

WINTER 2015

# BRIDGE

A PUBLICATION FOR OUR FRIENDS FROM PATHWAYS OF HOPE



## The Drawn Together

Art Program **page 10**

# Grief Notes

**Lisa Balster, MA, MBA, LSW**

**Director of Care: Patient and Family Support Services**

Well here we are again, right in the middle of the winter season in Ohio. As beautiful as it can be, most of us consider this time of year to be difficult in many ways. Our basic needs to stay warm and safe drive us to be minimally active; and while there is still work to be done, it is the “quiet” season, comparably speaking. The quiet season is a force of nature, as the trees and living beings go dormant for a time, and we go from tending to necessities to the quiet of our homes. What is the value of the quiet season? We all need to find that meaning for ourselves. It is universal and a part of the natural rhythm of life. Rest, reflection and coming to terms with our realities can perhaps best be done in the quiet season. In the quiet, or the fullness of nothing, we can hear our own thoughts, put form to our feelings, and get a clearer picture of what is true for us. Once our picture is clear, then we can better decide what to keep, what to discard, and what to





change as the spring comes. I wish you peace and quiet this winter season; spring will be here in its own good time. Until then, Pathways of Hope remains available to serve you and your loved ones.

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# Introducing: **The Pathways of Hope Bereavement Counseling Professionals Team**

Pathways of Hope Grief Counseling Center is a well-established (2002) service provider in the greater Dayton community. This accomplished, knowledgeable, caring staff provides support or education when requested by an individual, family, group, or community organization. All of our clinicians have a master's level or higher education and are seasoned professionals in grief and bereavement work.

- **Lisa Conn, MSW, LISW - S** (*Pathways of Hope since October 2013*)  
Lisa came to Hospice of Dayton with 11 years of experience working as a child therapist providing individual and family therapy to children exposed to domestic violence, many of whom were coping with grief and loss. She also has experience leading groups and providing therapy to adults. She holds a Master of Social Work degree with Supervisor designation from the University of Cincinnati.
- **Pamela Tyler, Ph.D., LSW** (*Hospice of Dayton since 2010, Pathways of Hope since December 2013*)  
Pamela is doctorate prepared in Gerontology and is a licensed nursing home administrator in the state of Kentucky and a Licensed Social Worker in the state of Ohio. She has worked as a nursing home administrator and executive director in both for-profit and not-for-profit long-term care/assisted living communities, and has several years experience as a home care and Hospice House social worker. Pamela's specialty is working with older adults.
- **Jonathan Haag, MSW, LISW - S, ATR-BC** (*Pathways of Hope since 2002*)  
Jonathan is master's prepared in Social Work and Art Therapy, and is a Licensed Independent Social Worker with Supervisor designation. In his role of Art Therapist, he works with children, teens and adults in individual and group settings. He is the director of Camp Pathways, the annual children's grief camp. He is board-certified and registered in Art Therapy as well.

- **Debbie Holt, MS Mental Health Counseling, LPCC - S**  
*(Pathways of Hope since 2006)*  
 Debbie is a master’s prepared Mental Health Counselor, a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor with Supervisor designation. Debbie worked in private practice for 16 years prior to coming to work at Pathways of Hope. Along with excellent service provision to individuals and families, Debbie is proficient in providing a variety of education sessions for Hospice of Dayton and for the community.
- **Fran Jerisk, MS Counseling, LPC** *(Pathways of Hope since 2011)*  
 Fran is a master’s prepared Community Counselor and is a Licensed Professional Counselor. She works with adults in individual, family and support groups. She has facilitated support groups for individuals coping with a cancer diagnosis at other non-profit agencies.
- **Bonnie Orlins, MSW, LISW - S** *(Hospice of Dayton/Pathways of Hope since 2009)*  
 Bonnie is a master’s prepared Social Worker with Supervisor designation, and has more than 30 years of social work experience. Her expertise is in psychiatric, medical, nephrology, and hospice/palliative care. She works with both adults and children. She served for many years on the regional Board providing oversight to dialysis operations.
- **Anne Petratis, MA, MS, LPC, BCCC** *(Pathways of Hope since 2011)*  
 Anne is master’s prepared in Theological Studies and Counseling, and is a Board-Certified Clinical Chaplain. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor who has worked as a Catholic Chaplain for more than 20 years.
- **Kate Hawvermale, Pathways of Hope Office Coordinator**  
*(Pathways of Hope since 2011)*  
 Your first interaction with Pathways of Hope– either by calling or visiting– will be with our kind and efficient office coordinator, Kate. She has many years of experience in medical education, and attended Miami University and Sinclair. Kate is an important

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*Continued from “Introducing: The Pathways of Hope Bereavement Counseling Professionals Team”*

part of our team, and will work to make sure your interaction is comfortable and that your needs are met in the best manner possible.

