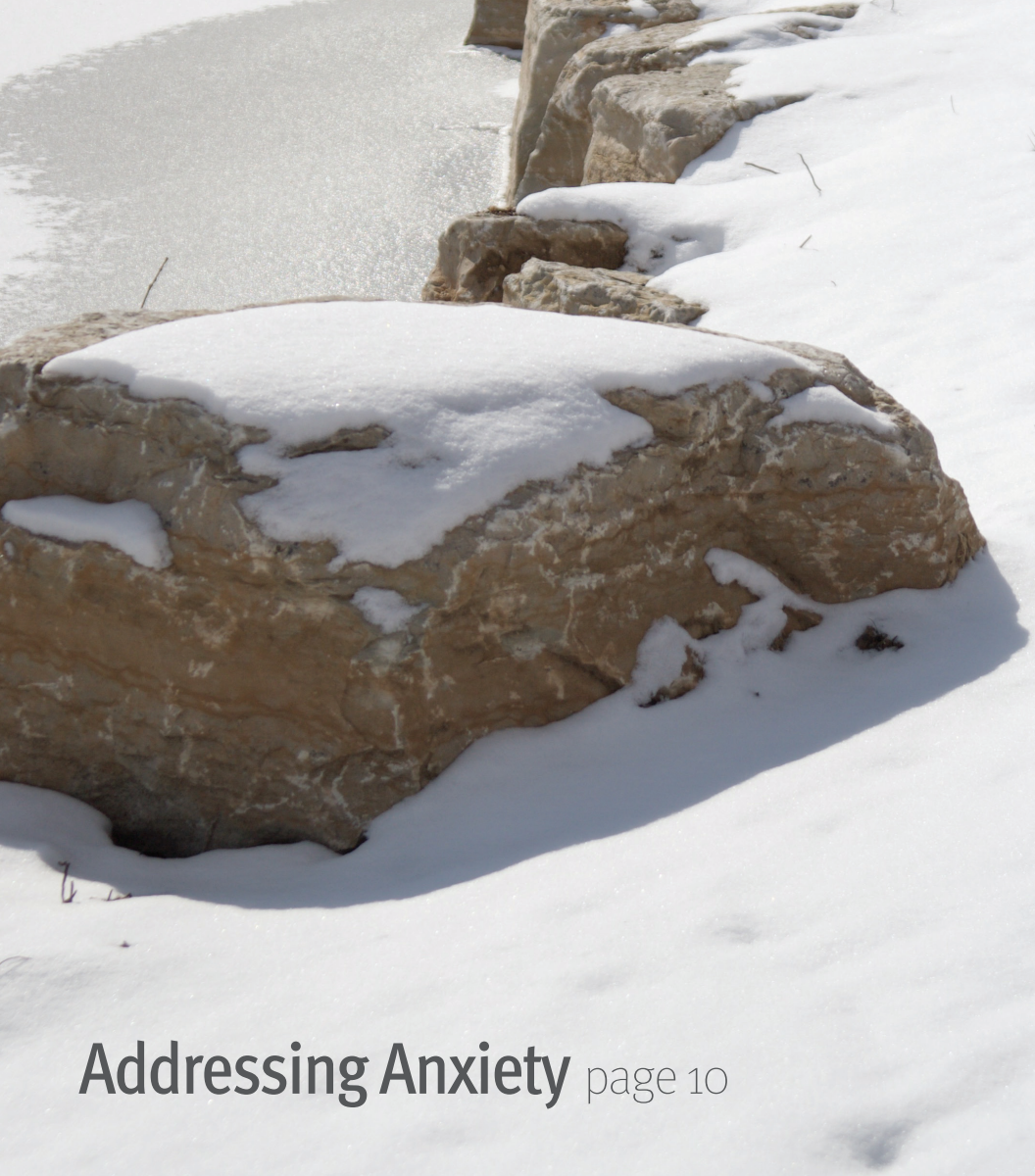


WINTER 2017

BRIDGE

A PUBLICATION FOR OUR FRIENDS FROM PATHWAYS OF HOPE



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Grief Notes

2017 Winter Greetings!

Lisa Balster, MA, MBA, LSW

Director of Care: Patient and Family Support Services

The beautiful, cold months that we are now living in are a special time to rest, think, and make plans for going forward. We hope that you are finding comfort, warmth, and peace in this first season of the year.

As you open this edition of the *Bridge*, it is our hope that you will find several things that will be of help to you and your loved ones. Included is an article on what is considered normal in grief, along with tips for self-care during bereavement.

The problems of anxiety and loneliness are also addressed. You will also find information on coping with teens who are grieving, as well as details of several grief camps that are offered through Ohio's Hospice Pathways of Hope Grief Counseling Center.



