



# PATHWAYS TO HEALING

Mar./Apr. 2018

*A newsletter to aid in bereavement*

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

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## *In Search of Hope*

By Michelle Gladu, LMSW, Bereavement Counselor

*"It is hope which makes the shipwrecked sailor strike out with his arms in the midst of the sea, though no land is in sight."*

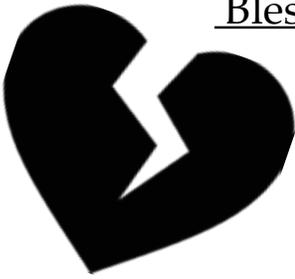
Ovid

Many a grieving person may feel like that shipwrecked sailor the philosopher Ovid describes - flailing in the water, seeking a shoreline that is just out of view. The death of someone we love can rob us, at least temporarily, of hope. It can be hard to imagine that we will feel happy again, or that there will be things to look forward to when the future seems scary and uncertain. The death of a loved one often challenges our beliefs, expectations and assumptions. It changes our plans and alters our identity. "Who will I be now without my loved one?" Even if we find a way to carry on day-to-day, we may do so without the sense of purpose we once felt.



Some may have already faced the loss of hopes and dreams when confronting the terminal illness of a loved one, while others experiencing the sudden death of someone close have their worlds drastically changed with no warning. Regardless of the circumstances, the question remains – how to find a path forward with meaning and joy? For many, religious faith or spiritual beliefs offer a sense of peace and trust in the future. However, faith can sometimes be challenged by loss as well. I once heard hope defined as "the belief that some good thing may yet happen." Getting to that "good thing" will no doubt involve letting go of the hopes we once had and grieving for them along with our loved one. It will require recognizing that while hope motivates us it also can restrict us if we aren't open to change. And while no one can "give" us hope, we usually don't find it alone.

The support of others is essential in being able to catch a glimpse of the solid ground of hope in the distance. Author Judy Brizendine suggests that grief itself is a form of hope. "Grief is the way we get from pain to a fulfilling life again" she writes. "When we choose to grieve we are choosing hope, because we've decided to take the necessary steps to move through the pain (over time) and start living again." When we think of it, life is no more or less certain now than it was before our loss – but our perspective has changed. We can take what we have learned and imagine a different future, one that embraces the hope of incorporating our loved one's memory and legacy into our own lives and the lives of others, even if we don't yet know exactly what that will look like. Ovid is also noted to have said "Let your hook be always cast. In the stream where you least expect it, there will be fish."



## Blessing For The Brokenhearted

*There is no remedy for love but to love  
more.*

-Henry David Thoreau

Let us agree for now  
that we will not say the breaking  
makes us stronger  
or that it is better to have this pain  
than to have done without this love.

Let us promise  
we will not tell ourselves  
time will heal the wound  
when every day our waking  
opens it anew.

Perhaps for now It can be enough  
to simply marvel at the mystery  
of how a heart so broken  
can go on beating,  
as if it were made for precisely this –

As if it knows  
the only cure for love  
is more of it,

As if it sees  
The heart's sole remedy for breaking  
is to love still,  
as if it trusts  
that its own persistent pulse  
is the rhythm of a blessing  
we cannot begin to fathom  
but will save us  
nonetheless.



## Giving Sorrow Words...

Coming in April ... join us for  
"Writing Through our Grief,"  
a 4 week support group where we  
will utilize writing as a way of  
coping with grief.

We will explore journaling,  
letter-writing, poetry, stories – any  
form of the written word that  
participants find meaningful as  
they work through their loss. No  
writing experience is necessary,  
only a willingness to write and  
share in a supportive  
environment.

See the upcoming events page for  
details.



# Spring 2018 EVENTS

## **Spousal/Partner Loss Support Group**

6 Thursdays: March 15th – April 19th

6:00 pm - 7:15 pm

Facilitator: Michelle Gladu, LMSW, Bereavement Counselor

Registration required by March 12th, space limited.

Call (315) 634-2208 to register

## **Spousal/Partner Loss Drop-In Group**

Meets Monthly on a Wednesday:

March 21st

April 18th

5:30 pm – 6:30 pm

Facilitated by Hospice Grief Center Counselors

No registration required

## **Writing Through Our Grief Support Group**

Four Thursdays: April 26th – May 17th

6:00 pm – 7:15 pm

Facilitated by Michelle Gladu, LMSW, Bereavement Counselor

**No writing experience necessary**

## **Save the Date**

**Hospice of CNY Spring Service of Remembrance**

**Sunday, May 6th**

**Location to be announced**

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 x 307 two hours prior to the event.**

# Unanswered Questions

By Matthew P. Binkewicz



If you have experienced the death of a loved one, you may have many unanswered questions. You may be searching for answers, but do not know who to turn to for answers. Here are some questions about the grief process and ways to address your feelings and emotions.

