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BRIDGE

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Grief Notes

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Coping with summer heat waves is one of the more uncomfortable aspects of mid-summer. Most of us have a limited tolerance for an extended heat wave. As temperatures shoot upwards, personal discomfort soars. Pleasurable outdoor activities are no fun when the heat and humidity linger for days and days. Daily routines and plans must change as we seek relief from the oppressive heat. The heat itself can affect our energy and our appetite. When the heat wave stretches beyond a few days, we desire a break in the weather. We try to remember that heat waves are temporary and “this too shall pass”.



When loss enters our lives, pain of grief follows. While we usually expect to feel sad and miss our loved one, we are often surprised to discover the impact grief has on our daily lives. As with a heat wave, our personal distress is worse as daily routines and once pleasurable activities remind us of our loss. Just as the heat can affect our appetite and sleep, so does grief. Sometimes it feels as though getting through the day takes all the energy we can muster. We find ourselves focusing on memories, thoughts and questions instead of the demands of daily life. We



can find some relief in conversations with others who share our experience. It is hard to find hope that the pain of grief will ever go away.

Life teaches us that summer heat waves come and go. We can apply the lessons of the summer heat wave to the challenges of grief. Self care, finding relief in safe, protective places, and sharing our experience and thoughts with others are helpful for getting us through both a heat wave and the pain of grief. Hope may be found in knowing that the terrible pain of grief is temporary, and like the heat waves of summer, will abate in time.

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Grief FAQ's:

Frequently Asked Questions about Grief

Since my loved one died, I find myself having a hard time concentrating and remembering things. I'm worried that I am becoming more forgetful. Is this normal?

Concentration and memory problems are common complaints after the death of a loved one. Stress and a feeling of exhaustion is common in grief. Our physical and mental abilities are affected when we are tired. Stress always weakens our ability to understand and remember. Grief is certainly a stressful experience. Grief also demands a lot of our attention, making it harder to focus on other things. Physical or emotional pain, can distract us from other important matters.

As a result, we may find we are “forgetting” things that would have been easily recalled under other conditions. If memory problems persist or grow worse, talk to your doctor. Memory loss may have causes other than grief.

Remembrance Services for 2015

Time of Remembrance and Hope for the Holidays provide families with an opportunity to come together during the first year of loss to remember their loved one in a memorial service. Family members are asked to bring a single cut flower for use in the March, July and September services as part of the memorial ceremony. Named luminaries honor our Hospice of Dayton patients in the Hope for the Holidays memorial services. Light refreshments follow each service, which last less than an hour. If you are unable to attend the memorial services below honoring your loved one, it is fine for you attend one at a later time. Hospice of Dayton sends invitations for all of the services. RSVPs are appreciated.

2015 DATES	TIME	LOCATION
<i>Time of Remembrance</i> Sunday, September 20, 2015	3:00 p.m.	Hospice of Dayton Community Room Shaw Building
<i>Hope for the Holidays</i> Monday, November 30	7:00 p.m.	Hospice of Butler & Warren Counties Team and Staff Center
<i>Hope for the Holidays</i> Monday, December 7	7:00 p.m.	Hospice of Dayton Community Room Shaw Building
<i>Hope for the Holidays</i> Thursday, December 10	7:00 p.m.	Hospice of Dayton Community Room Shaw Building



When Will The Grief Get Easier?

In the early days of grief, many think there will never be relief from the intense feelings of grief. Grief may cause you to lose energy, motivation and desire. You may experience sleepless nights. You may be unable to concentrate on the simplest of tasks. You may feel a crushing longing, loneliness and sadness. As the days go by, other people in your life may express concern over your grief. They may suggest it is time to “move on.” You may begin to wonder if your grief is normal.

It is important to understand what is “normal” varies widely from one person to another. Strong emotional, physical and mental reactions are very normal in the early stages of grief. As time goes on, these reactions decrease in intensity and frequency. Grief is often most intense two to three months after the loss and again before the first anniversary. Special days and events can continue to trigger grief for years to come. Sudden, unexpected grief may occur at times such as hearing a special song or spotting a favorite restaurant. With time, you will gain experience in dealing with grief in healthy ways that allow the activities of daily life to go on without too much disruption.

Look for small signs of healing. Perhaps you find yourself laughing more. You begin looking forward to future events and plans for the future. For most grieving people, healing occurs. Hold on to that hope and look for small signs of healing. This can bring comfort during the heavy days of early grief.

Addressing Anxiety

Flutters in your chest, stomach aches, dizziness, dry mouth, shortness of breath, feeling restless, problems falling asleep, a feeling of dread – all of these are common symptoms of anxiety. And anxiety is a very common part of grief. You have lost someone you dearly love and your world has been turned upside down. In addition to the painful feelings of loss, you may feel confused and stressed by the many tasks that are now part of your daily life. If you have experienced anxiety in the past, you may feel it creeping back into your life. Grief may breed anxiety – but you don't have to be controlled by it. You can control anxiety by taking action. The following are some helpful tips to control anxiety before it controls you!