As Ohio's Hospice grows, so has our bereavement services team! You will find information on how to access individual counseling services, as well as support groups offered in your area, on page 6.

As always, all of our services are offered at no cost to you and your family. We are very fortunate to have the financial support of our community, which makes our grief support services possible.

Please call us anytime and make an appointment to speak with one of our bereavement counseling professionals. It will be our privilege to serve you.



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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.

Education Outreach to the Community

Providing quality education on issues of end of life, grief and loss is the mission and focus of the Pathways of Hope grief counseling program. Professional staff provides trainings to congregations, school and civic groups on a variety of topics including:

- Children's grief
- The normal grief process
- Comforting the bereaved
- Professional ethics
- Advanced directives and
- Self-care for the caregiver

Staff will also tailor a program especially for your group's needs. Call your local Pathways of Hope location for more information on programs and speakers.

Time of Remembrance

Ohio's Hospice of Dayton will hold a **TIME OF REMEMBRANCE SERVICE** Sunday, March 19, 2017 at 3 pm in the Ohio's Hospice of Dayton Community Room, Shaw Building. RSVPs are appreciated and can be made by calling (937) 258-4991.

Remembrance Services provide our families with an opportunity to come together during the first year of loss to remember their loved one in a non-denomination memorial service. Family members are asked to bring a single cut flower for use in the service, which lasts less than an hour.

Additional 2017 Remembrance Services will be scheduled and announced in future issues of The Bridge.



Pathways of Hope Grief Counseling Center

Pathways of Hope Grief Counseling Centers provide 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 supporting grieving children, adolescents, and adults.

Our philosophy is that grief is a normal reaction to loss, and that is a unique experience for each individual, just as each relationship is itself one of a kind. The Pathways staff seeks to understand what is needed for each individual to navigate the grief process, 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. A bereavement counselor/social worker assesses each individual's need and develops an individual plan of care.

Grief support groups can provide a much needed bridge over the difficult days, weeks and months following a loss. Participants discover that the group is a place where understanding, encouragement and practical suggestions can readily be 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 through the year. Contact your local Pathways of Hope office for the current schedule.

Pathways of Hope services are open to the friends and family members of all Ohio's Hospice patients, as well as the community, free of charge, thanks to support from the communities we serve. Please call the location most convenient to you for additional information or to schedule an appointment:



Pathways of Hope Grief Counseling Centers

Ohio's Community Care Hospice

Wilmington

937-382-5400

Ohio's Hospice of Dayton

Dayton

937-258-4991

Ohio's Community Mercy Hospice

Springfield

937-390-9665

Ohio's Hospice of Miami County

Generations of Life Center

Troy

937-573-2100

Ohio's Hospice of Butler & Warren Counties

Franklin

513-422-0300



Is My Grief Normal?

Intense grief can be a new and frightening experience. Most people feel like strangers in unfamiliar, uncharted territory when experiencing grief for the first time. Fear of “going crazy” may prevent the griever from asking others if this experience of grief is normal. The truth is that people grieve differently and one person’s experience may look very different from that of another.

Though everyone grieves in a unique way, certain thoughts, emotions and behaviors are almost universal to acute grief. Following are some of the most common:

- Overwhelming sadness and tearfulness
- Feelings of emptiness and loneliness
- Difficulty with concentration and memory
- Problems falling and/or staying asleep
- Changes in appetite
- Lack of energy and/or motivation
- Decreased interest in things that formerly held your interest
- Desire to withdraw socially from others
- Restlessness and/or increased anxiety

Just knowing these grief symptoms are normal may be enough to calm your fears. However, if you still have questions about your grief journey, attending a support group may help. Listening to the stories of other grievers can assist in understanding your own grief symptoms. Pathways of Hope Centers offer a variety of grief support groups. Feel free to call and schedule an individual appointment with one of our grief counselors.

