



Holiday 2016

BRiDGE

A PUBLICATION FOR OUR FRIENDS FROM PATHWAYS OF HOPE



Hope for the Holidays

Your Personal Invitation to our Annual
Holiday Remembrance Event is Inside!





Grief Notes

Lisa Balster, MA, MBA, LSW

Director of Care: Patient and Family Support Services

The crisp, cool, colorful days of autumn have arrived, and we hope that you are enjoying the beauty of this season. At Pathways of Hope Grief Counseling Center we are looking ahead to the holidays, knowing that this special time of year can bring unique challenges to people in grief. We have prepared several offerings to help you and your loved ones experience peace, healing, and hope throughout the season. There are weekly adult support groups specifically aimed at coping with the holiday season, which you are welcome to attend any week that you wish (see page 17.) The Hope for the Holidays Memorial Services provide time to gather with our community, honor and remember, and receive helpful information for navigating the season (see page 8.) Also available are several short readings to help plan for and cope with the holidays.

Children and teens who have lost a loved one need much support, and we are here to help them, as well as those who care for them. We have a dedicated bereavement counseling team to help your child, teen, and family adjust to the death of someone loved. Please see page 4 for more information on supporting children.

The Pathways of Hope team is ready to meet with you individually, as a family, or in one of our multiple support groups (see page 6.) As always, there is no charge for our services, thanks to generous support from our Dayton community.

Please take a few quiet minutes to review this edition of The Bridge. We believe there will be something here just for you. We look forward to your call for an appointment, or meeting you at one of our holiday gatherings. Peace to you, your family, and loved ones.





Table of Contents

Supporting Grieving Children During the Holidays.....	4
Pathways of Hope Grief Counseling Center.....	6
Living with Loss During a Season of Celebrations	8
Grief FAQ's:	
Frequently Asked Questions about Grief	10
Dealing with Grief "Ambushes"	11
Preparations Underway for Camp Pathways 2017	12
Book Reviews	14
Healing Links	15
The Pathways of Hope Bereavement Counseling Professionals	
Team.....	16
Holiday Support Groups.....	17
School-based Grief Support for Children.....	18



Supporting Grieving Children During the Holidays

By Jonathan Haag DAT, LISW-S, ATR-BC (Art Therapist)

The holidays can be very difficult for grieving children, especially during the first year after the loss of a loved one. Because a major quality of the holidays is celebrating with one's family in the traditions that the family has created over the years, the holidays can be both a reminder of the loss of one's loved one as well as a reminder of special, pleasant memories shared with that person. This can be a painful time for children as they watch others enjoy the holidays while they are longing for the lost loved one. The anticipation of the holidays often can be worse than the special day itself.

What can parents do to help?

It is helpful to let grieving children know that the painful feelings they may have during the holidays are normal. Encourage them to tell you about their feelings. Work together to plan activities and new rituals that can add creativity and



fun to an otherwise hard situation. Here are a few ideas:

- Draw pictures or make cards of favorite holiday memories with the deceased.
- Create a special ornament to hang on the tree or doorway.
- Write a holiday letter to the deceased and place it in a special place either wrapped as a present under the tree or tied with a bow and placed next to their picture.
- Place a picture of the deceased at the dinner table with a candle so they are part of the holiday feast.
- Cook a dish or dessert the deceased especially enjoyed.
- Create a “gratitude bowl,” where family members can write on colorful slips of paper holiday memories of their loved one for which they will always be thankful. Read them aloud during a special time during the holidays.

These activities are powerful and healing because they allow children to mourn while at the same time giving permission to enjoy the holidays.



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 a unique experience for each individual, as each relationship is unique. The Pathways staff seeks 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 griever to feel they are processing grief normally. Individual need will be assessed by a bereavement counselor/social worker who will help develop an individual plan of care.

Grief support groups can provide a vital 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 usually meet on a rotating basis through 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
- Spousal Loss Group
- Living with the Loss of an Adult Child Group
- Loss of a Loved One Grief Support Group

Coffee Connection groups provide less formal support for bereaved adults, meeting monthly for an hour in Springboro and Dayton. No registration is required. Call Pathways of Hope for more information.



