



PATHWAYS TO HEALING

May/June 2019

A newsletter to aid in bereavement

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

Mother's Day & Father's Day Grief

By Joyce Nevola, LMSW, Bereavement Counselor



The birthing of Mother's Day in America as a national holiday did not occur without the effects of long-lasting labor pains. Initiated by Jan Jarvis in 1908, Mother's Day was created to honor her mother, motherhood, and nurturing, maternal bonds. It became an official holiday in 1914. Hallmark began manufacturing and marketing cards in the 1920s and Jan spent many years of her life denouncing its commercialism. Today, just as the sweep of Easter and Passover greeting cards leave the shelves, Mother's Day cards, gifts, and flowers flood the aisles of local stores and social media platforms. A short time later, this scene repeats itself in celebration of Father's Day.

It is a gift and grace to celebrate our beloved parents and to cherish the life and heritage they offered us. Because parents and children form a sacred bond long before birth, reminders of these days can tug on our hearts and pierce the depths of our souls. However, for parents who have struggled with infertility, experienced miscarriages, still birth, loss through adoption or estrangement and for children who carry the wounds of unresolved pain from parents who failed, messed up and were flawed, these days can trigger raw feelings not mirrored in the glow of the present holiday light.

For young and adult children who have lost parents and parents who have lost children, these celebrations can be sources of dread. Child loss is uniquely severe and unlike any other loss. It penetrates the soul, complicates every aspect of daily living, and is long lasting. Bereaved parents ache for a lifetime. Although the pain can become more manageable through the years, living the rest of their lives without their child can be terrifying.

Here are some suggestions to cope with Mother's Day/Father's Day grief:

- Honor your feelings. Allow yourself to feel sadness, anger, guilt, joy, emptiness and all the emotions that are a part of your grief. It is OK to cry!
- Know that anticipation can be worse than the day itself.
- Seek out others who offer emotional support and remember that everyone grieves differently.

Share stories and memories.

- Take care of yourself. Grief is exhausting! Make time for solitude and rest to feed your soul.
- Lean into your relationship with a higher power (God, nature, or words that represent a divine presence). Allow a beam of Light to enter into your darkness.
- Plan an activity in honor of your loved one. Do it alone or with supportive friends. Light a candle, create a memory book, or visit a place that your loved one enjoyed.
- Perform a random act of kindness for someone else. This gift can offer a moment of respite from your emotional pain.
- Know that we, at the Grief Center, are here to support you. You can call us for counseling, join one of our groups, and participate in our activities. We honor and value your struggle and it is our privilege to join you in your journey.

Is It OK To Be Happy?

Michelle Gladu, LMSW, Bereavement Counselor



Grief can feel like an endless winter for those who have lost a loved one. But just as the flowers of spring and the warmth of summer gradually bring some comfort, many find that as time passes they begin to feel a bit of happiness and even joy again. They may realize that the periods of pain and dismay are fewer and farther apart, less intense. For most, these moments of happiness are a welcome glimpse of a future where grief doesn't weigh as heavily. It is a future that many thought was not possible during those winter days of grief, when it was hard to imagine ever feeling

better. For some, however, the return of happiness isn't a relief. They worry that if they experience some happiness or laughter, or discover that they have spent a day without thinking of their loved one as much, that they are forgetting that special person. They see it as a betrayal, or wonder what others will think of them if they appear to be "moving on" with life. Or some might mistakenly believe that brighter days signal the end of grief. In reality, the gradual return of happiness is part of grief, an indication that healing is taking place. Not forgetting or betraying your loved one, but a sign that you are slowly beginning to incorporate their memory into your life, remembering not just their death but their full life. Just as we all know that rainy days can follow sunny ones, we understand the pain of loss is seldom too far from our minds and difficult days may still be ahead. If we can accept the brief respite that these lighter moments offer, though, we may find ourselves better able to cope and participate in life in the way our loved ones would have wanted.

Giving Sorrow Words....

Join us in June for "Writing Through our Grief," a 3 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. Group sessions will be held at our Hospice office in Liverpool, NY. See the Upcoming Events page for details.



Save the Date...



The Grief Center will once again be offering Grief Yoga at our Liverpool Hospice office this summer. The sessions will be offered July 11th, 18th and 25th in the afternoon and evening. During each session participants watch a DVD featuring a yoga instructor who also narrates the DVD, guiding participants through movements dealing with loss and grief. No yoga experience is needed, and we can provide yoga mats. See the next issue of Pathways for more information and to register.

UPCOMING EVENTS

AT OUR LIVERPOOL OFFICE

Attending a support group with others who have experienced a similar loss and are having similar reactions may be helpful. Hospice support groups are facilitated by professional staff who can assist in processing the challenges we face while grieving.

Writing Through Our Grief Group (3 Thursday evenings)

Date: June 6, 13, 20
Time: 6:00 – 7:15 PM
Facilitator: Michelle Gladu, LMSW
Bereavement Counselor

Call 634-2208 by June 1st to register

Drop-In Groups

Wednesdays: 5:30-6:30 PM

May 15th
June 19th

You do not need to register, just show up.

