

Spring 2016

BRIDGE

A PUBLICATION FOR OUR FRIENDS FROM PATHWAYS OF HOPE



Sandwiched Between Your Own Grief and the Grief of Your Surviving Parent

Grieving a Sudden Loss

Grappling with Guilt

Grief Notes

Seasons of Grief

Lisa Balster, MA, MBA, LSW

Director of Care: Patient and Family Support Services

Warm, sunny weather has once again arrived, and with it, a different kind of pace to our days. Many are looking forward to a time of rest and recreation. There are opportunities to gather for special occasions, such as graduations, weddings, and other celebrations that mark endings and new beginnings. We hope that you, as one who is grieving, take time for yourself to rest, refresh, and begin again.

Pathways of Hope Grief Counseling Center offers a wide variety of services for you and your loved ones. In this issue of *The Bridge*, you will find an introduction to the experienced, caring bereavement counseling professionals, several support group offerings including a new “Sudden Loss” support group, and articles that address particular aspects of loss and coping. Camp Pathways, an Ohio’s Hospice tradition that cares for grieving children and teens ages 7 - 17, is being planned; more information is on page 22. As always, our team continues to provide individual, group, and family grief counseling services as a fundamental part of our mission.

Thanks to the kind and generous support of our greater Dayton community, our services are offered free of charge (minimal fees for camp.)

Enjoy this beautiful time of year! Please call to speak with one of our professionals, who can help determine which services will benefit you and your loved ones.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Telephone: (937) 258-4991



Table of Contents

Grief Notes.....	2
Pathways of Hope Grief Counseling Center.....	4
Time of Remembrance	6
Grief FAQs	7
Book Review.....	8
Healing Links.....	9
Grappling with Guilt	10
The House is So Empty	11
Sandwiched Between Your Own Grief and the Grief of Your Surviving Parent	12
Remembering.....	18
The Pathways of Hope Bereavement Counseling Team.....	20
Father’s Day Luncheon Offers Grief Support.....	21
Registration for Camp Pathways Underway	22

Pathways of Hope Grief Counseling Center

Pathways of Hope, the Grief Counseling Center of Ohio's Hospice of Dayton, provides a variety of services to the community. Support and education are provided by a team of Masters prepared counselors, social workers, and an art therapist with significant experience and expertise in journeying with grieving children, adolescents, and adults.

Our philosophy is that grief is a normal reaction to loss, and that it is a unique experience for each individual, as each relationship is itself one of a kind. The Pathways staff seek to understand what is needed for each individual to navigate grief, and to assist with an effective plan to cope with this life change.

One-on-one counseling sessions for children, teens, and adults are available by appointment. Many times, just one session can provide adequate information for the griever to feel they are processing grief normally. Each individual's needs will be assessed by a bereavement counselor or social worker, and an individual plan of care will be developed.

Grief support groups can provide a much needed bridge over the difficult days, weeks and months after a loss. Participants discover that the group is a place where understanding, encouragement, and practical suggestions are readily found. Designed to meet different needs, all of our groups are open to anyone in the community who is coping with the loss of a loved one. Our groups typically meet on a rotating basis throughout the year. Contact Pathways of Hope at (937) 258-4991 for the schedule.

GROWING THROUGH GRIEF GROUPS focus on education and support, meeting for six sessions over 12 weeks. Registration is required.

Loss of a Parent Group – Next session begins August 8.

Spousal Loss Group – Next session begins June 2.

Living with the Loss of an Adult Child Group – On-going group; call for information.

Loss of a Loved One Group – Next session begins June 20.

Coffee Connection – These groups provide more informal support for bereaved adults, meeting monthly for an hour in Springboro and



Dayton. No registration is required. Call Pathways of Hope for more information.

Sudden Loss Support Group - For those who have lost a loved one suddenly from disease, drug overdose, accident, homicide, suicide, or natural disasters. This is an ongoing group which meets the 2nd and 4th Wednesday evening from 6:30-7:30 pm. Registration is not necessary, but it is strongly advised potential attendees speak to a Pathways of Hope professional staff member before attending.

