

Quick Links

Hollandhospice.org

YoungWidow.org
book lists, online resources
and support

GriefNet.org
online support groups

GROWW.org
online bereaved community

wpsgr.org
Grand Rapids Widowed persons
service: local groups and support

Dougy.org
website for children, teens and
parents following a loss

WebHealing.com
grief resources

Centering.org
grief resources and books

Griefshare.org
nationwide grief support
program; find one nearby

Griefwatch.com
resource for more websites

Griefwords.com

widowconnection.com

The Journey of Grief

Your journey of grief is not a welcome one. It is one that affects us all at one time or another. No one is immune to it.

For that reason, the journey of grief is natural, like the changing of the seasons.

Hospice of Holland is available to you throughout this journey. We offer many different types of support. We want you to know you are not alone in this difficult time.

Through this newsletter we hope to provide you with helpful articles, resources and reminders of upcoming events.

Seasons of Grief and Healing

Holidays are supposed to be a special time of year. They are a time of togetherness, family, celebrating, traditions and thankfulness. And there is usually some stress that accompanies them. But when there has been a death in the family, that stress is magnified. And more than the stress, there is a mixture of other emotions: sadness, loneliness, emptiness and feelings of being overwhelmed.

Learning how to handle the holidays is not a question of how to eliminate the pain and grief, but learning to live with the pain and grief without being consumed by it. No simple guidelines will take away the hurt you are feeling. We offer the following suggestions to give you hope that you can make it through and help you in remembering your loved one.

Be patient and realistic It is important to remember you are grieving. You will be different, your family will be different and your holidays will be different. Be patient with yourself and realistic. Prioritize things. Decide which traditions are really important and forget the rest. Consider new traditions. You can always go back to previous traditions in years to come.

Listen to your heart and acknowledge your limits Set aside some time to get in touch with your feelings. What are your needs this holiday? Share them with family and ask family what is important to them. Plan ahead. Remember that it is ok to say no. You do not have to say yes to every invitation. Do what you can this holiday season, and let that be enough. Consider keeping things simple this year. Grieving takes its toll on the body. It is important to take care of yourself. Get the rest you need. Eat right. Exercise as you are able.

Continued...

Seasons of Grief and Healing *Continued*

Allow yourself to cry As you unpack and sort through holiday decorations and go about some of your traditions, understand that the memories will be bittersweet. There will be many warm, special memories but along with those, will be some heartaches and awareness of your loved one's absence. Remember the many gifts your loved one gave to you – joy, lessons, laughter, love, companionship, faith. Write these down, and put them in their stocking, in an ornament or a memory book.

Remember your loved one through the use of rituals Rituals give us special ways to remember our loved ones, to celebrate their lives, and to recall special memories. They can be private moments alone, or a gathering of friends and family to share our thoughts and support. Buy a special ornament that reminds you of your loved one. Donate a gift in honor of them. Keep a special candle lit to remember your loved one. Make a card or write a letter to them.

Talk about the person who died Include the person's name in your holiday conversation. If you are able to talk candidly, other people are more likely to recognize your need to remember that special person who was an important part of your life.

You may have already experienced moments of feeling better, and not be as consumed with your grief. Holidays may temporarily set you back, don't be discouraged, this is normal. May you find comfort in your memories and hope amidst the sadness. If we can help you in this holiday season by meeting with you or providing some practical suggestions/handouts, please contact your bereavement counselor at Hospice of Holland.

"Our loved ones are still and always will be a part of us. They are threads in our fabric and we cannot lose their love" -Darcie Sims

Upcoming Events/Support Groups

Going Solo – For spouses/partners who have had a loss. This group meets two Thursdays each month, from 10am to 11:30am. Group meets at Hospice of Holland office, 270 Hoover Blvd. Please call 616.355.5594 to register.

Journeys – For younger spouses/partners (up to mid 60's) who have had a loss. This group meets the first and third Thursday of every month, from 5pm-6:30pm. Group meets at Hospice of Holland office, 270 Hoover Blvd. Please call 616.355.5594 to register.

A Season of Grief: How Can I Handle the Holidays? – Thursday, November 7 from 6:30pm to 8:00pm at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel, 650 East 24th St, Holland. Please pre-register by calling Hospice of Holland at 616.355.5594

Memories are powerful. Your memories of the experiences you shared with your loved one can make the past a significant part of who you are in the present. As you attempt to move to the other side of grief, you will need to learn how to store these memories in your heart and mind in such a way that you can recall them accurately but at the same time no longer feel the emotional pain associated with them."

From The Empty Chair:
Handling Grief on Holidays and
Special Occasions,
Susan J. Zonnebelt-Smeenge
and Robert C. DeVries.



Please remember that Hospice of Holland bereavement counselors are available to meet with you one-on-one to help you in your grieving process.

Contact our office at 616.396.2972, if you are interested in setting up a time to meet. In addition, our extensive bereavement library and bereavement support groups are available to you.