Relief in Grief

Life isn’t perfect, nor are relationships. When death marks the end of a life, it does not necessarily mark the end of hurt or anger. For some, that may lead to relief. Others may have watched their loved one suffer to the point where, when death occurs, they experience relief that the suffering has ended. Some caregivers had to ignore important parts of their life. They, too, experience relief as they realize they can finally reengage with those aspects of their life they had missed for so long.

People assume grief is about feeling sad but it is far more complex than that. A caregiver who has had disrupted sleep for many months might enjoy the physical relief of a full night of sleep. Caregivers might also be relieved to resume some social engagements without the guilt and cost of having to pay for a caregiver. Some may be grieving the death of an abusive relationship due to addiction, abandonment, mental illness, or dementia. There may be relief that their life or sense of well-being is no longer so complicated. For survivors whose abusers had presented a positive public image, it may be difficult to hear others speak so glowingly about the person. They are relieved for what is over, yet may feel anger or social isolation. They knew the deceased in a way that is so different from what others think they knew.

Regardless of your relationship with the person who died, whatever you feel is okay. If some or much of your reaction after the death is relief, allow that to be. Explore these reactions and express them in a way that feels helpful to you, such as writing them down or talking to someone you trust. It can be cathartic to write down any and all your reactions. No one else needs to see it. You will, in time, be able to move beyond your reactions and focus more on the future than you have been on the past.

~Patti Anewalt, Director
The Coping Kids & Teens program provides individual or family sessions for children and teens impacted by the serious illness or death of a loved one. For the safety of you, your family, and our staff, these sessions are held virtually via Zoom during the Covid-19 pandemic. Call the Pathways Center for more information or to set up an appointment.

Coping Kids & Teens

Pathways Center counselors recognize that grief is experienced by the entire family – children, teens and adults. Amid serious illness and death, children and teens often are overlooked, yet their needs are significant. Coping Kids & Teens is a 6-week family support series offered three times a year throughout the school year in the Bob & Joy Allen Coping Kids & Teens Wing of the Pathways Center for Grief & Loss. Children and teens meet in peer support groups and participate in activities to help them cope with a death, while adults learn how to manage the challenges of supporting grieving teens and children. Families meet with a counselor to complete an assessment prior to attending to determine if the group will be helpful for your child(ren). There is no charge for the Coping Kids & Teens program due to the generous support of the community.

Individual Grief Support

The Coping Kids & Teens program provides individual or family sessions for children and teens impacted by the serious illness or death of a loved one. For the safety of you, your family, and our staff, these sessions are held virtually via Zoom during the Covid-19 pandemic. Call the Pathways Center for more information or to set up an appointment.

Reflections on Healing

Have you ever considered the similarities between your grief journey and the fading and renewal that occurs in nature? The emptiness you experience when grieving is similar to that of a barren field that must be plowed and weeded to prepare for something new to grow. Just as this process takes place in nature, reflection on your memories can provide the seeds for future healing.

Grief work is painful. Tears may be a healing release for the feelings of sadness, anger and hurt that emerge with your loss. But not everyone is the same; some people never cry. Others shed tears much later, after shock and numbness wear off. What is important is that you find ways to express the uncomfortable feelings associated with your loss, rather than bottling up or blocking them. Some people need to keep busy, some seek physical outlets and some need to talk. Others might prefer to read about grief rather than talk about their loss.

As you continue the hard work of coping with your loss, you will begin to reorganize your life and prepare the ground for your next new season of growth. Consider attending a Pathways Center virtual support group as a way of helping you understand this process.

Call us at (717) 391-2413 or (800) 924-7610 with questions or if you would like more information.
People say, “Time heals all wounds.” I am worried. Why do I feel more pain now than when my husband died three months ago?

What you are describing is very common. At times you may feel worse, rather than better, three months after the death of your husband. When he died, you most likely were surrounded by family and friends. Perhaps now that everyone else has gone back to their routines, you are facing the day-to-day realities of his absence. Do you catch yourself thinking “I can’t wait to tell him…” or “I wonder what he’ll say about that?” If your husband loved a certain brand of cereal, you may find yourself crying in the cereal aisle at the grocery store! These times can be the hardest to adjust to.

Although it may not feel like it, you are heading in the right direction. As you face and address the daily reminders of how your life has changed, you begin to adjust. It takes a while for your heart to admit what your mind already knows—you no longer have your husband in the physical, present sense you are used to.

As you eventually discover what is most helpful in getting you through these difficult times, you will find ways in which your love remains. Although your life is very different from before, many bereaved people have told us that it does get better and easier. It is not just time, it is what you do with that time that helps you heal. As you learn what helps—whether it is a support group, talking to a friend, or taking on a new project or interest in honor and memory of your husband—life will once again become meaningful and even enjoyable.