## *How long will my feelings of grief continue?*

Grieving does not last forever. The worst part of it can continue for several months, and it can feel “fresh” for a year or two as persons experience and go through different holidays. But it does not go on forever. You are likely to experience a gradual decrease in intensity of feelings, with new “waves” of grief from time to time. If you feel that your grieving has persisted for too long, then it is important to talk to a counselor about it.

## *My family or friends are becoming impatient with me, telling me that I should be over my grieving and that I am living in the past. What should I do?*

Do not let other people dictate or influence the timetable of your grief. If after several months, your life is standing still, and you are not moving on, then there may be a problem. But family and friends may have their own needs and interests which influence their advice to you. A counselor can help you decide if your grief is not progressing or if you simply need more time. Sometimes family or friends are uncomfortable with death and grief; they are eager for us to “get over” our grief because they want to avoid the issue. Tell them that you appreciate their concern but that they cannot tell you when it is time to stop grieving.

## *Is it okay to be angry at the person who died? I'm angry about something they did, and I can't get that out of my mind.*

If you're bitter at the deceased, then it is important to acknowledge those feelings. It doesn't work well to tell ourselves what we “should” be feeling. We feel what we feel. It can be very uncomfortable to be angry at a person who has died. You may still miss them and love them. But you don't get over feelings of anger by squelching them. You get over them by acknowledging them and working through them. Failing to acknowledge you're the negative side of your relationship with the deceased may only delay resolving your grief.

## *Finding Answers to those very same Questions*

Think over the following questions. They may help you understand more about yourself and about how you experience grief.

1. How does your family tend to deal with grief? Did your parents let you see their feelings when they were going through it? If your parents did show their grief, how did that make you feel?
2. When you are grieving, do you tend to be more sad, anxious, or angry? Or is it some other type of feeling? Do you feel empty or lost?
3. How easy is it for you to talk about your feelings when you are grieving? Is there anyone that you can discuss such feelings with? Have you avoided talking to friends or family about your grief? If yes, then why?
4. What have you done to move forward with your life? Have you allowed things to change since the death of the person? Or have you tried to in some way live just the same as before? Do you worry about “betraying” the deceased by moving on with your life?
5. Did the death challenge any of your religious beliefs or beliefs about life in general? Was there anything about the death which has made it especially hard for you to accept?

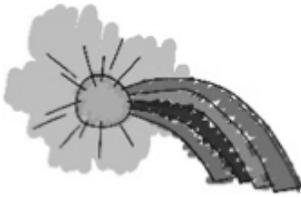
## **UPCOMING EVENTS AT HOSPICE OF THE FINGER LAKES**

Hospice Support Group

Hospice of the Finger Lakes is sponsoring a four session Bereavement Support Group beginning on Wednesday, March 7, 2018. Sessions will continue on each Wednesday in March (14, 21 and 28). All sessions meet from 3:00-4:30 pm at the Hospice Office located at 1130 Corporate Drive, Auburn, NY 13021

# HEALING HEARTS.....Kids and Teens Corner

by Susan Bachorik, MS, Bereavement Counselor



Questions posed by children should be answered in a straightforward, brief manner with consideration of the developmental level of the child.

Most children can usually absorb only bits of information at a time. Pay attention to their cues. Make sure they understand what you say. Explore with your child what prompted them asking a specific question. It is okay for you as the parent or guardian to say "I don't know" if you are unsure how to respond or do not have the answer to their question. Some common questions asked by children are:

Why did daddy die? If possible, try to understand why they are asking this question. Are they feeling sad, angry, guilty, etc. about the death? If it was an illness, were they aware of the prognosis? Was it a sudden death? Many factors need to be taken into consideration. It is imperative to allow the child to express their thoughts and feelings. For young children, death is confusing.

When is mommy coming back? How do you tell a child they are not coming back? It is important for them to know she is not coming back. They may not understand the concept of death being a finality. You can say things such as "the body stopped working." Do not say "she fell asleep and did not wake up." If they have experienced a pet dying they may understand the finality of death.

Will you die too? It is important when answering this question to give reassurance and support. You might answer this question by saying "I will die sometime, but I hope to be here a long time yet." How long will I live? A child needs to be reassured that most people live until they are old and do not worry about dying. No one knows how long they will live and no one lives forever. Depending on the age of the child share information based on what they can understand.

Sometimes children are looking for simple answers to their questions. Do not feel you have to share a great deal of information when your child initially brings up the subject. Listen to their concerns and let them process their feelings. Encourage them to talk as much as they want about this death. If they know of a peer who has had someone die, it may be helpful to let them know they are not the only one who has experienced the loss of a loved one.

CAMP HEALING HEARTS provides an environment for children to meet other children who have suffered a loss. Registration for CAMP HEALING HEARTS has opened. Our 2018 Camp takes place, August 20th – August 23rd. For camp updates visit our website @ [Hospicecny.org](http://Hospicecny.org) or call us at 315-634-2208.



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## Upcoming Events

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Mar.15th - Apr. 19th

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Mar. 21st

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Articles Inside  
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*Coping with Children's Grief*

## 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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