Include relaxation in your life.

Listen to soothing music, take a yoga class, or close your eyes and imagine yourself in a peaceful setting, 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. Breathe in deeply to the count of three, holding the breath for a count of three, and slowly breathe out to the count of three. Imagine yourself breathing in cool, fresh air and exhaling all the stressful thoughts and feelings.

Make diet and lifestyle changes.

Stop or limit the use of caffeine, sugar and tobacco. Engage in exercise you enjoy. Limit T.V. watching or reading that cause anxious thoughts.



Stop negative self-talk.

Using words like “I can’t do this” can make you feel helpless, which causes anxiety. Instead, use words such as “I don’t like doing this, but I will get through this.”

See your doctor.

Your doctor may want to give you medicine such as anti-depressants to reduce symptoms of anxiety. It is important to have a medical exam to be sure symptoms of anxiety are not signs of other illness.

Talk to someone caring.

Expressing your grief and fears openly can relieve stress and help you to come up with solutions for difficult situations. Grief often feels frightening and full of unknowns. Awareness of the normal symptoms of grief can be very helpful. Pathways of Hope can provide reading material, support groups and one- on-one support to help you control anxiety.



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 life 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 Adult's 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 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.





Grieving The Loss Of A Parent

The loss of a parent is the most common type of grief, affecting millions of adults each year. Unfortunately, the grief adult children experience is often not recognized by others. Great attention is given when the death of one parent leaves the living parent newly widowed. The grief of the adult child is often overlooked.

Whether the parent-child relationship was close or difficult, the death of a parent can leave a deep emptiness. The death of one's mother and father is part of the natural order of life, but it is a mistake to think that age and experience protect the adult child from the pain of grief. When the relationship with a parent was distant or troubled, friends and family may not know what to say. They may assume that the parent's death somehow "solved" the problems in the parent-child relationship. Many adults are taken by surprise at the intense feeling of being orphaned in mid-life when their last remaining parent dies.

Whether the death was expected or sudden, the grief that follows may be more intense and last longer than expected. Questions about what is “normal” come to the surface as brothers and sisters and other family members react to the death in different ways. Changing family roles and responsibilities and the stress of settling the estate often make the pain and loneliness of grief even worse.

The Pathways of Hope support group, *Adult Children Who Have Lost a Parent*, provides grieving adults a safe place to share concerns, memories and ideas for coping. Group members gain a better understanding of the grief that comes with the loss of a mother or father. This group meets for four weeks straight. Preregistration and a promise to attend all four sessions are required. Contact Pathways of Hope for more information.



Hospice of Dayton 5K Remembrance Walk

Carl Nichols, retired Chief Meteorologist for WDTN Channel 2 will be the Grand Marshall and Walk Leader.

NEW DATE:

October 24, 2015

WHERE:

Hospice of Dayton Campus
324 Wilmington Avenue

WHEN:

Registration opens at 8:30
Walk starts at 10 am

- Hospice of Dayton 5K (3.1 miles) and 3K (3.1 miles) Remembrance Walk will start at the Hospice of Dayton campus on Wilmington Avenue and proceed through the neighborhood, leading back to the Hospice campus.
- Shuttle buses will be available to shuttle walkers from offsite parking locations to the campus and also to pick up walkers along the way.
- This course is wheelchair and stroller accessible.
- For the safety of all participants, no roller blades, bicycles or unleashed pets are allowed.
- Register by October 1, 2015 to receive a T-shirt.
- Register online at hospiceofdayton.org/walk or call 222-WALK or email mbernard@hospiceofdayton.org
- Team and Individual trophies will be awarded before the Walk.



Hospice of Dayton is the region's only non-profit hospice. With your support, Hospice of Dayton can continue to provide such services as Occupational Therapy and Personal Care Specialists, improving patient quality of life. Such support also provides bereavement counseling to adults and children, including Camp Pathways.



Join us in this year's Remembrance Walk. With your support, WE can make a difference!

Healing Links



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

Author: Carol Staudacher

Publisher: Harper San Francisco, 1994

This book is a series of short readings that speak to the personal concerns of anyone facing grief. It covers a wide range of topics. It is not meant to be read in any particular order. The choice of a reading can be done at random or can match the reader's concerns. The book's format and the comfort and wisdom it offers makes it a good choice, no matter where one is in the grieving process.

After a Death: An Activity Book for Children

Author: The Dougy Center - The National Center for Grieving Children and Families

This colorful activity book 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. Each page invites thoughts on a unique aspect of grief. 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 authors are leading experts on grieving children. The book introduces healthy coping skills for children. This book is gender neutral and is well suited for children from elementary school to middle school age.

Please visit the following websites for resources and information on children and grief:

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

www.nationalallianceforgrievingchildren.org: This website has a great deal of information, including grant opportunities and programs for childhood grief.

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



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