Healing Pathways - Provides school based grief support programs, including one-on-one supportive grief counseling, grief support groups, and grief education for staff and students.

Art Forever After - A multigenerational art-based group providing the opportunity for children, teens, friends, and family members of all ages to make art together. The group meets on Mondays at the new William & Dorothy Yeck Family Grief Counseling Art Center on the Ohio's Hospice of Dayton campus. The sessions are offered as three-month segments.

Camp Pathways - An overnight summer camp for youths ages 7-17 who have experienced the death of a loved one. Camp Pathways will be held June 24-26. Registration is required and space is limited.

Pathways of Hope serves all friends and family of any Ohio's Hospice of Dayton patient as well as the community free of charge, thanks to the support of the community through the Ohio's Hospice of Dayton Foundation.

Please call (937) 258-4991 to arrange for a time to meet so we can understand your needs and create a plan that works for you.

Time of Remembrance

Time of Remembrance Services at Ohio’s Hospice of Dayton offer our families an opportunity to come together during the first year of loss to remember their loved one in a nondenominational memorial service. Family members are asked to bring a single-cut flower for use in the March, July and September services. Each service will last less than an hour. If you are unable to attend the memorial service designed to honor patients who died in the same time frame as your loved one, it is fine if you attend a later one. Invitations will be sent out for all of the services and RSVPs are appreciated.

Date	Time	Location
Time of Remembrance Sunday, July 17, 2016	3:00 pm	Ohio’s Hospice of Dayton Community Room Shaw Building
Time of Remembrance Sunday, September 18, 2016	3:00 pm	Ohio’s Hospice of Dayton Community Room Shaw Building
Hope for the Holidays Monday, November 28, 2016	7:00 pm	Ohio’s Hospice of Butler and Warren Counties Team and Staff Center
Hope for the Holidays Thursday, December 1, 2016	7:00 pm	Ohio’s Hospice of Dayton Community Room Shaw Building
Hope for the Holidays Monday, December 5, 2016	7:00 pm	Ohio’s Hospice of Dayton Community Room Shaw Building

Grief FAQs:

Frequently Asked Questions about Grief

I am having trouble sleeping. Is this normal?

Sleeplessness is an almost universal problem for griever. For some, providing care to their loved one before death was a long process, often characterized by light dozing in order to be alert for calls for help and frequent nighttime care. Therefore, sleep has been chronically disordered. For others, the loss has caused sleep disturbance. Typically, the griever finds falling asleep to be less of a problem than staying asleep. The dark and quiet of the night can intensify the recognition of loss, and lead to more sleeplessness. Sometimes all that is needed is more attention to healthy sleep hygiene: going to bed at the same time each night, resisting napping, intentionally relaxing before bed, avoiding exercise or alcohol immediately before bedtime. Most people return to healthy sleep patterns over time. However, if lack of sleep becomes an issue in functioning during the day, consult your physician about further sleep aids.



INSOMNIA

Book Review

After A Death: An Activity Book for Children

By The Dougy Center, The National Center for Grieving Children and Families

This colorful activity book is from the leading experts on grieving children. It is designed as a safe place for children to explore and express their feelings about loss, including their questions and thoughts about death and dying. It is also a place to remember their loved one. Subjects range from “You are not alone” and “How people die” to “Telling people about the death,” “Going back to school,” and “The journey ahead.” The book explains grief and normal responses to grief and introduces children to healthy coping skills. This book is gender neutral and is well-suited to children from elementary to middle school age.

Gaining Traction: Starting Over After the Death of Your Life Partner

by Vicki Panagotacos, PhD, FT

This book is a very practical guide for those who are a little further along in their grief process after the loss of a life partner. Asking “Who am I?” and “What do I do now?” occupy most griever's after the initial shock of the loss wears off. Dr. Panagotacos offers a step-by-step program, including helpful exercises that help the griever open their eyes to a new way of life and discover what is really wanted from this “new normal.” Personal stories and appropriate research make this book an excellent resource.

