



PATHWAYS TO HEALING

Sept/Oct 2018

A newsletter to aid in bereavement

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

"What Stage Am I In?"

By Michelle Gladu, LMSW, - Bereavement Counselor

Chances are you have heard about the "stages" of grief – possibly even before you experienced the death of someone close to you. Many researchers have developed ideas about grief stages, but those that Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross first outlined in 1969 have become the most well-known. They have even made their way into popular culture. I once received a birthday card that listed the five stages of birthday "grief" over getting older! Not as many people know that these five stages - denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance - were originally developed by Kubler-Ross through her work with people who were dying. She identified these feelings among those who were experiencing grief as they anticipated the end of their lives, rather than the grief of survivors. Once Kubler-Ross wrote about the stages, however, the public seemed eager to apply them to grief over many types of losses.



It's easy to see why thinking about grief in stages would be appealing. Stages help create a sense of structure and predictability to the chaotic feelings people experience after the death of a loved one. They can also be a way to mark progress through grief when it can feel endless. "If I can just get to stage 5, then I will feel better again!" Despite there being some benefits to thinking of grief in stages, it can also create problems. We may believe (or others may tell us) that if we are not going through these stages in an orderly fashion we are not grieving the "right" way. More recently grief researchers and counselors have come to see that these feelings are not really "stages" of grief, but represent just a few of the many thoughts and emotions that can occur during a person's grief journey. Kubler-Ross herself also recognized this later in her career. Some of these feelings may not occur at all. Not everyone experiences intense anger with their grief, for example. On the other hand, most people experience many more feelings than just the ones named in the five stages. They can occur back and forth or at the same time. There are many individual differences, and no specific timetable.

So can we make any sense of grief? Many grieving individuals I meet are under the impression that they must complete the stages of grief and THEN try to move ahead with their lives. The reality is that most people's grief looks something like two lanes on a highway, both going in the same direction. One lane represents all the thoughts and feelings a person experiences as they deal with the death of a loved one. The other lane represents adjusting to life without the loved one while carrying on with day-to-day responsibilities. People move back and forth in these two lanes over time and, just like changing lanes on a real highway, the transitions are not always smooth. But eventually these lanes merge into one as we learn to incorporate loss into our lives and go forward.

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A Service of Remembrance

“Remembering those who died and healing for those who grieve”

DATE: Sunday, October 14, 2018

TIME: 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

**LOCATION: Cicero United Methodist Church
8416 Brewerton Road, Cicero, NY**

Located on the East side of Route 11 about 1/8 mile north of Route 31
in Cicero.

*There will be a slide presentation during our service. You
will be invited to send in a photo of your loved one.
Invitation will be mailed to you shortly.*

Dealing with Our Fears

Joyce Nevola, LMSW, Bereavement Counselor

The heralding of Autumn is flickered in sparks of change, the end of an all too brief summer season, the eruption of harvest time, and the threat of another cold, dark winter in the lurking. Department stores are flooded with visions of Halloween ghosts, goblins, zombies, vampires, and other scary creatures. The lives of the dead and of the living co-mingle on October 31st. Billboards advertise haunted houses and fright nights echoing screams of dread.

All of us deal with fears throughout our lives. Fear is a warning of impending danger and a normal reaction to circumstances of stress. It sets off a chain reaction in the brain which culminates in a release of chemicals that causes rapid breathing, a racing heart, energized muscles, and a fight-or-flight response. Fear plays a major part of adapting to the loss of a loved one. Research has noted that, approximately, 40% of bereaved people will experience some type of anxiety disorder in the first year after the death of a loved one. We may fear what life will be like for us now. We may be terrified to cope with intense sadness. We may be afraid of the stark silence when we return home from work or activities. We may fret about how we are going to continue our regular routines when we are plagued with listlessness, apathy, and fatigue. We may be frightened by the prospect of lingering loneliness. We may dread no longer being special to someone, no longer being anyone's priority, and no longer having someone to witness our everyday life.

We may fear the notion of being orphaned. We may feel uncertain about how to handle practical matters such as finances, housing, raising our children alone, cooking our own meals, going back to work when our heart is so heavy-laden. We may be frightened with the prospect of our own mortality. We may just feel afraid without knowing why. Here are some suggestions to cope with fear after the death of a loved one:

- Make a FEAR LIST. Fears can become less worrisome on paper.
- Read your Fear List out loud, suspending any judgment.
- Talk about your fears to a family member or friend.
- Put your fear list in a box or envelope and put it away.
- When you are ready, take out your Fear List and choose one fear.
- Allow yourself to feel that fear, permitting your body to have its reaction.
- Listen to your self-talk about that fear.
- Reverse the language of fear. Instead of saying “I am afraid”, say, “I am experiencing fear at this time”.
- Tame your fear by exploring practical ways to manage it, such as getting a financial advisor, joining a support group, reading grief literature.
- Use positive affirmations like: “I am able to conquer my fear”.
- Distance yourself from your fear. Put it back in your box and envelope.
- Practice COURAGE! Come to know the strength that is already within you.

Remember that the Hospice Grief Center is here to support you in every phase of your grief journey with individual and/or group support. Call us at 315-634-1100.