Healing Links



The Good-bye Book by Todd Parr

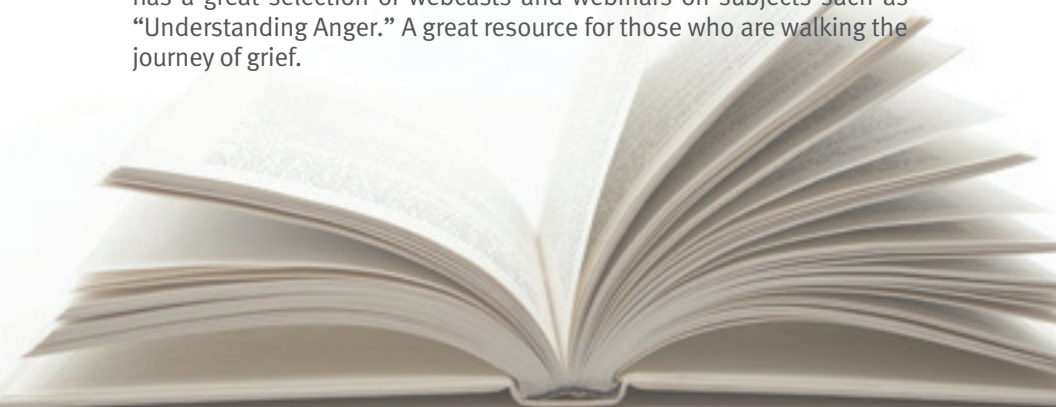
The Good-bye Book introduces young children to the concept of grief without ever using the word. Young children cannot understand death, dying or grief but they do understand good-byes. Parr uses simple language and relies on colorful pictures to illustrate a range of feelings that children experience with loss. He normalizes grief and prepares children for what to expect as well as offer them hope for the future and gratitude for the memories. Highly recommended for ages 2-6.

Surviving the Holidays without You: Navigating Grief During Special Seasons by Gary Roe

This book is easy reading which can be a benefit for people who are experiencing difficulty focusing on reading materials in the midst of grief. This book was written by a hospice chaplain with decades of experience and offers practical strategies for dealing with grief after the death of a loved one. With the tools provided in the book, someone grieving may find the ability to greet the holidays with a more positive and peaceful spirit, moving through the season with less anxiety and dread. The book also provides simple yet powerful affirmations to promote a healing attitude.

OpenToHope.com

Open to Hope Foundation is a non-profit foundation with the mission of helping people find hope after loss. This website shares stories of hope, contains articles about a wide variety of different losses and has a great selection of webcasts and webinars on subjects such as "Understanding Anger." A great resource for those who are walking the journey of grief.



Addressing Anxiety

You have lost someone you dearly love and your world has been turned upside down. In addition to the heart-rending feelings of loss, you may feel confused and stressed by the many tasks that are now part of your daily life. Anxiety is a very common component of grief.

If you have been prone to anxiety in the past, you may feel its' presence creeping back into your life. Common symptoms of anxiety include:

Common symptoms of anxiety include:

- flutters in your chest
- nausea
- dizziness
- dry mouth
- shortness of breath
- feelings of restlessness
- problems falling asleep
- a general feeling of dread

Grief can breed anxiety – but you don't have to be controlled by it. Addressing anxiety actively and consistently is essential. Following are some helpful tips to control anxiety before it controls you!

Incorporate relaxation into your life. Listen to soothing music, take a yoga class, or close your eyes and imagine yourself in a peaceful environment, such as the beach or a beautiful meadow. Let your imagination run free – take in the experience with all five senses.

Learn to take deep breaths – breathing in deeply to the count of three, holding the breath for a count of three, and slowly blowing out to the count of three. Imagine yourself breathing in cool, fresh air and blowing out all the stressful thoughts and feelings.



Make dietary and lifestyle changes.

Ban or limit the use of stimulants such as caffeine, sugar and tobacco. Engage in pleasurable exercise. Limit T.V. watching or reading that feed anxious thoughts.



Banish anxiety-producing self-talk. Using phrases like “I can’t do this” lead to feeling helpless, which produces anxiety. Instead, use statements such as “I don’t like doing this, but I will get through this.”



Seek out medical advice. Your doctor may want to prescribe medications to reduce symptoms of anxiety, such as anti-depressants. It is also imperative to have a complete medical exam to be sure symptoms of anxiety are not signs of other disease processes.

Talk to someone supportive. Expressing your grief and fears openly can relieve stress and help you to come up with problem-solving strategies for difficult situations. The grief process often feels frightening and full of unknowns – being aware of the normal symptoms and process of grief can be very beneficial. The bereavement counselors at Pathways of Hope can provide reading material, support groups and one on one support to help you address anxiety.



The House is So Empty Now

Learning to live alone is one of the most challenging aspects of life after loss. Whether it is coming home to an empty house, facing the quiet evening hours on our own, or learning to sleep alone, the adjustment is often difficult and painful. The home we have shared too often feels like an empty and unwelcoming house, 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 some of the following strategies that others have found to be 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 full length body pillow.
- Experiment with different scented candles or room scents to make it feel more homelike.
- Change your routine. Tape 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 partner 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 else who would enjoy sharing a meal, movie, concert or walk.

Challenges of Teenage Grievers

Each year, thousands of teenagers in the United States experience the death of someone they love. Teens feel the painful loss of someone who helped shape their lives when a parent, brother, sister, friend or relative dies. Unless grief is healed, these feelings about the death can become a part of their lives for years.

