

Grieving...



is as natural as crying when you are hurt,
sleeping when you are tired, eating when you
are hungry or sneezing when your nose itches.
It is nature's way of healing a broken heart."

— Doug Manning

OUR MISSION

Hospice of the Western Reserve
provides palliative and end-of-life care,
caregiver support, and bereavement services
throughout Northern Ohio.

In celebration of the individual worth of each life,
we strive to relieve suffering, enhance comfort,
promote quality of life, foster choice in
end-of-life care, and support
effective grieving.

Dear Friend,

We at Hospice of the Western Reserve care about you and want to stay in touch during the coming year.

Throughout the year, we offer several ways to assist you while you move through the grieving process. Our services include:

- Quarterly newsletter, About Grief
- Monthly and weekly grief support groups for children and adults
- Educational programs on grief and loss
- Telephone support
- Supportive visits
- Hospice of the Western Reserve Memorial Service

Please know that you are not alone. If you are experiencing any difficulties or struggling with a particular grief issue, please do not hesitate to call.

Remember that grief takes time. Take care and be gentle with yourself. We are here with continued care and support.

Warmest regards,

Bereavement Coordinator
Hospice of the Western Reserve

Suggested Reading

Don't Take My Grief Away From Me
How to Walk Through Grief and Learn to Live Again
Doug Manning

Fire In My Heart, Ice In My Veins
For Teenagers Experiencing a Loss
Enid Samuel-Traisman

Hope For Bereaved:
Understanding, Coping and Growing Through Grief
Therese S. Schoeneck

How To Go On Living When Someone You Love Dies
Therese A. Rando

How to Survive the Loss of a Parent: A Guide for Adults
Lois F. Akner

Living When a Loved One Has Died
Earl A. Grollman

Losing Someone You Love: When a Brother or Sister Dies
Elizabeth Richter

Motherless Daughters: The Legacy of Loss
Hope Edelman

On Grieving the Death of a Father
Harold Ivan Smith

The Orphaned Adult
Understanding and Coping With Grief and
Change After the Death of Our Parents
Alexander Levy

**Swallowed by a Snake:
The Gift of the Masculine Side of Healing**
Thomas R. Golden

**A Time to Grieve: Meditations for Healing
After the Death of a Loved One**
Carol Staudacher

Tear Soup
Pat Schwiebert & Chuck DeKlyen

**Understanding Your Grief: Ten Essential Touchstones
for Finding Hope and Healing in Your Heart**
Alan D. Wolfelt

When Bad Things Happen to Good People
Harold S. Kushner

**When Your Spouse Dies: A Concise and
Practical Source of Help and Advice**
Cathleen L. Curry

WEBSITES

Bereavedparentsusa.org

Centerforloss.com

Compassionatefriends.org

Griefnet.org

Growthhouse.org

hospicewr.org/bereavement-center-blog

Nhpc.org

Widownet.org

Grief Reminders

1. Grief is a normal and necessary process associated with any loss.
2. Grief involves physical as well as emotional responses.
3. Grief is hard work; it takes a lot of energy.
4. Allow yourself to fully experience your feelings.
5. Share your feelings with a trusted friend or professional.
6. Suggestions come from many sources; trust yourself to do what is right for you.
7. Have realistic expectations of yourself.
8. Deal with one hour, one day at a time. The whole situation can be overwhelming if looked at all at once.
9. Grief work may require doing things that are hard to do, such as going places you used to go together or listening to favorite songs.
10. You do not get over grief in the sense of forgetting; rather, grief will lessen and soften with time.
11. Seek help from appropriate resources such as groups, organizations and reading material related to grief.
12. See a professional counselor if that seems helpful.

“However long the night, the dawn will break.”