Fall 2018 Events:

Spousal/Significant Other Loss Support Group

Six Mondays

October 1st – November 5th

1:00 pm – 2:15 pm

Call 315-634-2208 by September 27th to register

Facilitated by Joyce Nevola, LMSW, Bereavement Counselor

Drop-In Grief Support Group

Now open to all losses

Meets monthly on a Wednesday:

September 19th

October 17th

5:30 pm - 6:30 pm

Facilitated by Hospice Grief Center counselors

No registration required

Coming later this fall:

Holiday Grief Yoga

November 5th, 12th and 19th

Time: 2:00 pm - 3:15 pm or 6:00 pm - 7:15 pm

Holiday Grief Talk

Wednesday, November 14th

6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Holiday Craft Memorial Workshop

Monday, December 10th

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

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.**

Rebuilding a Life Following the Death of a Loved One

Matthew P. Binkewicz, MA, FT



We survive many crises in life. Our homes and possessions may be destroyed by natural disasters such as fires, tornados, hurricanes, or floods. Others may experience loss of property or income through uncontrollable economic forces such as job loss, market downturns, or nation-wide recessions. These misfortunes are often unavoidable and unpredictable, but we seem to survive these losses finding the strength to rebuild our homes, replace our possessions, and re-invest our wealth in profitable ways. Somehow, we gather up enough courage and fortitude to return to a normal way of life.

But how do we approach rebuilding our lives following the death of a loved one? After all, death is the greatest loss we face, and no insurance plan or investment portfolio can ever bring back a loved one. There are no blueprints or how to videos that show us the way to a new normal. Having endured the physical loss and emotional pain of a loved one's death, many challenges face those who are grieving. Where do we find the energy and resources to rebuild a life without our loved one?

Essentially, there are three basic questions every grieving person must answer as they strive to rebuild their life and find a new normal. First, how can family and friends help you to build this new life. No one can go it alone, and you need to determine who can offer expertise and guidance in this difficult task. Those who are grieving ought to find a balance between accepting help and remaining independent. Prioritize the items in your life just as you would do following a fire or other natural disaster that has destroyed your home. Keep a notebook handy and jot down the areas where you need assistance and where you possess the know-how to get the task completed.

Secondly, you will need to reset your internal and external clock. The death of a spouse, partner, or family member can cause great disruption in your daily routine and evening activities. How do you restore some normalcy in life when the one you spent so much time with is gone? Initially, some may spend more time with those closest to them as a source of comfort and security. But this phase is temporary as children will have to return to work, and friends will need to be attend to their own affairs. You may choose to explore new ideas and search for creative ways to fill the long periods of time that seem to create such time-voids. Every window you open is an opportunity to restore purpose and meaning in your life.

The final question challenges many. How do you develop a new frame of mind that opens the soul and restores peace and joy? Spiritual exercises such as prayer, meditation, and yoga offers ways to relocate our energy and increase an awareness of the potential that still remains. Any loss teaches us to treasure what we once had, but it can also teach us to reach beyond our preconceived limits. A grieving woman once said to me, "My husband always encouraged me to explore new ideas and tap into the potential that God gave me. At times when I feel low or discouraged, I close my eyes and imagine him standing beside me repeating those words. Tears do flow, but I take comfort in those words which continue to echo deep within my soul." Rebuilding a new life following the death of a loved one is not easy. It requires great effort, lots of energy, and a willingness to endure setbacks and unforeseen challenges along the way. For those who reinvest the time and energy, your rewards will far outweigh any delays or detours you may encounter. Expect the unexpected and live life to its fullest, and in so doing, you will keep the memory of your loved one alive in your heart and in the stories you share with others.

Hospice of the Finger Lakes Support Group

Hospice of the Finger Lakes is sponsoring a four session Bereavement Support Group, starting September 5, 2018. Sessions will continue on each Wednesday in September (12, 19 and 26). 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

Children, School and Grief

How does someone help a child balance grief and academics?

Some children continue to have academic difficulties that can last for months or can last for two or more years. Grief and trauma can be a detriment to learning for children and adults. When someone dies, several changes take place that affect memory, concentration and learning.



After the death of a loved one, the area in the brain which processes information can be overloaded

with thoughts of the deceased. There is little room left for concentrating on academics, so school can become overwhelming to a child. On the other hand, some children continue to perform well in school following the death of a significant loved one. They may use schoolwork or sports to maintain steadiness when dealing with painful feelings and thoughts. Children, like adults with work, find the distraction to be healing and helpful.

HELPFUL THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- ❁ **Be patient and be accepting of a variety of reactions to loss**
- ❁ **Try to maintain normal routines**
- ❁ **Communicate with the school and develop a plan**
- ❁ **Avoid telling the child to “move on” or “get over it”**
- ❁ **Support your child regardless of academic performance**
- ❁ **Sports can help with grief. Make exceptions for sports participation**

Hospice of Central New York
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Upcoming Events

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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.

Hospice of Central New York complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

Hospice of Central New York cumple con las leyes federales de derechos civiles aplicables y no discrimina por motivos de raza, color, nacionalidad, edad, discapacidad o sexo.

ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-315-634-1100.

Hospice of Central New York 遵守適用的聯邦民權法律規定，不因種族、膚色、民族血統、年齡、殘障 或性別而歧視任何人。

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

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