

HOPE NOTES



Hospice of Charleston
a Gentiva® company

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Take Your Time

By: J. Chris Adams DMin.

You have probably already discovered that it takes time to grieve. The misconception that it does not take time, sometimes a long time, to work through your grief—is wrong. There is no time line for grief but Psychologists and Sociologists tell us that it often takes years to learn to live with a loss and to discover a “new normal.”

Even after years it is normal to have times that one would consider as low points. The fact remains that each individual deals with their loss and grief in their own way. It is as unique as ones own finger print, one might call it their *grief print*; you can be assured that yours is not exactly like anyone else's.

You will discover that there is a pattern to grief; however, there is no single path through grief, often times you must blaze your own trail.

The tasks of grief can be understood as: coming to the reality of the loss, embracing the various emotions that emerge during the grief process, making the necessary adjusts to your new normal, having the courage to remember, and rebuilding the foundation and the focus of your future. It should be said that the reality of grief is never as neat as it appears in such a list; the path may be low and narrow at times but these are sign posts along the way to let you know

you are on the right path.

It is easy to understand why the grief journey is no Saturday afternoon trip, it simply takes time. Be patient with yourself. Slow and steady wins the race, and slow and steady on the path of grief will lead you to your “new normal.”

Grief is not a time bound process; progress should be made, but hard things are hard and will demand a lot of time and energy.

You do not have to walk this journey alone- allow your friends and family to support you along the way. Most people are able to put the puzzle pieces of their grief together if they can talk through their feelings with someone they trust. The process of finding a new normal for your life, family and future is often discovered through the process of heartfelt discussion with a friend.

Please remember that our Bereavement Support staff is an available resource for you and your family. We are here for you during this difficult journey of your life— allow us to be a companion of compassion along the way.

J. Chris Adams DMin
Coordinator of Spiritual and Bereavement Care, Regional Support Partner, Gentiva Hospice Division

Ongoing and Upcoming Small Groups - supporting one another.

6-Week Grief Support—two groups now forming, a daytime group and an evening group. **Starting in March.** Please call Greg Mason 843-529-3100 or email Greg.Mason@gentiva.com for details, dates, and locations.

“Hope In Healing” group meets **every 2nd Thursday** at Hospice of Charleston, 3870 Leeds Ave, Ste. 101. Please call Barbara Heyward 843-529-3100 or email Barbara.Heyward@gentiva.com for information.

Our Bereavement Staff are available to you, please call us at 843-529-3100 to discuss additional community resources and individual grief concerns.

SHANNON'S HOPE

March 7th and 8th

Shannon's Hope, founded in 1989, is a weekend camping experience for children ages 6-15 who have experienced the death of someone special. *Shannon's Hope* is for children residing in Charleston, Dorchester, and Berkeley counties.

The overnight camp is held at Camp St. Christopher on Seabrook Island.

Please call Gretchen Bair 843-529-3100, or email

BEREAVEMENT CARE CONTACT INFORMATION

Alabama

Huntsville/Keith Lorick/
Dan Anderson 256.519.8808

Florence/Phillip Lamb
256.764.0873

Montgomery/John Sparks
334.271.1293

Phenix City/
Randy Worrell/
334.297.1566

Opp/Roger Stone
334.493.0725

Birmingham /Jim Elrod/Jeanine
Pope
205.682-9441

Dothan/ Bill Frank/Eddie Biss/
Charles Goldsmith/ Paul Cowley /
Tallmadge Butler 334.792.1100

