



Comfort for the Grieving Heart

Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

December 2016

"Each moment is a miracle encompassing everything: the joy and sorrow,
the failure and success, the disappointment and happiness,
the celebration and grief"
Kazuaki Tanahashi

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If you would like to be added to or removed from our mailing list, or if you would prefer to receive an electronic copy, please contact Dawn at 484-526-2499.

The 2012 Grammy awards were memorable for many reasons, but perhaps most notably for the death of Whitney Houston just one day before the show was set to air. With no time to alter the show, the Grammys aired and delicately balanced our collective grief as well as our celebration. We mourned Whitney while Jennifer Hudson sang "I Will Always Love You" in tribute. Then we turned our attention to Adele, who won all 6 of her nominations, tying for the most wins by a female artist in one night, and triumphantly returned to the stage after vocal chord surgery. Then we shifted our focus back to another artist's death, Amy Winehouse, as her father posthumously accepted a Grammy on her behalf. Then Bruno Mars performed and we again found our spirits lightened. Bruce Springsteen opened the show, and Paul McCartney closed the show. In between, Glen Campbell, who had announced the previous year that he was battling Alzheimer's disease, sang "Rhinestone Cowboy" and we were again reminded of the fragility of life.

The 2012 Grammys can be a good guide in our own grieving; what we learn is that it is possible to sit with both grief and celebration together. This is an especially fitting reminder as we enter the holiday season, when we are tasked with experiencing our grief in the midst of celebratory occasions. We are faced with the question of what to do when grief meets celebration. Perhaps the answer lies not in preparing or planning as we may be inclined to do, perhaps the overriding idea is one of learning to strike a balance. Part of what grief teaches us is that we often experience times where we are doing fine...trucking along in life and moving forward. Never forgetting but also remembering to live. Then come the times where we are hit hard...we get sad, feel hopeless, and are in pain. During the year, we experience these things in a natural course that is distinct to us as individuals. But, during the condensed period between Thanksgiving and the New Year, a time filled with meaning and memories, we can experience grief in a heightened way, as it sits hand in hand with celebration.

This year, as you enter into the holiday season, try and allow yourself to experience your emotions in a way that honors your grief, as well as the festivity and tradition that surrounds the season. When thinking of the holidays, consider ways in which carrying on traditions may help in this process, and also consider ways in which introducing new traditions may also support your grieving. Find your support people and have them ready in case you need respite and care, but also consider building in time to be alone to reflect. Share memories and talk of your loved one, but also make plans and look to the future. There is a sweet spot where grief and celebration can live with each other, and allowing yourself the freedom to simply feel and be in the moment may lead you to finding a balance. You, like the producers of the Grammy's, can map out a course that is respectful to both loss and life.

Find your Adele or Bruno Mars. Embrace your Whitney and Amy. They can coexist and to honor them both is to honor your loved one.

-Mindy

Grief and Loss Support Group

Our next round of our 6 week Grief and Loss Support Group is scheduled for February 2017. This group is for adults grieving the loss of someone significant in their lives and provides an opportunity to come together with others who have experienced the loss of a loved one. The group guides participants in understanding the uniqueness of their grief. Please note that this is not a therapeutic group; this group provides support, resources and education on the healing process. The group will meet on **Wednesdays from February 22, 2017 through March 29, 2017 from 3:30-5:30 pm** at St. Luke's Priscilla Payne Hurd Education Center, St. Luke's Bethlehem Campus, 801 Ostrum Street, Bethlehem, PA 18015 (building is located in front of Priscilla Payne Hurd annex of the hospital). **Registration for this group is required:** call (484) 526-2514 or email Suzann.Ditzel@sluhn.org



Newly Bereaved Workshop

This one-time workshop is for those who have a lost a loved one within the past 1-3 months and will provide education on the first few weeks and months of grief following a death. We will cover understanding common grief reactions, coping strategies, self-care throughout the grief process and beyond, and the uniqueness of your grief experience. These workshops will be offered on a bi-monthly basis. We will be meet on **Wednesday, January 18, 2017 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm** We will meet at the Pricilla Payne Hurd Education Center, St. Luke's Hospital, Bethlehem Campus, 801 Ostrum Street, Bethlehem, PA 18015 (building is located in front of Priscilla Payne Hurd annex of the hospital). **Registration is required:** call (484)526-2514 or email Suzann.Ditzel@sluhn.org

Open /Drop-in Support Groups

Please note changes in our Drop-In Group

Our Drop-In groups are designed to offer continued support to bereaved individuals who have already attended grief and loss programs through St. Luke's Hospice. Drop-In groups afford participants the chance to continue with supportive services. This group is facilitated, but directed by group members in terms of content and discussion. We currently offer 4 Drop-In Support Groups:

Easton: First Monday of every month from 4-5 pm at St. Luke's Hospital-Anderson Campus, Medical Office Building (MOB), 1700 St. Luke's Blvd, Easton, PA 18045 in Conference Room A.

Bethlehem: Second Monday of every month from 4:00-5:00 pm at St. Luke's Pricilla Payne Hurd Education Center, St. Luke's Hospital, Bethlehem Campus, 801 Ostrum Street, Bethlehem, PA 18015 in Room 112

Quakertown: Second Monday of every month from 6:30-7:30 pm at St. Luke's Hospital-Quakertown Campus, 1021 Park Avenue, Quakertown, PA 18951 in Taylor B Conference room.

Lehigh: Third Monday of every month from 3:00 - 4:00 pm at Dinkey Memorial Church, 1742 Dinkey Road, Lehigh, PA 18212.

