

FALL 2017

BRiDGE

A PUBLICATION FOR OUR FRIENDS FROM PATHWAYS OF HOPE



Hope for the Holidays Invitation see inside!

Grief Notes

Seasons of Grief

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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 several offerings prepared for you, 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 5). 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 our insert). Also available are several short readings to assist in planning for and coping 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 assist your child, teen, and family as they adjust to the death of someone loved. Please see page 15 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 offered (see page 8). As always, there is no charge for our services, due to generous support from our local 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 to meeting you at one of our holiday gatherings. Peace to you, your family, and your loved ones.



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Grief FAQ's:

Frequently Asked Questions about Grief

“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, then, it seems like out of nowhere, I’m down and feeling overwhelmed. Is this “normal?”

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 down are likely to feel exhausting and discouraging. Over time, the ups and downs become more manageable. We start to recognize the occasional grief wave as a normal part of the process of adjusting and adapting to life after loss.

Memorial Service 2017

You and your family are invited to attend the Community Care Hospice Memorial Service on Sunday, November 12, 2017.

The Memorial Service is a program of reflection, prayer, and remembrance of the special people served by Community Care Hospice over the last year. This is an opportunity for family and friends to remember and honor their loved ones. Additionally, the service will include a picture slide show of the patients served. To include your loved one in the slideshow, please mail or email one picture only to michellekessler@communitycarehospice.com along with your RSVP by Wednesday, November 8. You are welcome to call Michelle with your RSVP at (937) 382-5400.

Wilmington

Memorial Service

When: Sunday, November 12, 2017

Where: Wilmington Church of God,
100 E. Gordon Drive
Wilmington, Ohio

Register: Call to RSVP (937) 382-5400

Holiday Support Groups

The staff at the Pathways of Hope Grief Center 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 that these groups will provide emotional support during those difficult months as well as education on healthy ways to cope. Attend the groups when it would be most helpful and convenient for you. Here is the schedule:

Dayton

Ohio's Hospice of Dayton

When: Thursday evenings (except Thanksgiving)
6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
November 2 through December 21

Where: *Pathways of Hope*
Vistor Entrance/Friends & Family Entrance
324 Wilmington Avenue | Dayton, Ohio

No registration is required.

Wilmington

Finding Hope Through the Holidays Grief Group

When: Tuesday, December 5, 2017
2:00 p.m.–3:30 p.m.
or 6:00 p.m.–7:30 p.m.
OR
Thursday, December 7, 2017
2:00 p.m.–3:30 p.m.
or 6:00 p.m.–7:30 p.m.

Where: Community Care Hospice
1669 Rombach Avenue
Wilmington, Ohio 45177

Register: Call to register (937) 382-5400

HO HO NO!!!

Grief and the Holidays

The holidays are fast approaching, and this time of year can be most painful—especially if you have recently lost a loved one through death. The holidays are a time when family members and friends gather to celebrate the season, but for many, it can be a dreaded time of year.

Ohio's Hospice of Miami County Generations of Life Bereavement Center will be offering education and support to grieving adults to help prepare for the holiday season. We will talk about why holiday grief is so hard—the anticipation, our limitations, and expectations and past traditions. We will talk about compromise and giving yourself permission to create your own rituals to acknowledge your loved one while caring for yourself. We will adjourn with a holiday memorial service and light refreshments.

Grief and the Holidays will be offered twice at 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Monday, November 13 at the Troy Hayner Cultural Center. This event is offered free of charge. Register by calling Ohio's Hospice of Miami County Generations of Life Bereavement Center at (937) 573-2103. Please register by Wednesday, November 8, as seating is limited.

Troy

Grief and the Holidays

When: Monday, November 13
3:00 p.m. OR 6:00 p.m.

Where: Troy Hayner Cultural Center
301 W Main Street, Troy, Ohio 45373

Register: Call to register (937) 573-2103

Dealing with Grief Ambushes

It is natural for people who are in the process of grieving to dread certain events, such as holidays, anniversaries, and birthdays. Grieving often begins in anticipation of an event; such grief is expected and accepted.



However, the bereaved also may be taken by surprise by a grief *ambush*, which is usually unexpected and often elicits a significant emotional response. An ambush can be triggered by 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.

How does one handle an ambush?

The healthiest way to handle a grief ambush is to accept it as part of the normal grieving process. Sometimes griever report that they believed themselves to be doing well until, suddenly, they experience an intense grief response. Afterwards, they judge themselves to have “gone backwards” in their grief. This is not the case. Understanding that these episodes are 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.

Pathways of Hope Grief Counseling Centers

Pathways of Hope Grief Counseling Centers provide a variety of services to the community. Support and education are provided by a team of 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 it is a unique experience for every individual, just as each relationship is itself one of a kind. The Pathways staff seeks to understand what is needed for an 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 the individual's need and develops an individualized 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 to the community, and they are 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

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

Hospice of Central Ohio

Newark
(740) 788-1400

Ohio's Community Mercy Hospice is a Service of Ohio's Hospice of Dayton

Ohio's Hospice of Miami County

Generations of Life Center
Troy
(937) 573-2103

Ohio's Hospice of Butler & Warren Counties

Franklin
(513) 422-0300

The Pathways of Hope Bereavement Counseling Professionals Team

The Pathways of Hope Grief Counseling program is a well-established service provider in the greater Dayton community and the Southwest region of Ohio. This knowledgeable, caring staff provides support or education when requested by an individual, family, group or community organization. Our clinicians are licensed social workers or counselors, and are seasoned professionals in grief and bereavement work.