- **Lisa Balster, MA, MBA, LSW** (*Hospice of Dayton/Pathways of Hope 1989-2006, and since 2011*)

Lisa is master's prepared in Gerontology and in Business Administration. She has worked as a social worker, Bereavement Counseling Professional and hospice administrator. Lisa oversees the psychosocial/spiritual care at Hospice of Dayton, including social workers, chaplains, grief counseling professionals as well as the art, music and massage therapies at Pathways of Hope.

## **Grief FAQ's:** **Frequently Asked Questions about Grief**

### **What Exactly Is “Grief Counseling”?**

Simply put, grief counseling consists of a confidential, guided conversation about your loss experience with a trained counseling professional. It is different than a social conversation in both its structure and purpose. The process involves telling your story and describing the problems or dilemmas associated with your loss. Your counselor will likely ask questions that will help him or her get a better understanding of your situation, concerns and goals. The purpose of grief counseling is to help you gain a better understanding of your loss-related experience, while working toward resolving or learning to cope better with loss related challenges.

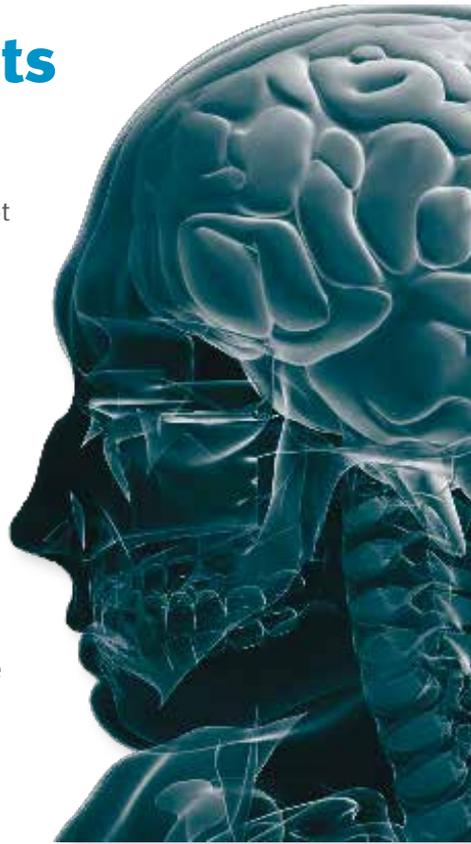
You and your counselor will work together to develop a plan to address your particular situation. Based on their knowledge, training and understanding of your particular concerns, your counselor may make specific recommendations, suggest alternatives or possible solutions. As part of your plan you may be assigned mutually agreed upon “homework assignments,” out-of-session activities designed to help you achieve your counseling goals.

# How Grief Impacts the Mind

Grief is experienced and expressed not only in our feelings, but also in our thoughts and behaviors. Because thoughts and feelings are so closely connected, we should not be surprised that grief takes a toll on us mentally.

Adjusting to the challenges of life after loss can be compared to learning a new language. Just as none of us would expect to become fluent in a foreign language in a matter of weeks, our brains do not seem to be wired to effortlessly accommodate the discrepancies that exist between the old life we once knew and realities of life after loss.

Grief is both physically and mentally exhausting. It may help to know that confusion, concentration difficulties and memory problems are common among grieving people and should naturally dissipate over time. Distraction is a normal aspect of grief that interferes with our ability to stay focused on what we are doing, recall where we put things, or remember appointments and social obligations. Grieving people often complain they feel like their brains are moving in slow motion as they struggle to answer questions or figure out something. It may help to know that these difficulties are not uncommon and will usually abate as we make sense of our loss and become more fluent in the new “language” of our changed lives. In the event these cognitive problems persist or continue to cause you personal distress, talking with your physician or a bereavement counselor is suggested.





## Grieving the Loss of a Parent

Every year between 10 and 15 million Americans will experience the death of a parent. Although it is the most commonly experienced of all losses, its impact on the surviving adult children is often discounted. After all, many view the death of a parent as an expected part of the natural order of adult life. For many adults, the death of a parent severs a cherished, adult relationship and friendship that has predictably provided mutual support, encouragement and understanding. For those whose relationship with their parent has been conflicted or difficult, a parent's death may signal the end of hopes and dreams for reconciliation.

Whether the loss comes at the end of a long illness, steady decline or as the result of a sudden accident or collapse, surviving children are often surprised by the impact that losing a parent may have on their emotions, self image and family relationships. The loss of a parent likely will trigger unanticipated changes in relationships with the surviving parent as well as siblings. The increasing number of families blended through the earlier remarriage of the deceased parent may leave survivors challenged to reconfirm or redefine "family"

relationships in their parent's absence. With the death of the last remaining parent, adults sometimes report being surprised at how orphaned they feel. Grief, which can be exhausting in and of itself, can compromise the energy available to normal demands of job, children, intimate relationships and other adult responsibilities.