*"The deeper that sorrow carves
into your being,
the more joy you can contain."*

Khalil Gibran

Managing Grief at the Holidays

1. Remember that just as there is no right or wrong way to grieve, there is no right or wrong way to celebrate a holiday
2. Lean into feelings of grief instead of trying to avoid them. You aren't trying to avoid grieving, you are trying to avoid pain. Grief is the way through the pain, so address your feelings as they arise
3. Try holidays in a new way. Grief has a funny way of helping us evaluate what parts of the holidays we want to keep, what we want to change and what we want to eliminate altogether.
4. Go in with a game plan. Make plans with family, friends or to be on your own, but be sure to build in a Plan B to your plans. Even if you think now that you want to spend the day alone, have a Plan B in place to meet up with friends in case being alone becomes overwhelming.
5. Externalize your loss: say a prayer, light a candle, make an ornament, donate money in their name, share funny stories.
6. Be gentle with yourself. Don't do more than you want and don't do anything that does not serve your soul.

What will I do this holiday season?

Weep for you, Miss you.

Be kind to a stranger because of our love.

Invoke your name so others will honor you.

Stand in awe at the beauty of all you are.

Meditate on your life and death.

Carry you in my heart wherever I journey.

Show mercy to children and animals.

Ask for your forgiveness, and your presence.

Unfold your love into the world.

Remember. Your. Beauty.

Dr. Joanne Cacciatore

Adapted from www.grief.com



Lehighton News :

To all of our friends in the Lehighton area, we hope you have noticed that we are working hard to grow our programming in the northern part of our service area. In addition to our monthly drop-in group (every 3rd Monday of the month), we are also offering workshops and groups on a rotating basis. We hope that if you have bereavement needs, you will join us. Our next drop-in group will be January 16, 2017 and our next round of our 6 week Grief and Loss support group is scheduled to start March 2017. We will make future announcements in the newsletter, so please be on the look out for information!

Additional Places to Find Support and Share Your Story

This is a listing of free bereavement resources in the area. If you have a need for something and don't see it on this list, please call the Bereavement Office at (484) 526-2499 for referrals to other services.

Cancer Support Community of Lehigh Valley is a local non-profit organization providing emotional and social support to family members and caregivers. They offer support groups, educational workshops and mind/body classes in their Allentown, PA office. Programs are free, but registration is required. Call 610-861-7555 or email info@cancersupportglv.org to register or for more information.

The Compassionate Friends offers ongoing support groups for parents, grandparents, and adult siblings grieving the loss of a child, grandchild, or sibling. www.thecompassionatefriends.org

TCF of Lehigh Valley meets at Sacred Heart Hospital, 2nd floor, 421 Chew Street in Allentown. The group meets the 2nd Monday each month at 7pm. For more information, call 610-837-7924.

TCF of Quakertown meets at St. Luke's Hospital, ground floor, 1021 Park Ave in Quakertown in Taylor Conference Rooms A&B. This group is held the 2nd Tuesday each month from 7:30 – 9pm. For more information, call 215-536-0173.

TCF of Easton meets the 2nd Thursday each month from 7-9pm at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 2115 Washington Blvd. in Easton. For more information call 610-866-5468.

Gentle Yoga for Grief, Stress, and Life Transitions offered by Wendy Littner Thomson, M.Ed., LPC, RYT. First session offered for free to caregivers whose loved one recently received hospice services from St Luke's Hospice. For location, times, or more information, please call 610-730-1992 www.givinggriefavoice.com

Free Spirits is a group of more than 2 dozen older widows who go out to lunch once a month to keep active and offer support to each other--and to newer widows. Most are members of Church of the Manger UCC, Bethlehem. Call 610-866-8223 for more information.

Soaring Spirits Regional Group Lehigh Valley social gatherings for widowed individuals to provide opportunities to connect with others in a positive, caring, and supportive environment. For more information, contact Sonja Handwerk at 610-297-0057 or soaringspiritslvpa@yahoo.com.

HALOS - CLC is for parents, grandparents and adult siblings who have experienced the loss of a child or sibling to suicide. The group meets every 4th Thursday from 6:30-8:30 pm at Hughes Library in Stroudsburg, PA. Register with Alice Keyes at (570) 236-1168

Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Center offers an Open Group on the 4th Wednesday of each month from 5:30-7:00 pm. Registration is required, contact Deb at (610) 347-9988 or deb@bradburysullivancenter.org. The Center is located at 522 W. Maple St., Allentown, PA 18101. There is no charge for the group.

GriefShare Groups are a faith-based approach to grief and loss. GriefShare groups are provided at several locations in the Lehigh Valley. To find a location near you, please visit www.griefshare.org.

St. Francis Retreat House holds monthly grief support groups on the first and third Tuesday of the month from 9:30-11:00 am. Located at 3918 Chipman Avenue, Easton PA. Please call 610-515-9028 for more information.

GRASP - For families who have experienced a death due to substance use. Group meets every 3rd Monday of the month from 7-8:30 pm at 1st Presbyterian Church in Allentown, Room 118. Please register with Nancy Howe (484) 788-9440

Stepping Stones for Adolescents is a group for teens ages 11-16 that meets at Lehigh Valley Hospice for teen peer support. Call (610)969-0330 for more information.

VNA/Hospice of Monroe County offers a support group the 1st and 3rd Wednesday each month at noon. Call 570-421-5390 for more information.

Grand View Hospital Hospice offers many groups and services that change seasonally. Please call 215-453-4210 for more information.

Doylestown Hospital Hospice offers a variety of support groups, including a widow/widower group, a young survivors group, and an adult loss group. Visit www.dhospice.com or call 215-345-2838.