Healing Links

Compassionate Friends

The Compassionate Friends is an international organization with over 600 local chapters worldwide. The website at www.compassionate-friends.org provides care and comfort to grievors who are experiencing the death of a child. This website provides support for parents, grandparents, and siblings. This site also offers suggestions to help others to better assist the grieving family. There is information on the website about locating a local chapter and also a link to “virtual chapters” that promote conversations through live chats. Although the website offers articles, books, and links to other resources, grievors shared they benefitted most from the opportunity to connect with others who understand their emotions firsthand.

Grappling with Guilt

Debbie Holt, MS, PCC-S

Guilt can be one of the most painful aspects of grief. Carrying guilt in the grief process can be likened to adding cumbersome boulders to the already heavy load of grief that one must carry after the loss of a loved one. Grieving minds might obsessively play the “If only...” mind game – “If only I’d seen the signs of illness earlier” or “If only I had spent more time with him/her” or “If only I had insisted on seeking different treatment.”

Guilt-producing statements with the word “should” also may play prominently – “I should have been able to care for my loved one at home” or “I should have been with him/her when he/she died.”

Running on the “if only...” or “should/shouldn’t” treadmill is exhausting and disheartening. Even more seriously, failing to deal with guilt properly may lead to a complicated or blocked grieving process.

Realizing there is a difference between “guilt” and “regret” may prove helpful to the griever. Nearly all individuals who are grieving suffer a certain number of regrets or wish things could have been done differently. But “regrets” are normal and do not imply one has done something wrong, only that in hindsight, one wishes to have made different choices.



Regrets usually lead to sadness and the ability of the griever to state “I did my best.” Guilt implies wrongdoing and must be addressed. “Talking back” to the guilt can be very helpful. Consistently making statements to yourself such as “I did my best” and changing the wording to “I wish I had spent more time with my loved one” removes the blame and moves guilt to a more healthy regret.

If you continue to struggle with guilt, it may be helpful to talk to one of the trained bereavement counselors at the Pathways of Hope. Learning to let go of guilt can be a freeing process.

The House is So Empty

Debbie Holt, MS, LPCC-S

Learning to live alone is one of the most challenging aspects of life after loss. Whether coming home to an empty house, facing the quiet evening hours alone, or learning to sleep alone, the adjustment is often difficult and painful. The home we have shared too often feels empty and unwelcoming, filled with memories that remind us only too vividly of our loss. Sometimes, very small changes in our behavior or environment can help make the transition to a new normal more manageable. You may want to consider the following strategies that others have found helpful.

- Turn the radio or TV on before you leave the house so that you do not have to return to a silent house.
- Put painful reminders in a safe place or in a special area of the house where you can access them intentionally.
- Adopt a pet – many have found caring for a companion animal deeply rewarding on many levels.
- Ask friends and family to call in the evenings.
- Move the TV to a different spot; changing the view sometimes helps.
- Some people find it helpful to create a “sacred space” where they can choose to be alone with their thoughts, memories and mementos, such as photos or other meaningful objects.
- Sleep on the other side of the bed or sleep with a body pillow.
- Experiment with different scented candles or room scents to make it feel more homelike.
- Change your routine. Record evening TV shows and watch them during the day; answer emails and correspondence in the evening; and take care of chores later in the day.
- Take your walk in the evenings.
- Rent videos you and your loved one would never have enjoyed together.
- Use your loved one’s t-shirt as a pillow case for your bed pillow.
- Join a support group and make plans with new acquaintances. You are sure to meet someone who would enjoy sharing a meal, movie, concert or walk.

