

July 2009

Facing Your Grief

Death has invaded your home and life; a beloved relationship ended before you wanted it to end; your hopes and prayers were for one thing yet the opposite has happened; now you are looking at the faces of grief.

Feelings of loneliness, anger, despair, and guilt may be your close companions; questions with no answers often fill your thoughts. This is the reality of loss. It seems the more you loved the greater and more intense the feelings of grief are. Making sense out of sorrow is no easy task; but, it is a process that can be navigated through when given enough time and focused effort.

Allow me to share some suggestions as you face your grief:

Do not look for easy answers to explain your loss.

Do not minimize the impact your loss has had on you and your family.

Do not hurry your way through the process, take time to embrace your feelings.

Take one day at a time and one step at a time.

Do not think that you are losing your mind because of the way you feel.

Allow people to help you and to love you.

Take some time for yourself, you need it.

Do not feel guilty when you have a good day.

Spend some time talking to co-workers, friends and family about your loss.

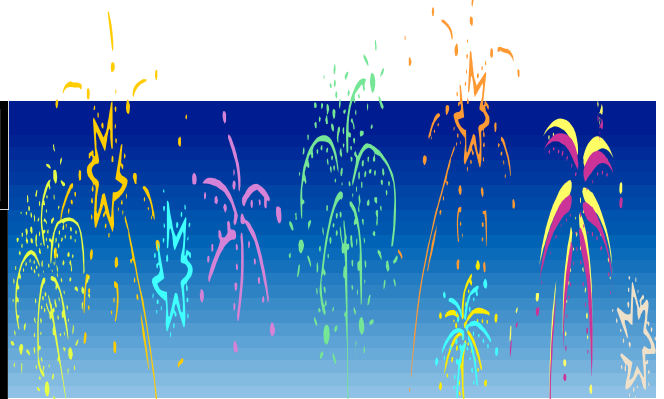
Do not withdraw from those who care.

Be realistic about your expectations concerning the length of grief.

Do not be afraid to do some of the familiar things connected with your loved one.

Be kind to yourself and let others show their kindness and concern towards you.

J. Chris Adams, Coordinator of
Spiritual and Bereavement Services.
Hospice Division of Gentiva



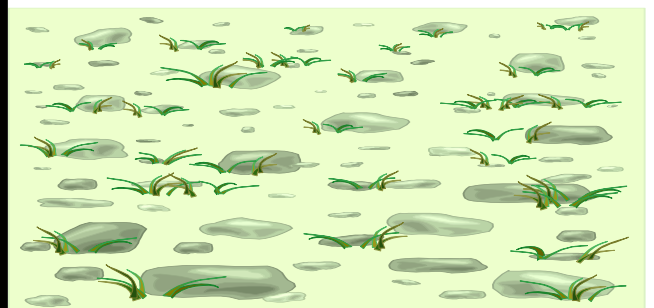
6-Week Grief Journey

This 6-week small group explores grief. Grieving is hard enough alone; journey with others for emotional nourishment.

Starts Monday, July 27

Please contact Greg Mason
phone 843-529-3100 / email
Greg.Mason@gentiva.com

There are only a few
spaces remaining;
please sign-up in advance.



BEREAVEMENT SERVICES CONTACT INFORMATION

Alabama Huntsville Keith Lorick / Dan Anderson 256.519.8808	Gadsden Richard Bradford 256.442.3208	Riverdale Ken Rose 770.907.2410
Florence Phillip Lamb 256.764.0873	Mobile Dave Tarvin / Candler Cain 251.340.6387	Lawrenceville Bill Daniels 770.822-6377
Montgomery John Sparks 334.271.1293	Florida Crestview Jim Vail 850.689.0300	South Carolina Greenville Dave Garner 864.329.0588
Phoenix City Randy Worrell 334.297.1566	Fort Walton Frank Dole 850.862.1069	Columbia Edison Cheeks 803.213.9986
Opp Roger Stone / Robert Beasley 334.493.0725	Marianna Gino Mayo 850.526.3577	Charleston Greg Mason / Alan Poe / Emily Buchheit 843.529.3100
Birmingham Jim Elrod 205.682-9441	Panama City Mike Young / Craig Brannon 850.769.0055	Tennessee Cookeville Barry Boggs 931.528.5133
Dothan Eddie Biss / Charles Goldsmith / Paul Cowley / Bill Frank / Tallmadge Butler 334.792.1100	Pensacola Bill Eddins 850.474.7288	Mississippi Tupelo Kevin Wallace 662.844.9725 Columbus 662.327.9669
Jasper Jeanine Pope 205.384.3882	Georgia Marietta/Rome Don Reed / Johnnie Porter 770.951.6251	Jackson Terry Robinson 601.362.7801
Eufaula Tim Stevenson 334.616.0061	Stockbridge Oliver Cameron 770.389.5760	McComb Daniel Perry 601.684.5841
Cullman Fred Wilks 256.737.7234	Bainbridge Andy Glover / Andy Hughes 229.246.6330	
Oxford Winfred Logan 256.831.2964	Newnan Rick Harden 770.502.1104	