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

Art Forever After is a multi-generational art-based group providing the opportunity for children, teens, friends and family members of all ages to make art with others. The group is offered weekly in three-month segments on Monday evenings at the new William & Dorothy Yeck Family Grief Counseling Art Center on the Ohio's Hospice of Dayton campus.

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 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.



Living with Loss During a Season of Celebrations

By Bonnie Orlins MSW, LISW-S

Birthdays, anniversaries and holidays tend to be particularly challenging for the bereaved, triggering painful memories and longings for times past. For many, Halloween has replaced Thanksgiving as the starting gun for an ever-lengthening marathon of holiday preparations and activities. Even in the best of times the holiday season can tax physical, emotional and financial resources. It should come as no surprise when grieving people start to feel dread as they contemplate the first holidays after loss. Withdrawing into a cave and hibernating with the bears until spring is impractical, so the best strategy is to plan for the challenges the holiday season may bring.

- Recognize your very human tendency to expect and predict the worst. In fact, most bereaved veterans of “first holidays” will tell you that although the holiday presented some painful memories, the anticipation was much worse than the experience.
- Seek structured opportunities to acknowledge your loss and honor the memory of your loved one. Participation in remembrance events such as Ohio’s Hospice of Dayton’s
- Remembrance Walk and the Hope for the Holidays program, or one of the many events sponsored by advocacy groups such as Walk for the Cure or Walk to Defeat ALS, can be meaningful opportunities for healing.
- Involve family members in planning for the holidays. A family conference can be an effective forum for renegotiation of holiday plans and individual responsibilities based on input from everyone.





- Scale back or eliminate obligations to decorate, shop, bake, write cards and, socialize. Even in the best of years we often find ourselves exhausted by trying to “do it all”
- When grief is part of the mix, it becomes clear that “doing it all” is more than impossible.
- Consider altering, rather than discarding, important family traditions. It might be too painful this year to gather around the dining room table for the “traditional” home cooked dinner. A buffet meal that everyone contributes to or dinner out at a restaurant may be good alternatives.
- Create new rituals that incorporate your loved one’s memory into the holiday. Flameless candles that “burn” throughout the season, lighting a memorial candle at mealtime, decorating the gravesite are all examples of small, but meaningful, rituals that acknowledge our continuing bonds.
- The custom of holiday gift giving is often a painful reminder of the gifts and people we are no longer shopping for. Many find that intentional gifts to lonely shut-ins, residents in nursing homes, or those with material needs can be a meaningful way of honoring deceased loved ones.
- “Random acts of kindness” during the holiday season can be highly therapeutic. A larger than normal tip for the waiter or waitress, paying the bill for an unsuspecting diner, leaving change in a vending machine, leaving a book in a waiting room or bus station with a note to enjoy, sending an anonymous gift to someone you know, offering a kind word to a frazzled mother...the opportunities to look outside ourselves are limitless.
- Nurture yourself. Take a nap. Sleep in, soak in the tub, or get a massage.
- Ask yourself: “If I knew this holiday season were to be the last one that I would have with my remaining loved ones, how would I spend it?” Loss teaches us the moments we are granted in life are incredibly fleeting and valuable.
- Seek out support. Attending a grief support group or talking to a grief counselor can be of immeasurable help in meeting the challenges of navigating the holiday season.





Grief FAQ's:

Frequently Asked Questions about Grief

Q: “Sometimes I feel like I’m on an emotional roller coaster. There are times when I’m feeling better and seem to be doing OK and then it seems like out of nowhere I’m down and feeling overwhelmed. Is this “normal?”

A: The “emotional roller coaster” is one of the most common ways people describe their experience when grieving. The demands of daily life may distract us from our grief for a time, only to throw us back into it with reminders of who and what we have lost. Early on, the ups and downs are likely to feel exhausting and discouraging. Over time the ups and downs become more manageable. We start to recognize the occasional wave of grief as a normal part of adjusting and adapting to life after loss.





