HOW LONG DOES GRIEF LAST?
By Judy Tatelbaum, MSW

Everyone who has ever grieved wonders: How long will this grief persist? How long must I feel sorrow and pain? We hate being uncomfortable. We hate the complex mix of feelings that grief engenders. We may feel like victims of our feelings, wishing they would just disappear.

As a culture, we want everything to be quick and easy. We don’t savor feelings any more than we savor the wide range of our varied life experiences. Like all else that we hurry through in life, we may be obsessed with getting through our pain as quickly as possible. How long does grief take? The real answer is that grief takes as long as it takes – a week, a month, a year or more depending on who we have lost and how this death impacts us. Grief is a process we must move through, not over or around. Even when we can temporarily deny our pain, it still exists. It will eventually erupt in some way, maybe at an inappropriate moment or during another upset or illness. It is always better to allow our strong feelings, to feel them, and to move through them in order to move beyond them.

What does getting over it mean? It means not being forever in pain over our loss. It means we don’t forget or stop loving the person we lost. We do not always have to grieve; we can remember without pain.

Too often we hear the awful message that we never stop grieving, never get over our loss. When we have no tools for overcoming sorrow, and when the world tries to shut us up, grief does go on longer. The belief that we will never recover from a loss can become a self-fulfilling prophecy, if we let it.

I believed I would grieve forever when my brother died. I kept sorrow alive for fourteen years by believing it was endless. I didn’t know how to stop my grief. Grief that persists for years can keep us living in the past, keep us from loving the people who are still alive. I was stunted by my grief, afraid to trust, afraid to commit, afraid to have children I might lose. It wasn’t until a good therapist helped me express fully how much this loss hurt me that I was able to stop grieving.

No matter how much we may hurt today, we must remember that grief is temporary. Mourning does not have to last forever. We can finish crying and expressing all our many feelings around this loss.

We can find in ourselves the courage to recover and heal. We can begin to live fully and love again.
## GRIEF SUPPORT

### GRIEF COUNSELING SUPPORT

Hospice of Central New York offers a thirteen-month grief support program through The Hospice Grief Center. Our professional bereavement counselors are available by appointment to help families and loved ones through this difficult time. Services offered for:

- Individuals
- Children
- Couples
- Families

Please call 634-2207 to request services.

### COPING WITH GRIEF ADULT SUPPORT GROUP

A drop-in group for adults who have experienced a death of a loved one, led by Hospice Grief Center Staff. Come to one, some or all sessions!

**Mondays, 6:00-7:00 PM**

**July 1, 15, 29; August 12, 26, 2013**

- Information about grief
- Grief coping strategies
- Support from others who have “been there”

Registration is not required.

Doors open at 5:45 PM and group starts promptly at 6:00 PM.

### HELP FOR NEW GRIEF

**Thursdays, July 18th or August 15th, 2013**

6:00-7:00 PM

- Information about grief
- For those whose loved ones have recently died
- Learn about the Hospice Grief Center

Please call at 634-2207 with questions or for additional information.

Registration is not required.

Doors open at 5:45 PM and group starts promptly at 6:00 PM.

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Please see Page 5 for information on

NEW support groups for loss of spouse or partner.
CHILDREN AND TEEN GRIEF SUPPORT

♥ HOSPICE OF CNY’S CAMP HEALING HEARTS ♥

A day camp for grieving children ages 6-14
Staffed by Masters level counselors and highly trained volunteers
August 19- 22, 2013 ~ 9:00 AM– 4:00 PM
Camp Iroquois, Manlius, NY
Space at camp is limited. Go to our website at www.hospicecny.org for a brochure or an application for registration.

♥ HEALING HEARTS KIDS AND TEENS CORNER ♥

HOW DO I TALK TO A CHILD WHO IS GRIEVING?

There are a number of important things you can do to help a child cope after the death of a loved one. First, be honest, open and clear. Whenever possible, adults should give children the facts regarding the death. While there is no need to describe great lingering detail, the important facts should be given. The imagination of a child will "fill in" the details if they are not given.

Second, do not avoid the topic when the child brings it up. Adults need to be available when the child wants to talk, but should avoid probing when the child does not want to talk. This may mean answering one question, or answering many. Don't be surprised if in the middle of your struggle to find the "right" answer to a difficult question, the child returns to play and acts disinterested. Unable to tolerate the level of emotional intensity, the child copes by avoiding.

Third, be aware of your own emotional reactions. Children will sense if the topic is emotionally difficult for adults around them. A child will try to please by either avoiding emotional topics or persisting with topics that she senses adults find more pleasant. It is only human for you to sometimes lose control and be very emotional in grief. It’s reassuring for children to know that they are not alone in some of their emotional upset. When you feel more composed, you can help the child understand how you were overcome with emotion, "Just like you feel sometimes." Explain that you struggle to understand too - that "We need to help each other when we are sad."