—African Proverb

Common Grief Reactions

Physical Reactions

- Tightness in the throat
- Heaviness or pressure in the chest
- Difficulty sleeping
- Increased heart rate and/or sweaty palms
- Difficulty eating (or in some cases overeating)
- Headaches
- Stomach pain and/or digestive upset
- Difficulty concentrating

Emotional Reactions

- Sadness or depression
- Guilt or anger about your relationship with the deceased
- Anger toward God
- Unexpected or uncontrollable crying
- Mood swings
- Fear of being alone
- A sense of emptiness
- Discomfort in large crowds
- Thoughts of “if only things had happened differently”
- Fear of the future
- Doubts or questions concerning why the death occurred
- Desire to run away or become very busy
- Forgetfulness

Suggestions to promote physical relief and healing

- Schedule a check-up with your family physician.
- In the early stages of grief, don't force yourself to eat more than you want. As your appetite returns, eat a healthy well-balanced diet.
- Get some exercise – even a peaceful, quiet walk. Physical exercise helps to relax you.
- It may be helpful to give up caffeine (coffee, colas, tea, etc.) as a way to relieve nervousness. Be aware that alcohol is a depressant. Some findings indicate that alcohol interrupts normal sleep patterns.
- Check frequently that you have balance in your life: rest, recreation, prayer/meditation and work.

Suggestions to promote emotional relief and healing

- Be gentle with yourself. Although you may often feel overwhelmed, remind yourself that what you are going through is normal.
- Reach out to others. It is important to find friends with whom you can talk. Sharing with someone who has “been there” can be especially helpful.
- Tell and re-tell what happened, remembering things about the loved one and the experience of his or her death. Good memories are also very important.

- Be aware that people grieve in different ways. Don't measure your progress in handling grief against others.
- You may or may not cry often but, when you do, realize it is therapeutic. Don't fight the tears.
- Record and express your feelings in a personal journal. Journals reflect experiences, give support and provide a safe place to convey yourself.
- Confront guilt by realizing you did the best you could.
- Be familiar with the normal experiences of grieving and be willing to engage in your own grief work.
- Remember that grieving takes time, and that experiences and emotions can recur. Be patient with yourself, and allow yourself to heal at your own pace.
- Beware of criticizing yourself, either consciously or unconsciously, due to unrealistic expectations.
- Find support from both inside and outside your family. Don't expect your family to meet all of your needs. Remember they too are grieving.
- Many of us have been brought up to be independent: "I'm going to handle this on my own." We find it difficult to ask for help. Yet, we all need support. Take the risk of joining a support group. Asking for help from "caring people" can make a big difference in working through your grief.
- It may be time to struggle with new life patterns. In the past you may have handled grief by overactivity. If your previous style of grieving has not been helpful, try new approaches such as: becoming active in a support group; finding telephone friends; reading and learning about grief; developing new coping skills; reaching out and helping others.
- Hold on to hope!

Surviving Grief—Tips for Adolescents

You may experience all kinds of emotions. They may be overwhelming, frightening, and intense: you may feel out of control. When you are grieving, normal is messy.

How do you cope?

- **Shock, disbelief:** Talk, talk, talk. Grief needs to become real before you can go on with the mourning process. Avoiding the pain is not possible.
- **Denial:** Understand that you cannot escape from grief. So talk about your pain.
- **Anger:** You have every right to be angry. But you don't have a right to take out that anger on others - or on yourself. If you feeling angry, try shooting hoops, walking, listening to music, journaling.
- **Guilt and regrets:** If only I hadn't said... I wish I had... Give yourself a break. When someone dies we often second-guess ourselves, but the truth is that awful things happen and there is little we can do about that.

- **Fears, worries:** It's difficult not to worry that something will happen to someone else you love or to you. Try to identify what your worries are. Then, talk to someone about those worries. Is anything in your control? If so, take a responsible action. If not, try some relaxation.
- **Inability to sleep:** Rest, rest, rest. Grief is draining.
- **Inability to eat:** Watch yourself. Grief can sometimes make you “forget” to eat or not care about what you are eating. Try to sit down at mealtime and eat.
- **Inability to remember:** You forgot about the paper that's due? You locked your keys in the car? Write things down. Organize for the next day the night before. Have friends call with reminders about assignments.
- **Inability to concentrate:** How can you focus when your mind is wandering? Allow more time to do homework. Talk to your teachers. **Be extra careful** when doing any task that requires your complete attention, ESPECIALLY driving.



The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss
Bereavement Center

300 East 185th Street
Cleveland, OH 44119-1330

*Serving Ashtabula, Cuyahoga,
Geauga, Lake, Lorain and Summit
Counties with offices throughout.*

800.707.8922 | hospicewr.org