Jasper/ Jason Daugdrill
205.384.3882

Eufaula/Tim Stevenson
334.616.0061

Cullman/ Fred Wilks
256.737.7234

Oxford/Winfred Logan
256.831.2964

Gadsden/Richard Bradford
256.543.3798

Mobile/Dave Tarvin
251.634.2402

Florida

Crestview
Jim Vail/ 850.689.0300

Fort Walton
Frank Dole/ 850.862.1069

Marianna
Gino Mayo /850.526.3577

Panama City
Mike Young/ 850.769.0055

Pensacola/ Wayne Butts
Bill Eddins 850.474.7288

Georgia

Marietta/Don Reed/
Johnnie Porter 770.951.6251

Stockbridge/Oliver Cameron/
770.389.5760

Rome/Bill Daniels 706.235.1205

Bainbridge/ Andy Glover
Andy Hughes 229.246.6330

Newnan/Rick Harden/ Johnnie
Porter 770.502.1104

Riverdale/ Ken Rose/
770.907.2410

Lawrenceville/ Troy Benton
770.822-6377

South Carolina

Greenville/Dave Garner/
864.329.0588

Columbia/ Eric Wolf
803.213.9986

Charleston/
Greg Mason, Barbara
Heyward, Alan Poe
843.529.3100

Tennessee

**McMinnville/Cookeville/ Cross-
ville**
Barry Boggs/ Roy Royster
931.528.5133

Mississippi

Tupelo
Kevin Wallace 662.844.9725

Columbus

Michael Smith 662.327.9669

Jackson

Terry Robinson 601.362.7801

McComb

Daniel Perry 601.684.5841

Get your kids talking... Karen Peeples-Hild, MS IMH-5034 Emerald Coast Hospice - Panama City, Florida—Volunteer Coordinator

As adults, sometimes it is difficult to put your feelings into words...well the same is true for children. It is commonplace for many parents or guardians to feel helpless or anxious when it comes to children who are experiencing grief. You can help your child express their feelings about a recent death or loss with this simple exercise.

Have your child finish the following sentences:

The saddest thing is ...

If I had one more chance to talk to the person who has died, I would say ...

My best memory is ...

If I could change anything, I would change ...

I wish ...

While you may not be able to "fix" your child's grief, these sentences will encourage conversation and communication. Try this exercise with your kids...it can be great for the adults in your life too.

HOPE NOTES

Grief: A Tangled Ball of Emotions

By: J. Chris Adams DMin

Experiencing grief is both challenging and confusing. It is challenging because no one is completely prepared for the process of grief and it is confusing because of the ever changing array of emotions that come with grief. There are days that one feels like a tangled ball of emotions. If you can picture in your mind a ball of yarn that has become tangled with broken ends protruding all over.



Today you may be feeling dread, so you pull on that string of yarn trying to find the end. Tomorrow you may feel loneliness, the next day rage, anger and dismay followed by periods of bitterness, denial, and anxiety. The emotions continue to flow: abandonment, depression, sadness, fear, envy, emptiness, and apathy.

It seems that every day some emotion is waving at you demanding that you give it attention and try to locate the "end." No wonder there is so much confusion with such a jumbled as-

M e n a n d T h e i r G r i e f

The fact that men and women are physically different is obvious, but the differences touch more than just the physical, it touches the area of grief and the emotional pain that comes with grief. Too often men and women deny their partners pain and attempt to legislate how they are to grieve. To most women, men appear to be without feelings and without words. They conclude that they are cold and hardened. To most men, women appear to be overly indulgent in their sorrow and tears, and do not understand why they must continually retell their story.

Question: Is different wrong?

Men tend to think their way through grief! It is as if men lack a language to express their feelings. Women tend to feel their way through grief! It is as if women lack the ability to get beyond their feelings; grief overshadows their life.

We must learn to walk together. If we approach grief as partners our awareness becomes infused with:

Respect**Empathy****Understanding****Trust**

Grief has no claim on gender. Men do grieve, but not like women. The fact that men choose not to talk does not mean they lack feelings...they simply lack words.

Mutuality encourages us to set each other free to grieve in our own way and at our own pace. Grief ought not to be a point of division but connection. Language gives concrete shape to our experiences; it puts the motion in Emotion. The vocabulary we use is based on our life experiences.

Men often lack a language for grief. They have no ready phrases, terms, statements, or clichés; however, being unable to describe their emotion is not the same as having no feeling. Men as a whole have not created a language of grief for themselves. It is as if men have been raised mute, silent to their emotional pain.

Grief often comes to men like a live electric current...a fork plugged into an electric toaster. Women need to listen with a new ear. Instead of focusing on what is absent, listen for what is present. Hidden in the silence is his grief.

Listening with a different ear a woman can access the silence and therefore provide support.

(Thoughts taken from book When Men Grieve: Why Men Grieve Differently and How You Can Help
by: Elizabeth Levang, Ph.D)

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This is normal, what you are experiencing is called the process of grief. This is the winding road of grief. Take comfort in the fact that you are not unusual.

Let me encourage you to face your emotions each day, look them in the eye and experience the feeling. Share your tangled ball of grief with others, help them to understand what you are going through. This allows you to process your feelings and it also helps them with their own grief.

I recall a story that I read about a man who was hiking in one of our National parks when he came upon a mountain lion. This man remembered reading on a sign at the beginning of his hike that if you came across a mountain lion not to run but rather to stop and face the lion. He did and it so startled the lion that the lion turned and ran off into the forest. Sometimes that which we dread the most is conquered when we face it. The emotions of grief may not run off into the forest, but they will become less fearful as we face them.