Adults grieving the loss of a parent often find the extent of their grief is unrecognized or unacknowledged by others. Because the loss of a parent is an expected part of the adult experience, support that might be readily offered for other losses may be seriously lacking, leaving the bereaved adult feeling isolated and lonely in their loss.

Support for adults faced with the loss of a parent is readily available at Pathways of Hope. Some adults will prefer to be seen in individual counseling, while others may prefer the support available in a group setting. Our Loss of a Parent Support Group offers bereaved adults an opportunity to come together with other adults grieving the death of a parent. Comprised of four sessions, the group provides participants with opportunity to share common experiences, recollect and remember, and identify helpful strategies for managing the challenges associated with this life passage. Groups are offered throughout the year.

“Every year between **10-15 million** Americans will experience the **death of a parent.**”

Pre-registration and a commitment to attend all four meetings are required. Please call Pathways of Hope at (937) 258-4991 to register for the group or request an appointment for confidential counseling.

# The Drawn Together Art Program

Drawn Together encourages the effective expression of grief through art. Participants do not have to be artistically gifted to create art or benefit from it. Art activities are designed to enhance the expression of grief as well as create art that honors and cherishes the memories of loved ones.



Options include:

## **Art Therapy Individual Sessions**

Since 2002, Pathways of Hope has offered art therapy support to grieving children, teens and adults of Hospice of Dayton families as well as to those in the community. “I don’t want to talk about it” and “I don’t know what to say,” are common themes I heard from grieving children, teens and adults. These sessions are a creative way for all ages to express grief in a way that doesn’t rely on “talking about it.” One advantage of an individual session is the ability to pay attention to a specific aspect of grief that seems especially painful.



## **The Art Forever After Group:**

This multi-generational art-based grief group provides the opportunity for individuals, friends and family members to make art with others. Art Forever After meets at the William & Dorothy Yeck Family Grief Counseling Art Center, 510 Wilmington Avenue, adjacent to the Hospice of Dayton

campus. This group is offered in 3-month segments every Monday from 6:30-8:30 p.m., September through November and February through April.



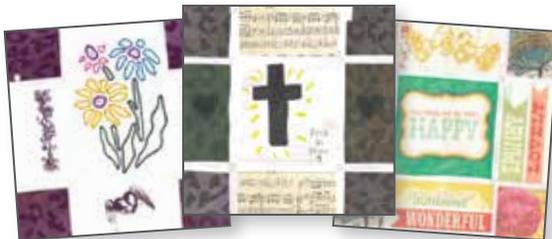
### **Drawn Together Open Studio:**

This open art studio format at the William & Dorothy Yeck Family Grief Counseling Art Center is designed especially for children and family members visiting patients at the Dayton Hospice House. People of all ages may come to make art. The open studio is offered on Wednesdays from 3:30-6:00 p.m., September through November and February through April.

### **Tribute Wall: An Art Response to a Sudden Death in the Community:**

The Tribute Wall is designed to give organizations and schools an art-based supportive response to a sudden death in their community. Drawn Together will coordinate the creation of a Tribute Wall by facilitating an art making activity for the members of that organization or school, constructing the wall and placing it in the school, then removing the wall after it is displayed. The individual artwork is also photographed and a memorial book can be made online by a Hospice of Dayton staff member or volunteer to be given to the family of the deceased from the school or organization and the Drawn Together Art Program.

For more information or to sign up for any of these activities or groups, please call Pathways of Hope at (937)258-4991.





## Preparations Underway for Camp Pathways 2015

**Jonathan Haag, LISW, ATR-BC**

It may be difficult to imagine in the midst of the gray days of winter, but the staff at Pathways of Hope is gearing up for Camp Pathways, our annual summer camp for grieving children and teens. Camp Pathways offers more than 60 grieving children the opportunity to participate in a fun-filled summer camp experience that provides safe opportunities to explore, share and gain understanding of their grief experiences.

This year's camp is scheduled to begin the morning of Friday, June 26, and conclude the afternoon of Sunday, June 28. Healing from grief incorporates two basic activities; healthy distractions from grief--including having fun--and paying attention to one's grief. This three-day, overnight camp experience provides grieving children the experience of doing those two basic healing activities. Supervised outdoor group activities such as swimming, fishing, canoeing, climbing walls and ropes courses provide fun and healthy distractions. Grief group support activities, evening

campfires, a talent show, arts and crafts and a memorial service provide opportunities to pay attention to and express grief. Professionally licensed bereavement staff from Pathways of Hope, trained volunteers and outdoor educators from Joy Outdoor Education Center lead age-specific activities and groups.