“SAVE THE DATE”

A Service of Remembrance

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

DATE: May 5, 2019
TIME: 1:30 – 2:30 PM
PLACE: St. Joseph the Worker Church,
1001 Tulip Street, Liverpool, NY 13088

Twice a year the Hospice Grief Center offers to the community a **Service of Remembrance** to remember the life of those who have died. This ceremony allows family and friends to come together to celebrate the lives of those that were loved. As you move forward on the healing path of grief, may you have strength to make peace with your grief and face the days ahead. We hope you will join us and feel some solace in reflecting on the light your loved ones brought to your lives.

These support groups are held at our Hospice Liverpool location, 990 Seventh North St., Liverpool, NY. Please use the Panasci 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 634-1113 x307 two hours prior to the event.**

When available, our Hospice events in the Finger Lakes region are identified on the next page.

Closets, Clutter and Keepers

Matthew P. Binkewicz, MA, FT



Here is my confession to all of you: I am not a hoarder, but I am a saver. I like to keep items that I believe may be of use in the future. In my workshop, I have two large metal garbage cans where I keep odds and ends of materials that I have used for a project, but potentially, might be needed for some future one. Container one holds wood scraps while the second one keeps pieces of metal, plastic and other salvageable items. When a project requires a small piece of wood or metal, I search the cans for the item before I go out and buy any materials. The logic is quite simple: why go out and buy a new item, when you have one readily available and waiting to be repurposed. Let me explain.

At the end of October, I give the wood scraps to my neighbor who uses them in his wood stove as kindling, and I recycle the metal and plastic. Both cans are empty and ready to accept new items in the spring. Everyone benefits.

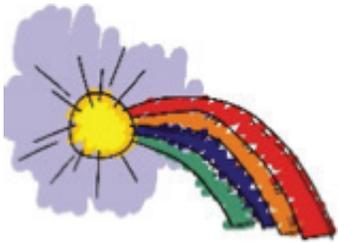
We often experience a similar scenario when a loved one dies leaving behind furniture, household goods, and personal items. As we sort through the belongings, we may feel overwhelmed by the volume of material in our possession and wonder what we should keep, donate, or put in the trash. Well-intentioned friends may instruct us to "get rid of it all." Others might advise that we keep everything for a year. Whose advice do we take?

There might be an answer somewhere between the two extremes. Clearly, we must be emotionally prepared to address the issue. We need to give ourselves time to grieve the loss and work through the feelings that we experience with the death of a loved one. No one should be forced to make any decision before they are ready. So take time to grieve. Ask yourself this question: Are you prepared to do this alone or will you need the help of a family member or friend?

Once you feel you are ready, you might begin by making three piles: keep, donate, and trash. Large items need to find a home quickly so you might see if a family member is in need of a couch, dining room table and chairs or a bedroom set. You can take the same approach with household items as well. Those items that remain can be donated to a charity. You may have to invest more time when sorting through personal items. These objects may possess special meaning. You may feel attached to a necklace, tie, or old jacket so you might want to set them aside and sort through the other belongings.

The process may require several months or even a year. If family members would like to help, accept their offer. Just remember that you do not have to sort through a lifetime of possessions in one day or week. Take your time. Recall the special memories of certain items, share stories with those you love, and let go of those things that can bring joy to others.

Please note: Invitations to our Memorial Service in the Finger Lakes region will be forthcoming.



HEALING HEARTS....Kids and Teens Corner by Susan Bachorik, MS, Bereavement Counselor

Think Summer... Think Camp

Children seek to understand what caused the death and why it happened. The best and most basic way to explain death is to simply say “the body stopped working.” This definition fits what children observe when they see a dead animal. The bird can no longer fly or sing. Avoid using the words, “lost,” “expired,” “passed away,” or “sleeping.” Children have a literal, concrete style of thinking, so avoid using euphemisms that will confuse them. Children believe they have the power to make things happen in the world. They often believe death is the result of something they did or didn’t do or say.

What is CAMP HEALING HEARTS all about?

At Camp Healing Hearts, children begin to understand that they are not alone in their grief, as they meet other children who have also experienced the loss of a special person.

CAMP HEALING HEARTS is a day camp held for four days, and this year it is scheduled to be held from Monday, August 26th to Thursday, August 29th @ Camp Iroquois in Manlius. Children going into Grade 1 through Grade 6 as of September, 2019 are eligible to attend. Each day’s activities are geared towards a theme. Day 1 is about telling their story. Day 2 focuses on feelings and Day 3 is about memories. The final day is talking about hope. Children need to express how they are feeling and this transpires through interactive activities with the campers each day.

Camp is facilitated by grief counselors and trained volunteers. As part of the camp experience, the campers will also have the opportunity to enjoy fun activities such as swimming, music, drama, horses, boating, etc.



For more information, you can call (315) 634-2208 @ the Hospice Grief Center or visit our website at www.hospicecny.org.

Hospice of Central New York
& Hospice of the Finger Lakes
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2019 Upcoming Events

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Grief Center Drop-In Groups

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June 19th

Writing Through Grief Group

June 6, 13, 20
(three Thursday evenings)

Articles Inside

**Mothers Day & Fathers Day Grief
Is It OK To Be Happy?
Closets, Clutter and Keepers
Think Summer... Think Camp**

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.

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