Memorial Pavers and Bricks

Hospice & Community Care offers a meaningful way to honor and remember someone special in your life through the purchase of a commemorative paver or brick. Your donation provides an engraved paver or brick placed on the Path of Remembrance, a memorial path that wanders through the grounds of The E. E. Manny Murry Center. A paver or brick may also be purchased for your home or garden. All orders received by May 4 will be part of the Path of Remembrance Dedication on October 17. Pavers and bricks are available to anyone regardless if care was provided by Hospice & Community Care. Pavers are $250 and bricks are $125; orders may be placed at www.hospiceconnect.org/path or by contacting the Development Office at (717) 295-3900.

The dedication will be held in person dependent upon the current state of the pandemic and our ability to insure the safety of our guests.

Sponsored by—

Call us at (717) 391-2413 or (800) 924-7610 with questions or if you would like more information.
Calendar of Events

Many people grieving find it helpful to hear others’ experiences with a loss after death. It is reassuring to realize what you are going through is shared by others. Our groups focus on grief education and support.

The Pathways Center for Grief & Loss and Hospice & Community Care are taking all necessary precautions for the health and safety of our patients and families, staff, volunteers and visitors related to the Coronavirus outbreak.

Groups will be held virtually via Zoom until further notice.

Contact the Pathways Center to discuss support options with a bereavement counselor who will also provide the appropriate log-in information.

Are you uncertain about attending a virtual grief group?

In a recent survey, nearly 90% of bereaved individuals felt the virtual Zoom format provided a supportive group experience.

Virtual Support Groups — Registration required

Groups are led by Master’s-level counselors and volunteers who have experienced the same type of loss. They provide time to share experiences and ask questions. Groups are designed for those within the first two years following the death of a loved one. These sessions will be held via Zoom. Contact the Pathways Center to speak with a bereavement counselor who will also provide the log-in information.

Coping with the Loss of a Parent or Sibling

Tuesday, MARCH 2, 6:30–8:00 p.m.
Tuesday, APRIL 6, 6:30–8:00 p.m.

Coping with the Loss of a Spouse or Companion

Wednesday, MARCH 3, 6:30–8:00 p.m.
Tuesday, MARCH 9, 6:30–8:00 p.m.
Tuesday, MARCH 16, 2:00–3:30 p.m.
Tuesday, MARCH 23, 2:00–3:30 p.m.
Wednesday, APRIL 7, 6:30–8:00 p.m.
Tuesday, APRIL 13, 6:30–8:00 p.m.
Tuesday, APRIL 20, 2:00–3:30 p.m.
Tuesday, APRIL 27, 2:00–3:30 p.m.

The following is a quote from a recent support group participant:

“Being with others who are in a similar situation is helpful in not feeling so alone and different.”

Call us at (717) 391-2413 or (800) 924-7610 with questions or if you would like more information.
Calendar of Events

Support Group Series — Registration required

Newly Bereaved Program (3-week series)

Wednesdays, MARCH 10, 17 and 24
2:00–3:30 p.m.
Tuesdays, APRIL 13, 20 and 27
6:30–8:00 p.m.
Wednesdays, MAY 12, 19 and 26
2:00–3:30 p.m.
(Registration deadline:
one week prior to the start of the group)

If your loss was recent, this series provides an overview of common grief responses and will help you to begin to identify coping tools. Space is limited; registration required. Call to speak with a bereavement counselor to determine if the group will meet your needs. These groups will be held virtually via Zoom.

Coping with the Loss of a Child of any Age (4-week series)

Wednesdays, MARCH 10–31
6:30–8:00 p.m.
(Registration deadline: March 3)

This free series, held via Zoom, will explore common reactions experienced by parents after the death of a child of any age. The group will also address coping strategies, self-care, and ways to commemorate their life. The sessions will be facilitated by a Master’s-level bereavement counselor and a volunteer who is a bereaved parent. Space is limited and registration is required. Interested individuals will first meet virtually with a bereavement counselor to determine if the group will meet your needs. Call to schedule an appointment.

Growing Through Grief (6-week series)

Wednesdays, APRIL 21–MAY 26
6:00–8:00 p.m.
(Registration deadline: April 14)

This support series, held virtually via Zoom, is for adults (age 18 or older) who are grieving a death that occurred at least nine months ago. The group provides a safe place to explore how you have been impacted by your loss, who you are apart from your loved one, and how you continue to reorganize your life. Space is limited; registration is required. Interested individuals will first meet virtually with a bereavement counselor to determine if the group will meet your needs. Call to schedule an appointment.

“Healing from grief is not the process of forgetting. It is the process of remembering with less pain and more joy.”
—Author unknown

Individual Consultations

Sometimes it can be helpful to meet individually with a bereavement counselor. Call the Pathways Center to discuss this further or to set up an appointment in Mount Joy, Lancaster or York. Virtual sessions are also available.