Ohio's Hospice

Lisa Balster, MA, MBA, LSW, CHA
Director, Patient and Family Support Services OHI Southwest Region

April Goins
Pathways of Hope Office Coordinator

Ohio's Hospice of Dayton

Annette Burckart, BA
Art Coordinator

Lisa Conn, MSW, LISW-S
Bereavement Counseling Professional

Jonathan Haag, DAT, LISW-S, ATR-BC
Art Therapist, Bereavement Counseling Professional

Debbie Holt, MS, LPCC-S, CT
Bereavement Counseling Professional

Fran Jerisk, MS, LPC
Bereavement Counseling Professional

Anne Petratis, MA, MS, LPC-BC
Bereavement Counseling Professional

Pamela Tyler, Ph.D., LSW
Bereavement Counseling Professional

Ohio's Hospice of Butler and Warren Counties

Bonnie Orlins, MSW, LISW-S, ACHP-SW
Bereavement Counseling Professional

Ohio's Hospice of Miami County

Kimberly Walker, MA, LSW
Bereavement Counseling Professional

Community Care Hospice: Clinton County

Michelle Kessler, BSW, LSW
Bereavement Coordinator

Ohio's Community Mercy Hospice: Clark and Champaign Counties

Monica DuShane, MSW, LISW-S, ACHP-SW
Bereavement Counseling Professional



Living with Loss During a Season of Celebrations

Bonnie Orlins, MSW, LISW-S
Bereavement Counseling Professional

Birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays tend to be particularly challenging for the bereaved, painfully triggering memories and longings for times past. For many, Halloween has replaced Thanksgiving as the “kick off” to 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 a sense of dread as they contemplate the first holidays after loss. Unfortunately, withdrawing into a cave and hibernating with the bears until next spring is not a practical option. The best strategy is to prepare and plan for the challenges that the holiday season may bring.

- Recognize your human tendency to expect and predict the worst. In fact, most bereaved veterans of “first holidays” will tell you that although the holiday itself presented them with some painful memories, their anticipation was much worse than the experience.
- Seek out structured opportunities to acknowledge your loss and honor the memory of your loved one. Participation in remembrance events, such as Hospice of Dayton’s Remembrance Walk and the Hope for the Holiday’s program, or one of the many advocacy group-sponsored events, such as Walk for the Cure or Walk to Defeat ALS, can serve as meaningful opportunities for healing.
- Involve other family members in planning for the holidays. A family conference can be an effective forum that encourages the renegotiation of holiday plans and individual responsibilities based on input from everyone.
- Scale back or eliminate decorating, shopping, baking, sending cards, and making social obligations. 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. While 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 preferable alternatives.
- Create new rituals that incorporate your loved one's memory into the holiday. Flameless candles that glow throughout the season, lighting a memorial candle at mealtime, decorating the gravesite with seasonal flowers or other items are all examples of small, 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 individuals/families with material needs can be a meaningful way of honoring deceased loved ones.
- Intentional "random acts of kindness" during the holiday season can be highly therapeutic. Leaving a larger tip for a 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 this question: "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 that the moments we are granted in life are incredibly fleeting and valuable.
- Seek out additional 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.



Book Reviews

The 13th Gift: A True Story of a Christmas Miracle

by Joanne Huist Smith

This book is a true story about a family who experienced the death of their husband/father during the Christmas holiday one year earlier. Undeniably, this book is filled with a fair share of emotion-laden passages. Be forewarned that, as a griever, you might either identify with the anger and depth of sorrow or become thoroughly disturbed and disheartened by it. However, if you can transcend the heartbreaking details presented early on, you will find, at the core, a story of hope and joy and healing. This miracle story may further inspire readers to initiate a similar tradition for other grieving families. What an incredible—and quite possibly life-transforming—gift that would be!

Grief Recovery for Teens

by Coral Popowitz, MSW

The author of *Grief Recovery for Teens* teaches young adults about the fundamentals of the functions of the human brain and their relationship to the grieving body. Each chapter focuses on a specific emotion of the grieving teen and offers practical exercises to alleviate common physiological symptoms caused by grief and loss. Chapter examples include *Your Scared Body*, *Your Lonely Body*, *Your Tired Body*, and *Your Healing Body*.

An exercise for *Your Sad Body* is *My Helping Hand*. The teen is instructed to open a hand and fold down one finger to represent someone who is supportive. After folding down all four fingers, the thumb is folded over to make a fist. The thumb represents the teen's own strengths. The teen then places the closed fist over his or her heart and takes a deep breath while thinking about the people who will always be there to help. The teen can use the soothing power of the *Helping Hand* tool whenever sadness arises.

This book is informative, instructive, and easy to understand. It is appropriate for tweens as well as teens. It is also a great guidebook to help parents and caring adults support school-aged children through grief. It is highly recommended for griever ages 10–17.

Pathways Breakaway: A Daylong Grief Event for Children and Teens

Jonathan Haag, LISW, ATR-BC

Art Therapist | Bereavement Counseling Professional

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



Pathways Breakaway will be held on Monday, January 18, 2018—a day on which most children will be out of school for the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. The event will be held at the Kettering Recreation Center, 2900 Glengarry Drive, Kettering, Ohio, and 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, email pathwaysofhope@hospiceofdayton.org, or register online at hospiceofdayton.org/breakaway.

Dayton

Pathways Breakaway

When: Monday, January 18
8:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Where: Kettering Recreation Center
2900 Glengarry Drive
Kettering, Ohio 45420

Register: Call to register (937) 258-4991



Pathways of Hope
324 Wilmington Avenue
Dayton, Ohio 45420

Community Care Hospice
Hospice of Central Ohio
Ohio's Community Mercy Hospice
Ohio's Hospice of Butler & Warren Counties
Ohio's Hospice of Dayton
Ohio's Hospice of Miami County

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