

Reflections...

on the grief journey

A Publication of Center for Hospice Care

Bereavement Newsletter

www.cfhcare.org

Issue 5

*"What we once enjoyed and deeply loved we can never lose,
for all that we love deeply becomes part of us."*

---Helen Keller

"It's hard to believe it has been a year since you died."

You may find yourself agreeing with this quote. As you look back over these past months, you may also find that you have made some changes and learned some new skills. Maybe you have found new morning routines that helped you adjust to waking up without your partner or have learned how to cook for one. Maybe you have thought of memories of your child and smiled and not felt overwhelming sadness. Maybe you have found someone to bounce ideas off of like you used to do with your dad or you successfully baked grandma's Thanksgiving pumpkin pie. Maybe you have learned how to knit in honor of your sister to continue her tradition of making a blanket for every new member of the family.

The intense grief reactions you experienced soon after your loved one died may have decreased over the past couple of months as you learned ways to adjust. As you get closer to it being a year since their death, some, but not all bereaved, naturally experience more intense grief reactions again. It can be helpful to make a plan as you anticipate acknowledging this passage of time. Some ideas include:

- Gather with family and friends and share stories and memories.
- Spend time at the gravesite.
- Take the day off of work/school and look through pictures, read a book, clean, relax.
- Make your loved one's favorite meal and dessert and watch a movie they loved.
- Volunteer and/or make a donation in your loved one's name.
- Do a creative activity with the youth in your family like making a stepping stone, decorating a frame, tying a fleece blanket, etc. in memory of your loved one.
- Plant a tree or flower in your yard.



Call Us Any Time

(574) 255-1064
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(574) 264-3321
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(574) 935-4511
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(219) 575-7930
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Ritual can be a helpful coping tool on special, important days. If you are not sure what you want to do, be compassionate with yourself. It may be helpful to talk with friends and/or family and the bereavement

counselors at Center for Hospice Care are also available if you have questions.



What Does “Living with the Loss” Mean?

Each person would have their own unique way of answering this question. Reviewing the statements below could be helpful in identifying ways that you have learned to live with the loss in your life. You may also identify areas where you are having a little bit of difficulty or a lot of difficulty. It is valid wherever you find yourself in this process and it is a reminder that grief will go at a pace that is unique to you and your experience. If you find yourself having difficulty or if you have questions, please give the office a call and ask to talk to one of our bereavement counselors.



- You recognize the reality of the loss and are no longer protesting that it happened.
- You experience the pain of grief at times and you recognize that it is natural and you have effective ways to cope.
- You have learned new skills and taken on new roles when needed.
- You have learned to live with the grief while functioning well in your life.
- You continue to remember your loved one and in those moments are not overwhelmed by grief.
- You have learned how to continue the relationship with your loved one without their physical presence.
- You recognize that grief waves will come with reminders and you have effective coping tools to utilize in those moments.
- You realize that special days will bring a mix of celebration with those that remain and mourning for those who are no longer here.
- You can experience joy and not feel guilty.
- You are making plans for the future.



Adapted from “How to Go On Living When Someone You Love Dies” by Therese A. Rando, Ph.D.

A Commitment to Life

Death is a reality I am coping with today.
While I am feeling hurt, I remind myself that I will survive.
Though grief is normal and I must grieve for my own health's sake,
I grieve not as one who has no hope.
Though I am familiar with sharing decisions, sharing experiences, and doing for another as well as myself:
I can be alone without feeling lonely,
I can make decisions for myself, and
I can learn to do for myself all that needs to be done.
More than any other, I know what is best for me.
I will act on my own advice as well as others.
As much as possible, I elect to be in charge of my life.
I will remember, I cannot help that.
I do have some control over how long the memories linger.
I have a choice as to how I deal with my pain.
I give myself permission to live,
to face reality and change it where I can,
and accept it where I cannot.
Like any other human being, I need to be close to others at times.
The death of one so loved does not change that need.
I will seek closeness with others when needed.
I choose to live and expect the best that life has to offer.
While death is a reality, I will remember that neither death nor life shall separate us.
I am not alone.
I make a commitment to live life to the fullest.
-Author Unknown



Volunteering

"I wish there was some way I could give back to hospice for the wonderful care given to my loved one and our family!"

There are many opportunities for our bereaved families to give back if they choose to do so. Many find it valuable in their grief process to invest time and energy in helping others. Whatever your interests, hospice has a place for you! We welcome new volunteers to do office work, run errands, visit patients, make phone contact to the bereaved, participate in Camp Evergreen programming for youth, help with the Walk for Hospice, or assist in other ways. Call the hospice office nearest you for further information about volunteering:

South Bend: 574-243-3100

Elkhart: 574-264-3321

Plymouth: 574-935-4511

La Porte: 219-575-7930

Toll Free: 800-413-9083

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Could Bereavement Services be Helpful?

Being close to a year after your loved one's death, you may wonder if you and others in your family are doing okay. If you have questions and if you or your family is experiencing any of the concerns listed below, please contact the nearest office.

- Significant challenges with functioning at home, work, school
- Continued intense grief reactions along with persistent longing for the person who died
- Continued preoccupation with the circumstances of the death
- Thoughts of suicide (the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-8255 is a resource)

The death of an important person impacts your whole being and mourning takes a lot of physical and emotional energy. Youth can grieve in new ways as they move into new developmental levels of understanding. As you and your family begin the second year without your loved one, remember that mourning can take longer than we expect and our licensed Bereavement Counselors remain available to provide individual, family and group grief counseling. Some bereaved can also be at a point in their mourning where they want to volunteer and offer support to others who are grieving. For more information on bereavement services or volunteer opportunities, please contact the nearest office.

If you would like to stop receiving Reflections, please contact the nearest office.

Center for Hospice Care
choices to make the most of life™

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