



PATHWAYS TO HEALING

Nov./Dec. 2017

A newsletter to aid in bereavement

Created by: Hospice of Central New York & Hospice of the Finger Lakes

Coping with Holiday Grief

By Joyce Nevola, LMSW – Bereavement Counselor



According to the National Retail Federation, the holiday season consists in the 61 days that comprise November and December and includes the holidays of Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. The ever earlier presence of winter holiday sales, performances, decorations and traditions bombard our vision and blur our mind with sights and sounds that invade our wounded hearts. Thoughts of the Syracuse Thanksgiving Antique Show, Dickens Christmas in Skaneateles, Lights on the Lake at Onondaga Park, the lighting of the Menorah in Hanover Square, and the many celebrations of peace, heritage and hope which are part of the Kwanzaa feast abound. Activities which were once sources of joy and moments to be shared with our loved ones may become the cause of dreaded anticipation for those of us who grieve.

There is no quick fix or way around our pain at holiday time when past memories and present sorrow collide but there are ways to approach these days that make our lives more manageable. Here are some suggestions:

- Set realistic expectations of yourself and know that this year will be different.
- Know that the anticipation of the holiday may be worse than the day itself.
- Choose what traditions you would like to include and which ones you feel you cannot handle (cards, decorations, shopping trips, family gatherings).
- Allow yourself to feel sadness, anger, confusion and all the emotions that are a part of your grief – It's OK to feel out of step with the season.
- Be aware that there may be some friends who have not heard of your loved one's death and you may receive a card or gift addressed to both of you.
- Remember that everyone grieves differently and your family may have varied holiday needs – communicate those needs with each other and compromise.
- Take care of yourself – grief is exhausting – take time for solitude and rest amid the holiday stress but try not to over-isolate.
- Practice limit-setting phrases when it is difficult to say no to others – “Thank you but I simply don't have the energy to do that now” – “If I am having a good day, I will be there.”
- If you choose to attend an event or gathering, provide your own transportation so that you can leave if and when the need arises.
- Surround yourself with supportive people and share your special holiday memories with them. Light a candle in honor of your loved one.
- Attend our Holiday Grief Talk on Wednesday, November 15th from 6 to 7:30pm.
- Participate in 3 sessions of Grief Yoga on Nov. 20th, 27th, and Dec. 4th.
- Join us for our Holiday Craft Memorial Workshop on December 11th from 6 to 7:30pm to decorate a wreath in honor of your loved one. You can cherish this for years to come.
- Call the Grief Center if you would like to talk with one of our counselors.

What you choose to do this year, may not be the same for the next year. Honor who and where you are in your grief at this moment. The holidays will come and they will go. Your loved one remains in your heart forever.

A Death in the Home

By Michelle Gladu, LMSW, Bereavement Counselor



Dying at home is what many people wish for and what a growing number of families want for their loved ones. In generations past, death at home was a more familiar and expected occurrence. Today, families are often not prepared for how they may feel after the death has occurred. If the family member was ill, the knowledge that they fulfilled their loved one's wish for a home death can bring families great comfort. Loved ones may die at home unexpectedly as well, however, sometimes under

traumatic circumstances. Whether anticipated or not, difficult images and memories can accompany a death at home – the home in which other family members must usually continue to live. For some, having medical equipment removed along with other reminders of a death due to illness helps. Returning a room or area where a loved one died back to a more “normal” state can provide a sense of consistency and familiarity. Others find solace in making the space look different. They may paint a room, rearrange furniture or place photos and other mementos of happier times in an area where family members can come together to remember. Spouses may decide to make another room in the house their own if their spouse died in the bedroom they formerly shared. Take some time to think about what might be most helpful and practical for you. If you live with others it's important to communicate and negotiate any changes made in the home because, as with most aspects of grief, there are variations in what each person finds helpful or comforting.

Families may fear these difficult memories will replace the happier thoughts of their loved one at home, and take away the sense of home as a place of refuge. It can help to seek counseling if you are struggling with some particularly painful images in your mind. People most often find that these difficult memories will lessen in time though, and their home will be a source of comfort again.



*They say that there is a reason
They say that time will heal
But neither time or reason
Will change the way I feel
For no one knows the heartache
That lies behind our smiles
No one knows how many times
We've broken down and cried
We want to tell you something
So there won't be any doubt
You are so wonderful to think about
Author Unknown*

UPCOMING EVENTS

WINTER 2017

Coping With Holiday Grief

Wednesday – Nov. 15th

6:00 to 7:30pm

Facilitated by Joyce Nevola, LMSW
Bereavement Counselor

★ ★ ★

Listen to a brief presentation, view a video, hear the words of others who have been through a similar experience.

No need to register - just come!

Make a MEMORIAL WREATH



in honor of your loved one

MONDAY - Dec. 11th - 6:00 - 7:30pm

Facilitated by Joyce Nevola, LMSW
(Supplies Provided)

Bring pictures and/or mementos to add on
Call (315)634-2208 to Register by Dec. 4th

Grief YOGA at Holiday Time

November 20th, 27th & Dec. 4th

2:00-3:15pm OR 6:00 - 7:15pm

Video: "Grief Yoga" by Paul Denniston

NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY

Call (315) 634-2208 by Nov. 17th to register

Spousal/Significant Other Loss Drop-In Group

Wednesdays: 5:30-6:30 pm

(Nov. 15th is an open session for everyone on Holiday Grief)

December 13th and January 17th, 2018

No need to register – just come in!

All events are held at Hospice of CNY, 990 Seventh North St., Liverpool, NY. Please use the **Panasci Community entrance** at the back of the building, which is fully accessible.

