



**November
2024**

**St. Luke's
Hospice
Bereavement
Team:
484-526-2499**

Comfort for the Grieving Heart

Navigating November

November. The days grow shorter, the wind becomes colder, and the leaves fall from the trees. Each year, the season's darkening is juxtaposed by festivities offering color and light. But when you are grieving, it can feel like a difficult time to participate. You may find yourself alone more, unable to go outside as often, and missing a time when the celebrations were more fun. Or, you may be reminded that this time of year has always been difficult, and you long for the traditions others are able to enjoy.

Your feelings are valid and important. It's more than OK to grieve through November, even when others are encouraging you to feel differently. It may help to think about past Novembers that you did enjoy and what parts you can continue this year. For instance, if you used to enjoy baking a special dish with the person you are grieving, you could continue that tradition in their memory. But also, if trying to recreate a tradition seems too difficult, decide how you want to change it.

If you feel pressure from other people, trust your instinct. Your emotional needs are valid and deserve respect. You have the right to prioritize them. Remember, grief is a unique experience, and no two people do it the same way, even in the same family or circle of friends. It's OK to navigate it in your own way.

As November unfolds, consider reaching out for support if you need it. Expressing your feelings and concerns can be incredibly helpful. Additionally, taking care of yourself physically by getting enough rest, eating well, and engaging in activities that bring you comfort can make a difference in how you navigate this challenging time. Remember, it's OK to prioritize your well-being and take things one step at a time. Give yourself compassion and understanding as you move through this month.



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.



Practical Ideas for Family Gatherings

Delegate Tasks: Ask for help and accept support for things like decorating, food, and dishes.

Add an Extra Plate: Add an extra plate to the table to represent the presence of the person you are grieving.

Change the Seating Arrangement: If seeing an empty chair at the table is too difficult, consider changing where everyone sits.

Tell Stories: Start a new tradition

of sharing stories from past gatherings when the person you are grieving was alive.

Watch Alcohol Consumption: Alcohol can provide short-term comfort. But it can also intensify negative emotions.

Take a Time Out: Find a quiet spot when you need it. Go outside to take some deep breaths.

Hope for the best. Try to assume everyone has good intentions.

It's OK to shift between memories of the past and thoughts about the future. This back-and-forth is a natural part of grieving.

If You Feel Out Of Control

Questions to ask yourself:

Am I hungry, tired, or do I need to move my body?

What am I doing that's helping me? What am I doing that's harming me?

What's one moment of connection I've had this week?

Have I been outside today?

Do I need to reach out to tell someone how I'm doing?

Need help? Call our Bereavement Team at 484-526-2499.

Both- And

"I feel guilty for having fun." Do you ever wonder how (or even if) you can enjoy the weather, friends, and a funny moment when you are "supposed to be grieving"?

There's no evidence that people can or should experience only one emotion at a time. Have you been anxious but also excited about trying something new? What about being sad that a big project is ending but also happy the work is finished?

Human emotions are not black and white. It's normal to miss the person you're grieving and your old life while also welcoming new experiences and relationships. It's OK to shift between memories of the past and thoughts about the future. You can spend time at a grief support group or completing therapy while also figuring out your new life and the role you play in it. This back-and-forth is a natural part of grieving.

Feelings may come and go, and you may experience more than one feeling at a time. You can feel both and that's OK.

Video Library

Our St. Luke's Hospice 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 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.

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 with others in a similar situation.

For more information, call us at 484-526-2499.

Bethlehem Area Support Group

Wesley United Methodist Church, 2540 Center Street (Route 512), Bethlehem, PA 18017. Join us the first Friday of each month from 10—11:30 a.m. Join us November 1, December 6, January 3.

Brodheadsville Area Support Group

Western Pocono Community Library, 131 Pilgrim Way, Brodheadsville, PA 18322 from 1—2:30 p.m. Join us November 13 & 27, December 11, January 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 may affect you emotionally, physically, spiritually and psychologically, provide 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.

Upcoming Dates: November 7, December 12 (1-2:30pm)

St. Luke's Senior Meals

St. Luke's University Health Network offers healthy, affordable meals for seniors (65 or older). It's an opportunity for a great meal at a great price (under \$5 for a entrée, salad, side, veggie, dessert and drink) along with meeting new people. Meals served from 4-6pm.

Anderson, Carbon, Miners, Upper Bucks Campuses: Mon.—Fri.

Monroe Campus: 7 days a week

Bethlehem Campus: Thurs. (Guest Speaker on the first Thursday.)

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 Hospital Hospice offers groups and 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.). Groups for bereaved youth ages 7-17 and bereaved caregivers raising bereaved children are offered in-person. 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.