



June 2009

## Children and Loss – How You Can Help

Children, like adults, will react to loss in different ways and in their own time. Some of the common reactions and coping strategies for children related to grief are:

**Denial of the Death** They realize that the death has occurred, but they may pretend that it never happened, especially in the weeks directly following the death of their loved one.

**Feelings of Insecurity** In some cases, they may fear being left alone, or they may begin worrying about their own health and mortality. They may become overly concerned about the mortality of other loved ones, especially if the loss was a parent or grandparent.

**Feelings of Guilt** Sometimes children may imagine that they somehow are responsible for the death, or feel guilty because they did not respond to their loved one with sufficient affection. Perhaps they can not forget the argument that transpired between them and the deceased.

**Problems in School** They may in fact resist returning to school once the funeral is over; or, when they do return they may find concentrating very difficult. You may notice a drop in grades or

perhaps a sudden change in disposition and an increase in misbehavior.

Remember that children grieve in shorter patterns than adults. They may be playing games with friends one minute, and become upset and very tearful the next. Their grieving appears to be like an on and off switch that can be adjusted at any given moment. Know that this is simply a coping mechanism that allows them to handle their feelings. They are not emotionally mature enough to handle the intensity of grief for long periods of time.

Be patient, understanding, and most importantly of all - available. Help your child understand death in a way that suits their age and maturity level. Grieving is a family affair that requires time and genuine care from and towards each and every member

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



### 6-Week Grief Journey

This small group explores grief. Grieving is hard enough alone; journey with others for emotional nourishment. Next group **starts in July**. Please call Greg Mason with interest. 843-529-3100 or email [Greg.Mason@gentiva.com](mailto:Greg.Mason@gentiva.com)

## Compassion Fatigue

*Are you taking care of yourself, or are you continually running on "empty"?*  
This program may benefit you, please join us:

**Wednesday, June 10 at 7:00pm**

Location: Heartland of Charleston  
1800 Eagle Landing Blvd, Hanahan

Presented by Hospice of Charleston.

For more information,  
please call Keshia 843-529-3100.



## BEREAVEMENT CARE CONTACT INFORMATION

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

### Save the Date for Shannon's Hope



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 to create friendships and support that allow them to identify and express their feelings in a safe and caring environment. **October 17 and 18, 2009** at Camp

St. Christopher on Seabrook Island. Registration and application are required; interested individuals please call 843-216-7323 Hospice of Charleston Foundation.

#### Additional Resources For Children and Grief

- National Mental Health Information Center— [www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov](http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov)
- National Institute of Mental Health— [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)
- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry— [www.aacap.org](http://www.aacap.org)
- Mental Health America— [www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org)

## HOPE NOTES

### After the First Year...

The first year of bereavement brings pain, disbelief, and the agony of reality as it now confronts you. The time period after the first year is usually not as painful as all the "firsts" were. Although you are getting better you are probably not as healed as you would like to be. It will help you to understand the next step and to learn some skills for coping on a daily basis.

You may find it helpful to lower your expectations of yourself, work on your grief and hold on to hope. Everyone's grief is a little different, it can be compared to fingerprints or snowflakes - no two are alike. Here is a list of suggestions and observations that may help as you move forward:

1. Do not be overly critical of yourself; and, do maintain realistic expectations.
2. Face the reality of your new normal and all its long-term implications.
3. Do not be surprised if the second year is more difficult than the first.
4. If your style of grieving has not been helpful, then it may be time to rethink your approach.
  1. It is vital to find a friend with whom you can talk.
  2. Do not get stuck in one of the stages of grief. Do not ignore it, work on it.
  3. Cry when you have to, and laugh when you can.
  4. Be sure to have a physical checkup with your physician.
  5. Maintain balance in your life physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
  6. Do not expect too much of your family right away, they are grieving too.
  7. Set realistic and attainable goals for yourself.

**Do not give up...be a fighter...things can get better.**

*"Time heals," many people say.  
It may.*

*It may help to dull your pain.*

*But the medicine of time,*

*Taken by itself,*

*It is not sure.*

*Time is neutral.*

***What helps to heal is what you do with time!***

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

**"Hope In Healing"** open group meets **every 2nd Thursday 10:30am-11:30am** at Hospice of Charleston, 3870 Leeds Ave, Ste. 101. Please call 843-529-3100 for information.