

Grief never ends...But it changes. It's a passage, not a place to stay. Grief is not a sign of weakness, nor a lack of faith...

It is the price of love.

—Author Unknown

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

"Joy shared is joy doubled.
Grief shared is grief halved".

—Apache Quote

The Journey of Grief

You are on the journey of grief. This journey is not one you chose and is not one you can choose to avoid. Much like the continued turning of the calendar and changing of the seasons, the journey of grief sweeps you up and in without permission. Because you are an individual with your own personality and distinct relationship with your person, your journey of grief is unique to you; remember, though, that you do not walk the path alone. The Hospice of Holland Bereavement Team is here to assist you. We hope you receive this newsletter as a reminder you are not alone and find in it helpful articles and resources, as well as reminders of upcoming events.

Grief & COVID-19

In addition to all the usual patterns of grief as discussed, it is important to know that our current reality could be heightening your grief responses. As a result of COVID-19, there is increased isolation and a need to maintain physical distancing from those who might be most helpful to you in your grief. You aren't able to give or receive hugs, sit nearby, or even have a face-to-face conversation without a mask covering half of your face. Sometimes, you might appreciate the excuse to stay home and not engage with others; that's your grief. It is important to find ways to connect; even for minimal amounts of time, to assist you in moving forward in grief. If you're surprised by the intensity of your feelings right now, know it is likely due to the world around you. You haven't done anything wrong and there is nothing abnormal about your grief. If you have any concerns about how your grief is manifesting, though, please contact a bereavement counselor. Being heard and validated can go a long way in alleviating the additional burden you might be carrying in this season.

Seasons of Grief and Healing

Summer is upon us once again. In a season filled with picnics, boat rides, and celebrations, summer can be a particularly difficult time for grievers. There seems to be an air of anticipation and fun, a desire to experience new things, a need to play; you, though, experience a different reality.

If you are early in your grief, summer can feel especially cruel. Right now, you might prefer the excuse winter provides to stay indoors by yourself. Instead, you may be trying to find a reason not to join the festivities—because to explain you hurt too much today seems to not always be heard.

If it has been several months since the loss of your person, you may experience summer a bit differently. For you, participating in a boat ride or cookout or game of badminton can actually be both appealing and enjoyable. You need to be intentional about how many such

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Seasons of Grief and Healing *Continued*

activities you schedule in a given week, yet, overall, you may feel grateful to be back out there. But, just as a hot, humid day catches us off guard after days with windows open, so your grief waves continue to hit hard and with little warning. On those days, you likely can't imagine an invitation you want to accept.

Maybe you are someone who has lived nearly a year since your loved one died. Many in your life assume that with this milestone comes a sudden ability to return to a life filled only with blue skies and full sun. You know the truth, though. You might spend time outside, gather with friends or family, and play the games— all the while a quiet presence of grief is with you. It may not interfere like it used to, but it is there as a reminder of your person and of your shared love.

No matter where in grief you find yourself this summer, remember you are not alone and you do not need to force yourself to feel anything other than what you feel.

Summer Self-Care Suggestion

- Go at your own pace. Remember this is your journey and you set the expectation for each day's tasks. When you're considering an activity or a project, ask yourself if it is life-giving or life-draining. If it is draining, consider putting it off to another time.
- Get organized. When our to-do lists are unorganized, they become overwhelming and we are unable to do anything at all. Structure your lists into sections of need (ie: by due date), want, and dream. Once organized, let the due dates dictate how much you do from the 'need' list. Is it a day nothing is due? Pick something from the 'want' list or spend some time on the 'dream' list.
- Play. No matter the place in your grief journey, laughter and play will help you continue moving forward. Watch a funny video, get out board games you've always loved, play a yard game with some friends. Even 15 minutes of play and/or laughter can significantly brighten your day.
- Speak your person's name and story.
- Reach out to your support system or ask them to reach out to you if you're not ready to do the contacting. Grief is unique and individual, but we aren't meant to do it alone.

Upcoming Events/Support Groups

Grief Walking Group – This outdoor group will focus on four steps of grief walking; nature, movement, mindfulness/meditation, and remembering. Meetings will take place at the Upper Macatawa Natural Area (1300 84th Ave in Zeeland) on Thursdays from 10am to 11am beginning July 23 and ending August 30. Please contact Hospice of Holland at 616-355-5594 for details and to register by July 21. Space is limited.

Face masks are required and social distancing will be practiced.

Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass under trees on a summer's day, listening to the murmur of the water, or watching the clouds float across the sky, is by no means a waste of time."

–John Lubbock, *The Use of Life*



Please remember that Hospice of Holland bereavement counselors are available to speak with you one-on-one to help you in your grieving process. Contact our office at 616-355-5594 for more information.