what you need, or how they can help.

In grief, everything tends to feel so immense, overwhelming, confusing, and sometimes downright scary. It is like trying to navigate uncharted waters in gale force winds, choppy conditions, and with no compass in hand. It can leave you feeling like a castaway, alone in an ocean of grief.

What may appear to others to be the simplest of questions, asked with the kindest of hearts and purest of intentions can just feel so vast as we try to navigate and make sense of something that is just so difficult to wrap, not only our heads around, but our hearts.

Sometimes when these questions are asked, the most genuine thing you can do is just be honest. It's okay to let people know you do not know what you need right now and that this is all so new to you. Let them know you appreciate that they care and that once you figure out what you need it is good to know that they will be there for you.

Sometimes more than words, what we need is to just know we are loved and cared for. That support means more than anything. Sometimes you may just want someone to sit with you, to just be there. That is love in its purest form.

While your course may look different than anyone else's we are all unified in knowing both love and loss and trying to find dry land in what may feel like a sea of tears and uncertainty.



Grief Comes in Waves ~ Unknown

As for grief, you'll find it comes in waves. When the ship is first wrecked, you're drowning, with wreckage all around you. Everything floating around you reminds you of the beauty and the magnificence of the ship that was, and is no more. And all you can do is float. You find some piece of the wreckage and you hang on for a while. Maybe it's some physical thing. Maybe it's a happy memory or a photograph. Maybe it's a person who is also floating. For a while, all you can do is float. Stay alive.

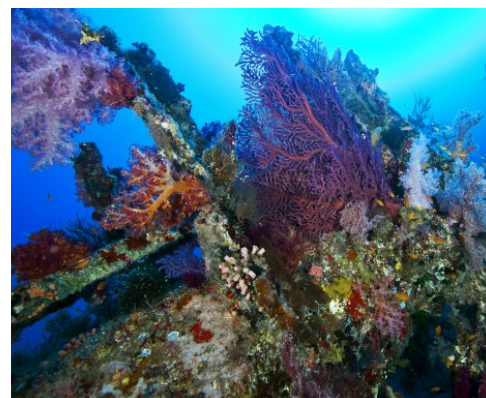


In the beginning, the waves are 100 feet tall and crash over you without mercy. They come 10 seconds apart and don't even give you time to catch your breath. All you can do is hang on and float. After a while, maybe weeks, maybe months, you'll find the waves are still 100 feet tall, but they come further apart. When they come, they still crash all over you and wipe you out. But in between, you can breathe, you can function. You never know what's going to trigger the grief. It might be a song, a picture, a street intersection, the smell of a cup of coffee. It can be just about anything...and the wave comes crashing. But in between waves, there is life.



Somewhere down the line, and it's different for everybody, you find that the waves are only 80 feet tall. Or 50 feet tall. And while they still come, they come further apart. You can see them coming. An anniversary, a birthday, or Christmas, or landing at O'Hare. You can see it coming, for the most part, and prepare yourself. And when it washes over you, you know that somehow you will, again, come out the other side. Soaking wet, sputtering, still hanging on to some tiny piece of the wreckage, but you'll come out.

Take it from an old guy. The waves never stop coming, and somehow you don't really want them to. But you learn that you'll survive them. And other waves will come. And you'll survive them too. If you're lucky, you'll have lots of scars from lots of loves. And lots of shipwrecks.



News & Events

Grief Support for You

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:

Thursday, March 7th 2024, 1-2:30PM

Wednesday, March 27th 2024, 6-7:30PM

Wednesday, April 10th 2024, 6-7:30PM

Thursday, April 25th, 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.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 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 s

In-person Brodheadsville

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

Virtual

Our virtual grief support group is held on the first Friday of every month from 10:00-11:30 am. The group meets via Microsoft Teams.

This group will provide a space for therapeutic and supportive conversation to process grief. Topics will vary based on attendance. It is facilitated by a grief counselor. For more information or to register, contact Katie Ruf at (484) 225-9269 .

***"Grief is like the ocean; it comes on waves
ebbing and flowing. Sometimes the water is
calm, and sometimes it is overwhelming. All
we can do is learn to swim."***

- Vicki Harrison

Additional Places to Find Support and Share Your Story

Below is a list of bereavement services in the area. Some 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 call 610-347-9988

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.

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 *Hopeful Hearts* 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 occasionally offered in-person. For dates and times, visit www.oasisbethlehem.org or call 484-747-6825. Advanced registration is required, please email 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).

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.