The Mourner's Bill of Rights

By: Alan Wolfelt, Ph.D.

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Though you ought to reach out to others as you do the work of mourning, you should not feel obligated to accept unhelpful responses you may receive from people. You are the one who is grieving, and you have certain "rights" no one should try to take away from you.

The following list is intended to both empower you to heal and decide how others can and cannot help you. This is not meant to discourage you from reaching out to others for help, but rather to assist you in distinguishing useful responses from hurtful ones.

You have the right to experience your own unique grief.

No one will grieve in exactly the same way you do. So, when you turn to others for help, don't allow them to tell you what you should or should not be feeling.

You have the right to talk about your grief.

Talking about your grief will help you heal. Seek others who will allow you to talk as

much as you want, as often as you want, about your grief. If at times you don't feel like talking, you have the right to be silent.

You have the right to feel a multitude of emotions.

Confusion, disorientation, fear, guilt and relief are just a few of the emotions you might feel as part of your grief journey. Others may try to tell you that feeling angry, for example, is wrong. Don't take these judgmental responses to heart. Instead, find listeners who will accept your feelings without condition.

You have the right to be tolerant of your physical and emotional limits.

Your feelings of loss and sadness will probably leave you feeling fatigued. Respect what your body and mind are telling you. Get daily rest. Eat balanced meals. And don't allow others to push you into doing things you don't feel ready to do.

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You have the right to experience “GRIEFBURSTS.”

Sometimes, out of nowhere, a powerful surge of grief may overcome you. This can be frightening, but is normal and natural. Find someone who understands and will let you talk it out.

You have the right to make use of ritual.

The funeral ritual does more than acknowledge the death of a loved one. It helps provide one with the support of loving and caring people. More importantly, the funeral is a way for you to mourn. If others tell you that the funeral or other healing rituals such as these are silly or unnecessary, do not listen to them!

You have the right to embrace your spirituality.

If faith is a part of your life, express it ways that seem appropriate to you. Allow yourself to be around people who understand and support your religious beliefs. If you feel angry at God, find someone who won't be critical of your feelings of hurt or abandonment.

You have the right to search for meaning.

You may find yourself asking, “Why did he or she die? Why this way? Why now?” Some of your questions may have answers, but some may not. Watch out for some of the clichéd responses some people may give you. Comments like, “It was God's will” or “Think of what you have to be thankful for” are not helpful and you do not have to accept them.

You have the right to treasure your memories.

Memories are one of the best legacies that exist after the death of a loved one. You will always remember them. Instead of ignoring your memories, find others with whom you can share them.

You have the right to move toward your grief and heal.

Reconciling your grief will not happen quickly. Remember, grief is a process, not an event. Be patient and tolerant with yourself and avoid people who are impatient and intolerant with you. The death of a loved one changes your life forever.

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“Hope In Healing”

Community Grief Support Group
every 2nd Thursday 10:30am-11:30am

Hospice of Charleston, 3870 Leeds Ave, Ste 101.
Please call Emily Buchheit 843-529-3100 for information.

Hospice of Charleston
3870 Leeds Ave, Ste 101
N. Charleston, SC 29405

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

Register Early

Shannon's Hope October 17 and 18, 2009



A community bereavement program for **children ages 6-15** who have experienced the loss of someone they love. Licensed counselors and hospice trained volunteers provide fun, organized activities in helping children “create stepping stones from their stumbling blocks.” A weekend at Camp St. Christopher on Seabrook Island to create friendships and support that allows children to identify and express feelings in a safe and caring environment.



Pre-registration and application are required.

Please call Paula Mellichamp 843-529-3100 for information.
Printable application available at www.hospiceofcharleston.org
(click on events, then Shannon's Hope)