Doors open 15 minutes before events. **To check cancellations due to weather or emergency, call (315)-634-1113 x307 two hours prior to the event.**

Dealing with Loneliness

By Matthew Binkewicz, MA, FT



When we experience the death of a loved one, we react to the death physically, psychologically, and spiritually. Our emotions regulate the depth and intensity of any loss especially with the death of a spouse or partner. Like all emotions, loneliness takes on many levels of meaning for those who are grieving the death of a loved one. Some may feel it in profound ways reaching into the very depths of their being and holding them captive in a world which does not understand how they feel. Simple everyday tasks become physical and emotional hurdles creating frustration and anxiety. Others may experience brief encounters of loneliness that pose little or no threat to their daily routine.

When you have been “two” and suddenly become “one,” your world changes. You feel as if you have lost your future. The hopes and dreams you had planned offer little pleasure as the life you built together gradually loses its meaning and purpose. After the funeral planning and services are complete, and when the legal and financial paperwork is submitted, after the cards, phone calls, texts, and tweets slow to a trickle, loneliness creeps in and takes up residence.

It is important to remember that there is no proven way to handle loneliness. Each relationship is unique. Unlike other relationships, your spouse is your companion and partner in life. Children move away, friends and neighbors relocate, but your spouse stays with you. This is the one person you can rely on, plan and share a lifetime together. You find comfort in routine and regularity while the world around you changes. So what can you do when you find you are living on your own?

After the pain and shock eases, you may find that continuing the plans and dreams that you and your spouse had is a way of keeping him/her closer. Perhaps a trip or cruise you had planned together is a way to renew yourself after a traumatic loss. You can dedicate a garden in their honor as a reminder that the dreams you shared can find fulfillment.

A good friend had planned an anniversary cruise with his wife to Hawaii. Although she died several months before the trip, he decided to take the cruise and dedicate the trip in her memory. He lovingly took some of her ashes with him and on their anniversary, he awoke before sunrise, and walked to the beach. As the sun slowly rose above the horizon, he scattered those ashes in the surf. He told me it made him cry and feel complete knowing they had made the trip together.

All of us face loneliness after the death of a partner or spouse. How we deal with that emotion will give us the strength to move forward in our grief journey toward our new normal. Take the time to reassess your goals in life, and make choices that re-integrate your loved one in ways that find fulfillment in the plans and dreams you created those many years ago.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT HOSPICE OF THE FINGER LAKES

30th Annual “Light up a Life” Tree Lighting Ceremony
November 30, 2017 at 4:00 pm

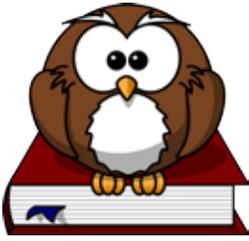
Hoopers Park Clubhouse & Gazebo, on the Corner of East Genesee St/S. Herman Ave., Auburn, NY
Music by Perform4Purpose

Visit our web-site: www.hospiceofthefingerlakes.org for more information

Bereavement Support Group
Wednesday, December 6 & Wednesday, December 13, 2017 at 3—4:30pm
Hospice of the Finger Lakes, 1130 Corporate Dr., Auburn, NY 13021
For more information call: 315-255-2733

HEALING HEARTS.....Kids and Teens Corner

by Susan Bachorik, MS, Bereavement Counselor



Children are sometimes “the forgotten mourners.” As a person who spends time talking with parents and counseling children who have experienced a death, it doesn't appear that children, at the time of the loss, are forgotten. However, when I speak to people who do not spend their days as a grief counselor, I know what is meant by children as the forgotten grievers. One way that children are forgotten at the time of the death is by believing that a child is too young to know or understand what is happening. Though they may not understand in the same way an adult does, that does not mean they are unable to grieve. A child who is old enough to love is old enough to grieve. A child who is aware of the absence is able to grieve the loss of what is gone. This means that children grieve at less than a year old. Though a child may not be able to articulate what they are feeling or what is missing, they can be aware of something missing and show their feelings in their behavior. Acknowledging the loss to even a very young child and responding to that child with compassion and attention is important in allowing that child to grieve.



Children's books about death and grief are wonderful resources.

They can provide instruction and offer an opening to conversation with children on the topic of death. In addition, they can provide helpful words for adults in talking with children about death and grief. Here are some suggestions:

Lost and Found: Remembering a Sister by E. Yeomans. After her sister dies a young girl reflects on the way her life has changed.

How It Feels When a Parent Dies by J. Kremetz. Eighteen children between the ages of 7 and 16 speak openly and honestly about their experiences and feelings when either their mother or father died.

The Scar by Charlotte Moundlic. A story of a boy who has experienced the death of his mother. He is overwhelmed with emotions and he misses her desperately. He is also angry with her for leaving him. With the help of his grandmother he is able to understand his grief and emotions.

Granddad Bill's Song by J. Yolen. A book about a grandparent's death. An elementary school aged child asks questions of the adult family members in his life. He finds a way to understand and express his emotions about his grandfather's death.

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Upcoming Events

Coping with Holiday Grief
Nov. 15th

Grief YOGA at Holiday Time
November 20th, 27th & Dec. 4th

Make a Memorial Wreath
Dec. 11th

**Spousal/Significant Other Loss
Drop in Group**
Dec. 13th - Jan. 17th

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The Hospice Grief Center

Hospice of Central New York provides support for Hospice families for 13 months following the death of their loved one. There is no charge for our services.

Community members are welcome to attend workshops and drop-in groups at no charge.

Donations are appreciated for community members requesting individual counseling.

****If you do not want to receive the
Pathways newsletters, please call
315-634-2208****

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注意：如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 315-634-1100