Call us at (717) 391-2413 or (800) 924-7610 with questions or if you would like more information.
**Calendar of Events**

**Other Options**

**GRASP**  
*(Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing)*

**Tuesday, MARCH 9, 6:30–8:00 p.m.**

**Tuesday, APRIL 13, 6:30–8:00 p.m.**

This monthly group provides sources of help, compassion, and understanding for families or individuals who have had a loved one die as a result of substance abuse or addiction. Pre-registration for new attendees is required. For more information about location or Zoom details, or to register, contact Marjorie Paradise at mparadise810@comcast.net or (717) 951-2720.

**REMEMBERING OUR MOTHERS**  
*(an interactive virtual event)*

**Saturday, MAY 8, 9:30–11:00 am**

*(Registration deadline: April 30)*

This annual Mother’s Day commemorative event provides women whose mothers have died the opportunity to remember, honor and celebrate their mothers’ lives. Join us virtually through Zoom to hear Debbie Miley, Hospice & Community Care chaplain and ordained pastor in the United Church of Christ, present “Still My Mother.” There will be opportunities for discussion with other participants. Space is limited; registration required. Call the Pathways Center to speak with a bereavement counselor who will provide the log-in information.

**SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE** *(virtual program)*

Hospice & Community Care invites you, your family and friends to watch a special virtual Service of Remembrance in memory of loved ones who died in 2019 and 2020. Two services will be available for you to view at your convenience—an interfaith service and a secular service.

For more information, visit www.HospiceCommunity.org/SOR. Services will be available online from **March 1–April 30, 2021**.

**Spanish Support**

**Grief Support in Spanish**

The Pathways Center for Grief & Loss’ bilingual Bereavement Counselor, Deborah Gonzalez, MSW, is available to any bereaved individuals who speak Spanish. Call (717) 391-2440 to leave a confidential message in Spanish or if you wish to receive our Spanish newsletter.

**Consejería de Duelo En Español**

El Centro De Pathways para Duelo y Pérdidas cuenta con una Consejera de Duelo bilingüe, Deborah Gonzalez, MSW, quien está disponible para reunirse con personas que están sufriendo la pérdida de un ser querido. Puede llamar al (717) 391-2440 y dejar un mensaje confidencial en Español o si desea recibir el bulletin Caminos Hacia La Esperanza.

Call us at (717) 391-2413 or (800) 924-7610 with questions or if you would like more information.
Most people who are deeply grieving worry whether they are grieving “correctly.” If this is you, perhaps in your moments of deep sadness you wonder what the difference is between grief and depression. This may be compounded if others offer comments such as “You seem to be holding up well” when, on the inside, you know that is the exact opposite of how you are feeling. It is important to understand the difference between clinical depression and the naturally deep sadness that accompanies grief.

Grief is the reaction to loss — it is comprised of all the reactions you are experiencing, not just emotionally but spiritually, physically, cognitively and socially. There’s a clear correlation between how much you grieve and how much you love. Grief is a primal reaction and everyone grieves differently based on their personality, previous losses, the relationship to the loved one, and their environment. An important component of grief is the deep sadness you experience, as it serves a specific purpose. When you have those times of deep sadness you naturally turn inward, into yourself. You slow down and become enveloped with a protective layer that causes you to lose some of your focus with the outside world.

The key to this deep grief or sadness is to tend to it — not ignore it but tune into it — paying attention to its presence when it occurs. In today’s fast paced world you may block out or push on through those times when grief hits you front and center. Doing this does not bypass the grief, it is still there, waiting to be tended to at a later date. It is far better to tune into these times telling yourself to pause and reflect, because the answers for what you need are there within you. By paying attention to this deep sadness you will begin to understand what you need, in that moment and going forward, to move beyond those feelings. The moments will ebb and flow—they come and go. When these episodes occur, you may question “How do I go on?” yet over time, the moments will become less frequent. In between these times of deep sadness most people are able to experience some pleasures, such as the support of a good friend or the love of a grandchild.

In grief you may have a bad day or bad moment but it eventually passes. Clinical depression on the other hand is not intermittent. It is persistent, ongoing, never changing. Depression is accompanied by a feeling of hopelessness and apathy. One will continually question “Why go on?” While deep sadness is usually more focused on feelings surrounding the loss, clinical depression often has a negative self-focus which can become distorted with feelings of worthlessness and guilt. If you find you have lost all interest in everything you previously cared about and can find no joy or meaning in any of the moments of your life you may be experiencing clinical depression. If your symptoms are not going away or if you have a history of depression it is important to reach out to a mental health professional or your family doctor. Depression is treatable, often with ongoing counseling and sometimes with medication. Do not suffer in silence, reach out. There are always others who care.

~Patti Anewalt, Director
Also Available Through the Pathways Center

Workshops, in-services and trainings are available for those who support the bereaved. Are you seeking grief support outside of South Central Pennsylvania? Visit www.nhpco.org or call the Pathways Center to find support closer to your home. Contact the Pathways Center for more information about how we could be a resource to you, your organization or someone you know.