Dealing with Grief “Ambushes”

It is natural for those grieving to dread events such as holidays, anniversaries, birthdays, etc. Grieving often begins in anticipation of the event and such grief is expected and accepted. However, the bereaved may be taken by surprise at grief “ambushes,” which are unexpected events that elicit significant emotional responses. Hearing a loved one’s favorite song on the radio, finding an old photograph or note from a loved one, or even something as trivial as passing a loved one’s favorite food in the grocery aisle can trigger these “ambushes.”

How are these to be handled? The healthiest way to handle grief “ambushes” is to accept them as part of the normal grieving process. Grievers may often report they felt themselves doing well until experiencing these sudden, intense grief responses and then judge themselves to have “gone backwards” in their grief. Understanding these episodes to be a normal part of grieving can take the fear out of the experience. Know they are going to happen, allow yourself to feel and express the emotions and keep pressing forward in your grief journey.



Preparations Underway for Camp Breakaway 2017

By Jonathan Haag DAT, LISW-S, ATR-BC (Art Therapist)

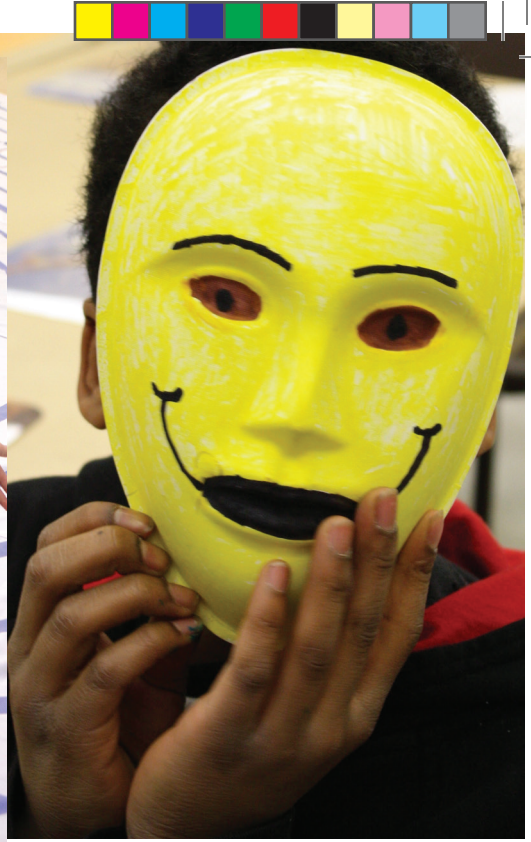
When: Monday, January 16, 2017

Where: Kettering Recreation Center

Register: www.hospiceofdayton.org/breakaway

Pathways Breakaway is a daylong, grief focused event designed for children, 7-17, who have experienced the death of a parent or other loved one. Experiencing the event in age specific groups, participants will enjoy fun activities such as swimming, ice skating and games as well as grief activities involving art, music and discussion groups. Lunch and snacks will be provided.





Pathways Breakaway will be held on Monday, January 16, 2017, a day on which most children will be out of school for the Martin Luther King holiday. The event, which will be held at the Kettering Recreation Center, 2900 Glengarry Drive, Kettering, Ohio, will begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 5:30 p.m.

Breakaway is offered at no charge, but pre-registration is required as the event will be limited to 50 children. For further information and registration materials, please contact Pathways of Hope at (937) 258-4991, or email pathwaysofhope@hospiceofdayton.org, or register online at hospiceofdayton.org/breakaway.



Book Reviews: ***Surviving the Holidays Without You: Navigating Grief During Special Seasons***

by Gary Roe

The holidays can offer special challenges to people who are heartbroken after the death of a loved one. This book is a simple guide for helping grievers to not only survive the holidays but to enjoy those special days in the midst of sorrow.

The author is a hospice chaplain who shares personal examples and professional experiences to encourage and empower grievers to consider the holidays as a wonderful time to honor and celebrate the lives of those who are loved and missed. This book is a guide to managing holiday expectations, dealing with a host of grief-related feelings, and planning for “special” days so they will continue to be special.