Teen Years Can Be Naturally Difficult

Teens are no longer children and they are not yet adults. Other than infancy, no developmental period has more dramatic change. Teens begin moving away from parents and forming a new sense of independence. They are questioning the beliefs and values they learned during childhood and beginning to form their own. The death of a loved one can be an overwhelming experience for teens.

Because teenagers are moving away from parents, they usually look to their friends for support. Unfortunately, they may not receive the help they hope to find within their circle of friends. Teens may also try to hide their grief because they don't want to be seen as weak or different. Seeking help and accepting support can be difficult and may increase feelings of confusion and loneliness.

Signs a Teen May Need Extra Help

Because grief can be so difficult during the teenage years, it is helpful to understand signals that a teen is struggling with grief. Below are some grief symptoms to be aware of in teens:

- **Emotional:** long-lasting depression, deep sadness, constant irritability, restlessness and low self esteem
- **Physical:** Sleeping difficulties or over sleeping, eating too much or not at all, fatigue, stomach and headaches as well as other physical complaints.
- **Social:** Break down of relationships with family and friends, wanting to be alone all the time, risk-taking such as drug and alcohol abuse, fighting, sexual promiscuity, denying

pain while at the same time acting overly strong or mature.

- **Intellectual/ school:** Trouble paying attention, falling grades, lack of interest in school or social activities, or over-activity & acting too busy (trying to block out the pain)
- **Spiritual:** Anger with God, concerns about the afterlife, questioning or loss of belief system, struggling with feelings of forgiveness and guilt.



Caring Adults' Role

How adults respond when a loved one dies can have a huge effect on the way a teen experiences grief. Sometimes adults struggle with the death of a loved one and don't want to talk about the death. They may believe that by doing so teens will be spared some of the pain and sadness. Adults avoiding their own grief may discourage teens from sharing their grief. Grieving teens are often pressured to act as if they are doing better than they really are.

When a parent dies, teens may be told by well meaning family members to "be strong" and to "carry on" for the surviving parent. The teen may be working very hard to cope with his or her own grief and not be able to support someone else. This can make the teen's grief more difficult.

Teens need caring adults to tell them that it is natural and

Article continues on page 16

healthy to feel sadness along with many other feelings after a loved one dies. Teens benefit from gentle reminders that the pain they feel right now will not go on forever. They need to hear that their grief will slowly heal. When teens receive the message “ignore your grief,” they may suffer more from feelings of being alone in their grief than from the actual death itself.

What Helps

Teens having a hard time with grief can get help through community resources. School counselors, clergy, and private counselors can help. Teen grief support groups are one of the best ways to support grieving teens. Pathways of Hope offers one-on-one grief counseling, art therapy, family grief counseling, school support groups, and Camp Pathways. For information call 937-258-4991.

Camp Courageous offers Support and Education for Grieving Children/Teens

Ohio’s Hospice of Miami County is extremely proud of the fact that for twenty-two years Camp Courageous has been available to grieving children and teens. The camp is possible thanks to the generous support of the community through gifts of time, talents, and financial support.

Camp Courageous is offered free of charge to Miami County children and teens entering grades K–12. Camp is open to any child/teen in the community who has experienced the death of loved one, regardless of whether Ohio’s Hospice of Miami County services have been used.

Camp Courageous is a day camp where bereaved children and teens come together to share memories, create memorial items,



play, sing, learn, laugh and cry. Camp is a safe place for feelings to be expressed and campers gain life-long tools for coping with grief. Each age group has age appropriate camp activities with ample recreation time built into the schedule.

When the 30 – 40 campers arrive on the first day of camp they are a bit uncertain and shy. An adult companion is assigned to each camper to serve as a buddy. By the time they leave at they have made new friends - friends that have also had a loved one die. They no longer feel as alone in their grief. That sense of community is why camp is so successful year after year.

Planning has already begun for camp to be held the week of June 12-16, 2017, with campers attending from 9 am-4 pm daily. Applications for adult companions will be available in January and applications for campers will be available in March. Camp Courageous is held at the Ludlow Falls Camp in Ludlow Falls, Ohio.

Individual and group support is available for grieving children, teens, and adults year round through the Pathways of Hope Grief Support Center.

Please contact Pathways of Hope for more information by calling 937-573-2100.

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 including: 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 dishes after every meal is easier than facing a sink full 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.



Preparations Underway for Camp Pathways 2017

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 23rd and conclude the afternoon of Sunday, June 25th. 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 provides grieving children the experience of both of these 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 2017 will be held at the beautiful Joy Outdoor Education Center in Warren County. 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.



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