Camp Pathways 2015 will be held once again at the beautiful Joy Outdoor Education Center in Warren County. Pre-registration is now underway and is open to children between the ages of 7 and 17 who have experienced the death of a parent, grandparent, sibling or other loved one. The cost of the camp is minimal: \$20 for one child, \$30 for two children and \$40 for three or more; scholarships are available in cases of financial need. If your child or a child you know could benefit from a fun-filled summer camp experience that includes time with other children who have experienced similar losses, please contact Pathways of Hope at **(937) 258-4991** or pre-register online [www.hospiceofdayton.org/camp](http://www.hospiceofdayton.org/camp).

## ***Growing Through Grief*** **Groups Provide Support and Education**

The loss of a loved one can be a difficult, lonely and painful experience, sometimes bringing about major changes in almost every life area. Our very popular *Growing Through Grief* support groups are designed to provide a safe, understanding and supportive environment for adults faced with the challenges of life after loss. The groups meet six times over a 12-week period, taking you through an entire season. An initial visit with a Pathways of Hope staff member will provide you an opportunity to work together to create a care plan that will help support you in the best ways possible. For details, please call Pathways of Hope at (937) 258-4991.

# Tips for Self Care While you are Grieving

- Take care of the basics - eat a balanced diet, get enough sleep and exercise regularly.
- Give yourself permission to experience feelings of grief: sadness, numbness, anger, relief - whatever feelings you have.
- Talk with others about what you are feeling and experiencing.
- Consider writing down your thoughts and feelings in a notebook, journal or computer diary. Reviewing what you have written at a later time can help bring clarity and perspective.
- Be gentle and patient with yourself - the wounds of grief take time to heal.
- Avoid alcohol. Because alcohol is a depressant, it will increase feelings of sadness rather than relieve them.
- Avoid making major decisions if at all possible. Judgment is often clouded by grief, so delaying life-altering decisions until the pain of grief has abated somewhat is usually the best choice.
- Accept help when it is offered, and ask for help when it is needed.
- Take care of daily responsibilities rather than allowing them to build up - washing up after every meal is easier than facing a sink of dirty dishes.
- Use reminders to keep you on track. Post-it notes, calendars and message boards can compensate for memory problems that are common when grieving.



# Healing Pathways School Programs for Children

On any given day, the shadows of loss and grief can be found extending themselves into classrooms and playgrounds. It is a privilege to help children of all ages find the courage to step out of those shadows and learn to understand and cope with what they are feeling. Hospice of Dayton is proud to include our school-based program, Healing Pathways, for children –in grades K-12. This is a free service that includes a variety of offerings, such as grief groups targeted for age appropriate development, grief seminars for entire student populations, one-on-one grief counseling, staff/faculty training on identifying grief in the classroom, and crisis intervention in the schools. Schools in need of any of these services should contact Lisa Conn, MSW, LISW at Pathways of Hope, 258-4991.

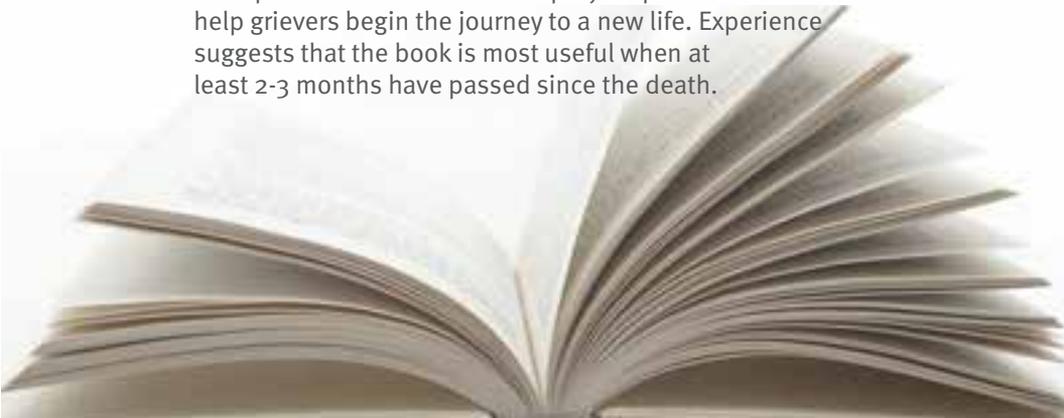
## The Griever's Bookshelf

**Title:** *Surviving the Death of Your Spouse*

**Author:** Deborah S. Levinson, LCSW-C

**Publisher:** New Harbinger Publication, 2004.

In an attempt to answer the question, “How do I restart my life?” the author, a widow and psychotherapist, has developed a helpful three-stage model of adjustment. Each stage is presented with concrete tasks and skills needed to move to the next stage. The book is written as a compassionate guidebook, providing information, examples and exercises in a step-by-step fashion that will help grievers begin the journey to a new life. Experience suggests that the book is most useful when at least 2-3 months have passed since the death.





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