Sandwiched Between Your Own Grief and the Grief of Your Surviving Parent

By Bonnie Orlins MSW LISW-S ACHP-SW

It is a powerful reality to lose a parent. Many factors affect your grief. Had that parent been slowly declining? Was it an unexpected death? Had there been a role reversal that made you become the parent and your parent the child? What was your relationship like with that parent? Was there unfinished business or unresolved issues? Have you handled loss in the past? How have you handled loss issues in the past? What other losses or stressful situations do you have in your life? Do you have an effective support system?

While you are dealing with your grief, there may be another gnawing force occurring simultaneously. Your surviving parent is also experiencing grief. Your parent will also have a unique reaction as a surviving spouse.

As each relationship is different and each person is unique, your surviving parent's grief will differ from yours. Losing a spouse is not the same as losing a parent. It is not realistic to assume that you know exactly how your surviving parent feels.

If your parents have been married for a very long time, the sense of oneness that may grow between longtime spouses may further complicate the grief. Your surviving parent may feel like he or she has lost a limb yet continue to feel phantom pain. There may be no memory of life without the other partner.

You have been delegated a dual role of dealing with your grief while at the same time helping your surviving parent deal with grief. Each of you need to work through the tasks of mourning, but many factors may affect this experience. These tasks do not occur in a neat and orderly sequence and it is common to move back and forth between stages.

First Task of Mourning

The first task of mourning is to accept the reality of the loss. While some denial may be protective in enabling an individual to gradually deal with a loss, forgetfulness and/or dementia, which can be common with an aging parent, can make the situation more difficult. At a time when you are under stress and on edge, it can be particularly trying when a surviving parent may continually forget about the death of a spouse and continually question you about the absence. Another disheartening experience can occur if a surviving parent makes the decision to dispose of all possessions of the deceased spouse. Sometimes surviving spouses attempt to protect themselves from dealing with the reality of the loss by ridding themselves of reminders.

Second Task of Mourning

The second task of mourning is to process the pain of grief. There can be a myriad of emotions. People may experience anger, guilt, sadness, panic, longing, relief, etc. Grief is sometimes delayed. After a death, survivors may be occupied with necessary business issues.

Your surviving parent may appear to be fine at first, but weeks or months later, a strong grief reaction may surface. There are often unexpected triggers of grief. One may hear a special song or run across a memorable photograph. A surviving parent may not outwardly experience grief because grieving has been occurring over a long period.

If a surviving spouse was a longtime caregiver, there may have been some disassociation and they may have related to the deceased more as a patient than as a spouse. Some symptoms of grief can be magnified in an aging parent. Forgetfulness, inability to concentrate and focus, disorganization, and lack of interest and lack of motivation can all be symptoms of grieving, but they can also go hand-in-hand with normal aging.

Third Task of Mourning

The third task of mourning is to adjust to a world without the deceased. Many longtime spouses have embraced very defined roles, sometimes traditionally gender specific. An aging man may have relied on his wife to cook and take care of his home. An aging woman

Article continues on page 14

Sandwiched Between

may have relied on her husband to make monetary decisions or to drive. One spouse may have assumed the role of measuring any needed medication. It can be difficult, frightening, and painful to assume new roles at a time when one has less energy and self-confidence.

Some surviving spouses have never been on their own. Their only memories of eating dinner or taking a walk may be as a couple. They have defined their identity as a husband or a wife. Thinking of oneself as a single person after so many years of marriage can seem insurmountable.

Spouses may have talked about taking care of themselves and never wanting to rely on their children or, on the other hand, they may have discussed a belief that their children should take care of them.

Fourth Task of Mourning

The fourth task of mourning is to find an enduring connection with the deceased in the midst of embarking on a new life. An aging parent may be more isolated and may not have a support system of peers because of factors such as illnesses, deaths, and lack of mobility.

An aging surviving spouse may be thinking about end-of-life issues themselves and may have a hard time creating a new life with new relationships and interests. It is not uncommon to express a desire to join the deceased spouse. This is usually a passing thought. A parent who talks about hurting himself or herself, or who has been depressed, should be directed to professional counseling.