Adapted from “The Child’s Loss: Death, Grief, and Mourning” By Bruce D. Perry M.D., Ph.D. and Jana Rubenstein, M.Ed.,LPC

Amy VanDusen, MSW
Child and Family Grief Specialist
UNDERSTANDING THE RANGE OF GRIEVING STYLES
By Marna Metcalf, MA

In many ways, grief is a universal experience as loss is a part of life. Yet, each person and each relationship is unique and we grieve in our own ways. You might see that your loved ones are coping very differently with their grief. Friends and family might have expectations of your grief that don’t seem to fit with your experience.

As you cope with these differences in grieving styles, it may be helpful to consider Dr. Kenneth Doka’s concept of intuitive and instrumental grieving styles. Intuitive style grievers experience strong emotions and they cope with these feelings by expressing and exploring them. Intuitive grievers may be helped by talking to loved ones, a counselor, or support groups about their grief. Those with a more instrumental style experience grief through thoughts and physical feelings; therefore, they cope by thinking and doing. Problem solving and physical activities, such as choosing and tending to a gravesite, may help instrumental grievers more.

The descriptions of these grievers may sound like the “typical” differences between men and women; however, grieving styles are not necessarily gender specific. You might note that you or someone you know seems to fall somewhere between these two styles. The belief is that most people fall somewhere in between intuitive and instrumental styles, but identify with one style more. Being able to recognize your own style and the style of your supports can help you better validate each other’s grief. You might also be helped by not expecting something of yourself or others that is just not your/their style.

Hospice of Central New York Families

Grief services are covered for those whose loved one died in the Hospice of Central New York program in the last 13 months. There is a nominal registration fee for camp.

Other Members of the CNY Community

Those who experienced a non-hospice death are offered the following services free of charge: grief talks and workshops, bi-annual Service of Remembrance, lending library and Pathways newsletter. We ask that each person contribute what they are able for short term counseling.

Hospice of Central New York does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, sexual orientation or religion.
One might ask, how can there be laughter in our grief? As Roger Rabbit said “Sometimes a laugh is the only weapon we have.” When some one dear to us has died it may not seem right or appropriate or even respectful, to laugh and have a good time. Some may even be at a place where they don’t feel capable of laughter. It may take time. Amusing incidents or stories can momentarily draw us away from our tears and be a way of affirming that life can and will go on. Laughter can give us hope and a means of coping with loss. It tells us we can get through this. Scientific research tells us that laughter lowers blood pressure and decreases pain. Laughter stimulates the brain to release endorphins which help to elevate mood. It can energize and open us to being present to others. Laughter can help us to not feel so alone and isolated in our grief. Don’t deny yourself moments of joy or happiness. Grief is hard enough.

SPOUSE AND PARTNER LOSS GROUP FOR WOMEN

• How does one exist in a world without their soul mate? Will the pain ever go away? How does one move forward?
• We will explore these issues and help to find ways to replace pain with hope.

Thursdays, July 11, 18, 25 and August 1, 2013 ~ 10:00 – 11:15 AM

You must register for this group by July 8th by calling 634-2207.

Doors open at 9:45 AM and group starts promptly at 10:00 AM.

SPOUSE AND PARTNER LOSS GROUP FOR MEN

• How does one exist in a world without their soul mate? Will the pain ever go away? How does one move forward?
• We will explore these issues and help to find ways to replace pain with hope.

Wednesdays, July 10, 17, 24, 31, 2013 ~ 10:00 – 11:15 AM

You must register for this group by July 8th by calling 634-2207.

Doors open at 9:45 AM and group starts promptly at 10:00 AM.
Calendar of Events

Loss of Spouse or Partner Support Group for Men – July 10-July 31, 2013
Loss of Spouse or Partner Support Group for Women – July 11-August 1, 2013
Coping With Grief Adult Support Group – July 1, 15, 29 and August 12 and 26, 2013
Help for New Grief Group – July 18 or August 15, 2013
Camp Healing Hearts – August 19-22, 2013
Individual or Family Grief Counseling Support – available by appointment

Check out our website at www.hospicecny.org

Please contact Ellen, Bereavement Office Coordinator, at 634-2207 for further information, or if you would prefer not to receive this publication. Unless otherwise noted, all events are held at Hospice of CNY (fully accessible). Should a program need to be cancelled due to weather or other emergency situation, we will leave a message at 634-1113 x 307 two hours prior to the event.