

PATHWAYS TO HEALING

A NEWSLETTER TO AID IN BEREAVEMENT



Fall & Winter 2026

Holiday Grief

By Michelle Gladu, Social Worker
Hospice of Central New York and of the Finger Lakes

The holidays that fall and winter bring can be an especially difficult time for those grieving the death of a loved one. In ways large and small we are reminded of what we've lost and what will never be the same. Ignoring the holidays and hanging on until January may be the only thing we feel we can do – especially when experiencing the first holiday season without a loved one. However, these special days can be an opportunity to re-evaluate priorities and focus on what is most important. Some traditions may be very meaningful, while others can feel more like chores we do every year just because that's what we've always done. Keeping our hearts and minds open can help us do more than just survive the holidays.

Some things to consider:

Creating some new rituals and traditions, such as lighting a special candle or including a new ornament to commemorate your loved one, can help. Consider having guests bring a dish to pass of a favorite food of your family member. Giving a toast, saying a prayer, sharing a funny story are all ways to include the memory of your loved one in the holidays.

Spending time with children in your life can bring a renewed sense of joy. Consider their wishes and needs in your holiday planning. Children may benefit from the continuity that traditions provide.

Helping others in the community can make the holidays feel more meaningful – especially if the death of your loved one means you will not have someone to celebrate with this year, or family relationships are complicated.

Doing something completely different this year – going out of town or celebrating with friends, for example – can help give the holidays a different feel if our memories of holidays past are difficult.

Keeping in mind that others may grieve differently than you and may have different needs when it comes to the holidays, can help prevent misunderstandings and hurt feelings when expectations clash. Communication and compromise are important.

Recognizing our limits is important, too. Grief is hard work, and you will likely not have the energy to do everything you might have done in the past. Saying “no” may be hard for others to accept, but necessary to maintain balance.

Finally, if you find yourself feeling joy this holiday season, remember that being happy isn't a betrayal of your loved one. Bittersweet though they may be, the holidays can be a time to honor and remember our loved ones and carry on their legacy.

Fall Bereavement Events & Grief Support Sessions

You don't have to navigate grief alone.

Hospice is honored to offer a variety of grief support programs throughout the fall and holiday season. Whether you're looking for a creative way to remember a loved one, support for your family, or the comfort of connecting with others who understand, we invite you to join us.

Space is limited for all events, and advance registration is required. To register for one or more events, please call **315-634-2141**. Unless otherwise noted, all events will be held at:

Hospice Grief Center
990 7th North Street
Liverpool, NY 13088



Events:

- **Ornament Making** – Thursday, December 10th at 5:00 PM – for children, teens, and families

Grief Support Sessions:

- **Holiday Grief Sessions (two options to select from)**
 - **Virtual Event** – Wednesday, December 2nd at 11:00 AM or 6:00 PM (choose 1)
 - **In-person Event** – Monday, December 14th at 5:30 PM



HEALING HEARTS.....Kids and Teens Corner

Grief During The Holidays

by Elyssa Saltzman, LMSW Bereavement Counselor

From September through early January, there are many different holidays that occur in what most of us call the “holiday season”. These holidays are connected to a certain culture, country, and/or religion which may bring up our grief in a new way or make us feel our grief even more knowing our loved ones are not with us for this holiday. It is difficult to be a part of these special holidays without your loved one, especially when there are so many important holidays so close to each other. While you may feel many different emotions about your loved one not being here to celebrate these holidays with you, there are some ways to help you cope during the holidays.



TALK ABOUT IT: Weeks before the holidays talk about how the holidays will be different without your loved ones. Discuss what things should be kept the same and what new things should be done. Talking about it can help you prepare for the holidays and allow you to talk about how you want to remember your loved ones during this holiday season.

CREATE NEW TRADITIONS: Keep some traditions but also try to incorporate new traditions. You can include your loved one in your holiday celebration by displaying a photo, donating a gift to charity in their honor or memory, putting out a special ornament or something else that connects your loved ones to the holiday, or even add in sharing memories of your loved ones from the holidays.

LEAN ON OTHERS: It is important to lean on family and friends for support. Tell them what you need from them or what might help you. Talk about your memories of your loved ones. Talking about your loved ones and how you feel can often help you cope with your feelings and feel less alone.

It is okay to feel sad, angry, or even happy during the holidays. Sometimes you may have multiple feelings at once. It is usually better to talk openly about how you feel about and what you want to do for the holidays. Talking to others allows you to have a voice and be heard. One of the comments we hear most often from children and teens at The Hospice Grief Center is that they are grateful when someone talks to them about their loss and that they can talk openly about how they feel.

***For more information on Grief Services, call 315-634-1100 or visit
www.hospicecny.org/grief-support***



990 Seventh North Street, Liverpool, NY 13088
(315) 634-1100 www.hospicecny.org

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
SYRACUSE, NY
PERMIT 24

A decorative sunburst graphic consisting of several thin, light gray lines radiating from a central point, positioned above the "Articles Inside:" section header.

Articles Inside:

- Holiday Grief
- Bereavement Events & Support
- Healing Hearts - Kids & Teens Corner

Please check the Hospice website for information
on upcoming support groups

www.hospicecny.org/grief-support

***If you do not wish to receive the Pathways
newsletters, please call 315-634-1100***

Hospice of Central New York & Hospice of the Finger Lakes 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 & Hospice of the Finger Lakes 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，翼鵜種族、膚色、民族血統、年齡、殘障 或性澮而歧視慘澮。

注意：如果您顛用繁體葺文，您鍼婢躋費獲得語言援操服鍊。請致電 315-634-1100