Article continues on page 16

Sandwiched Between...

13 Tips on how to help a surviving parent as

1. Give the gift of patience and understanding. Listen to your parent and encourage conversation about your deceased parent. It is healthy to express and share feelings and memories. It is helpful to keep in mind that grievers are more likely to be short-tempered and may be less able to handle minor issues calmly.
2. Evaluate your parent's living situation for safety and appropriateness.
3. Encourage your surviving parent to take care of him or herself. Take care of yourself as well. Encourage rest, exercise if allowable, and healthy meals. If cooking is a problem, investigate home delivered meals.
4. Stay in frequent contact with your surviving parent. If you have willing siblings or family members, you may want to consider a phone or visit chain to assure frequent calls or visits.
5. Encourage compliance with medical appointments. Assure that physicians are aware of your parent's and your own bereavement. Grief is stressful. The immune system can be impaired. Alert staff of your parent's living facility about any concerns.

as well as yourself:


6. Remember and acknowledge important dates and anniversaries. Birthdays, holidays, and anniversaries can often cause grief relapses. Think about having dinner with your parent on an anniversary, but be respectful if your parent declines.
7. Offer to help your parent sort through the deceased parent's possessions.
8. Validate your surviving parent's continued purpose in the family.
9. Encourage activities such as volunteer work, which can enhance a sense of purpose.
10. Investigate a support group for people who have lost a spouse. If you are inclined, investigate a support group for yourself for people who have lost a parent.
11. If a religious community has been an important part of your parent's life, encourage continued participation. Investigate transportation options if this is a concern. Sometimes church members are willing to help transport other members.
12. Direct your parent and yourself to professional counseling if symptoms do not improve.
13. The grief journey is a long one but with proper care and work, individuals can effectively work through grief.

Remembering

Pamela Tyler, PhD

A love story made national news recently. The chronicle featured an 82-year-old Wisconsin widower, Bud Caldwell. There's a park bench in Fond du Lac dedicated to his wife, Betty Caldwell—a memorial that prominently displays her framed picture. During their 56 years together, Betty and Bud could often be heard singing verses from “Pennies from Heaven” and “A Daisy a Day,” two of their favorite songs. With Betty gone, these songs have been delightfully incorporated into a memorial ritual, one that helps Bud remain connected to his sweetheart even though Bud has had to move on without her. Regardless of how much snow blankets the area, Bud makes the daily drive to the park, where he ambles to the front of Betty's bench. Bud carefully places a daisy and a penny on the bench—a sentimental expression of love and remembrance—and touches Betty's photograph, pleasantly greeting his beloved wife before taking leave.





The Caldwell love story is representative of Worden’s fourth task of grieving: To find an enduring connection with the deceased in the midst of embarking on a new life. A connection with a deceased loved one is commonly maintained through memorials and rituals. Choosing a memorial is one way for people to honor a deceased loved one. For Bud Caldwell, the bench represents a public display where he can remember Betty with other park visitors. A headstone at the cemetery is also a common type of public memorial which can provide insight into the person who is buried there with the use of a picture(s), quotes, and/or other original design features.

The ritual of coming to the bench every day with a daisy and a penny is Bud’s personal ritual, associated very specifically to his relationship with Betty.

Rituals and memorials can transform grief into healing by celebrating the life of the person who has died. Ideas for remembering a deceased loved one might include:

- creating a memorial fund for donation to a project and/or cause that was supported by the deceased;
- creating a scrapbook or memory book;
- identifying the seat at the dining table usually used by the deceased as a seat of honor and either leaving it empty or inviting guests to be seated at the “special place” at the table;
- making a quilt—or perhaps a memory teddy bear—out of the person’s clothing or wearing an article of clothing or jewelry that belonged to the deceased;
- continuing to celebrate the birthday of the deceased by gathering family/friends for a favorite meal.

The number of ways to honor and remember can be as varied and unique as the people being remembered.