Cinnamon Roll Sunday A Child’s Story of Anticipatory Grief

by Jennifer Allen, LMFT, ATR-BC

Cinnamon Roll Sunday tells the story from the point of view of Noah as he witnesses his father’s decline from cancer. He notices everything is changing and the time he is able to spend with his father becomes more precious. The author prepares the reader for the reality of the impending loss while encouraging us to continue meaningful family rituals such as Cinnamon Roll Sunday with the knowledge that these memories will be a source of comfort and joy during our time of sorrow.

This story is ideally suited to elementary school age children and can facilitate a conversation between parents and children. The illustrations reveal the physical changes we see in a loved one approaching the end of life. In so doing, they demystify the process of physical decline reducing some of the fear and anxiety children might otherwise experience.



Healing Links



Please visit the following websites for information on grief:

www.OpentoHope.com: www.OpentoHope.com is “an online community offering inspirational stories of loss, hope and recovery.” On this website you will find over 5,000 articles on all aspects of bereavement and loss, written by experts in grief and healing. The website also offers helpful webinars and videos and gives visitors the opportunity to share their own stories.

www.dougy.org: The first center in the United States to offer peer support groups for grieving children and teens is known for its groundbreaking support group model. The website has numerous resources and information to help caring adults and professionals support children and teens through their grief.

www.childrengrieve.org: This website has a wealth of information, best practices, grant opportunities and initiatives about childhood grief for both caring adults and professionals.

www.childgrief.org: Children’s Grief Education Association has helpful handouts about what to say to children about loss, death, and dying as well as what not to say to a grieving child.





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)
- April Goins, 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



Holiday Support Groups

The Staff at the Pathways of Hope Grief Center at Ohio's Hospice of Dayton, would like to invite you to a series of support groups designed to assist you in dealing with grief at the holidays.

The holiday season can be a very painful time for those who have suffered the loss of a loved one during the year. It is our hope these groups will provide both education on healthy ways to cope as well as emotional support during those difficult months. The groups will follow a drop-in format; no registration is required. Attend the groups when would be most helpful and convenient for you.

Here is the schedule:

Tuesday mornings 10-11 a.m.

Tuesdays evenings 6:30-7:30 p.m.

November 1st-December 20th – Pathways of Hope

Location: Pathways of Hope, Ohio's Hospice of Dayton

For further information or questions, please call the Pathways of Hope at (937) 258-4991.





School-based Grief Support for Children

Every day many children who come to school after the loss of a loved one find it difficult to concentrate and perform academically. They likely have little understanding of how loss is affecting their learning and daily functioning and may feel overwhelmed by their grief, wondering silently about whether what they are experiencing is normal and what to do with their feelings.

Pathways of Hope offers school-based support groups to area schools in all grade levels to help children cope with their loss and heal. Children are offered a safe space where they can express their feelings and discover that they are not alone in grief. This free service includes support groups, individual counseling, and grief response to students and faculty immediately after a sudden, collective loss.

Schools interested in these services should contact Lisa Conn, MSW, LISW-S, at Pathways of Hope (937) 258-4991.





Seasons

Love is a fall that we fools want to take,
a mistake that we just have to make.

For me it began in the spring of my life,
when I first met my wonderful wife.

We danced through the seasons, together as one,
lived bright as the light of the sun.

In my arms she was warm as a soft summer breeze.
We were shelter against winter's freeze.

So many good years turned their seasons so fast,
always proving that true love must last.

Each day a bouquet, each night born again,
and then...and then...and then...

She passed in the fall of our thirty-eighth year,
and love broke our one heart so dear.

Can I live without her touch, and her feel?
Must I really believe this is real?

Please let me go back to the time of our life,
to my time with my beautiful wife.

Love was a mistake that we just had to make,
a downfall that I had to take,

and I'd take it again, if only I could,
for the seasons of loving, I would.

©Charles Michael Holmes

Used by permission





Pathways of Hope
324 Wilmington Avenue
Dayton, Ohio 45420

Non Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Dayton, OH
Permit #133