Regardless of the manner in which a life is celebrated or memorialized, memorials and rituals provide a valuable and functional component for the healing journey. By identifying a meaningful way to honor someone, mourners will find a way to incorporate the memories of their loved ones into newly created realities that will encourage moving forward in peace.

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 Balster, MA, MBA, LSW
- Annette Burckart, BA
- Lisa Conn, MSW, LISW-S
- Jonathan Haag, MSW, LISW-S, ATR-BC (Art Therapist)
- Kate Hawvermale, Pathways of Hope Office Coordinator
- Debbie Holt, MS, LPCC-S
- Fran Jerisk, MS, LPC
- Bonnie Orlins, MSW, LISW-S
- Anne Petratis, MA, MS, LPC, BCCC
- Pamela Tyler, PhD, LSW

Father's Day Luncheon Offers Grief Support

In honor of Father's Day, the grief support program of Ohio's Hospice of Dayton is offering special support to those who have lost their fathers.

Pathways of Hope at Ohio's Hospice of Dayton invites members of the public who have lost their father to attend a Father's Day luncheon on Tuesday, June 14 to honor memories of Dad. The program will be held from 12-1 pm in the Community Room at Ohio's Hospice of Dayton. According to Bereavement Counselor Debbie Holt, MS, PCC-S, the Father's Day program is designed to remember and honor fathers who have been lost in the last year.

"For many, Father's Day can be a painful holiday for those who have recently lost their Dad," Holt explains. "While a single event can't heal the pain, the luncheon will provide opportunities to share with others who are experiencing the same loss and will provide helpful information on how to cope with the grief the holiday brings."

Honoring will come through the sharing of memories and personal histories. It won't be necessary to speak the memories if the attendee chooses not to, but setting aside time to reflect on those memories can be very helpful.

Advance reservations are required. Those interested in attending can contact Pathways of Hope at Ohio's Hospice of Dayton at 937-258-4991.

Registration for Camp Pathways Underway

If you think a camp for grieving kids sounds like a real downer, you may be surprised at what former campers have to say about their Camp Pathways experience.

- It was so much fun!
- It was awesome!
- It is amazing and helpful!
- I LOVED it!
- It is a great camp and it helps a lot!

These comments come as no surprise to anyone who has seen what happens when fifty children and teens, ages 7-17, discover that they have a lot in common with others who have lost a parent, sibling, grandparent or other loved one.

The camp is designed to help bereaved youth understand that as difficult as the loss of a loved one can be, grief, fun and the joy of being a kid can coexist. Opportunities to better understand their grief and explore how they can cope with grief's challenges are interspersed with abundant opportunities for fun. Swimming, fishing, hiking, mastery of a climbing wall and age-appropriate games, sports and team-building activities as well as plenty of campfire hijinks add up to a memorable and life-altering experience for everyone involved.

Camp Pathways will be held the fourth weekend in June (Friday, June 24 through Sunday, June 26) and involves two overnight stays. Transportation from Ohio's Hospice of Dayton to the campsite at Joy Outdoor Education Center in Warren County is provided on Friday morning, June 24. Parents or guardians provide transportation back home after closing ceremonies on Sunday, June 26. Advance registration is required before June 1, 2016, as well as a non-refundable registration fee of \$20 for one child, \$30 for two children and \$40 for three or more children. Fees can be waived in cases of financial hardship. For information and registration materials, please visit our website at www.hospiceofdayton.org or call us at (937) 258-4991.





WHO?

Children and teens, ages 7-17, who have experienced the death of a parent, sibling or significant loved one.

WHEN?

Friday, June 24 -
Sunday, June 26, 2016

WHERE?

Camp Joy Outdoor
Education Center
Clarksville, OH 45113

COST?

\$20 for 1 camper
\$30 for 2 sibling campers
\$40 for 3 or more sibling campers
(Financial aid available)
Transportation to camp on Friday
provided



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