

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](http://Hollandhospice.org)

[YoungWidow.org](http://YoungWidow.org)  
book lists, online resources  
and support

[GriefNet.org](http://GriefNet.org)  
online support groups

[GROWW.org](http://GROWW.org)  
online bereaved community

[wpsgr.org](http://wpsgr.org)  
Grand Rapids Widowed persons  
service: local groups and support

[Dougy.org](http://Dougy.org)  
website for children, teens and  
parents following a loss

[WebHealing.com](http://WebHealing.com)  
grief resources

[Centering.org](http://Centering.org)  
grief resources and books

[Griefshare.org](http://Griefshare.org)  
nationwide grief support  
program; find one nearby

[Griefwatch.com](http://Griefwatch.com)  
resource for more websites

[Griefwords.com](http://Griefwords.com)

[bereaveddadsnetwork.com](http://bereaveddadsnetwork.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.

## Understanding Grief

Moving forward in grief necessitates facing and moving through pain and all other emotions. This often feels scary or intimidating to griever, especially those who have little knowledge of emotions in general. To remove the fear and restore a sense of control, the best thing a griever can do is learn what grief is and how to approach it. Here are a few simple truths to help you better understand grief; for more, see Upcoming Events on page 2.

1. Say their name: Say your person's name as often as needed. Tell stories and ask others to share their stories with you.
2. Distraction is okay, avoidance is risky: We are not built to live in grief 24/7 and it is okay to distract yourself through time with friends, funny movies, or a hobby you enjoy. Avoiding grief (ie: actively ignoring it) is one of the fastest ways to become stuck in grief.
3. There is no timeline: No one can tell you where or when you should be on your grief journey. As long as you are moving forward, you are going the right pace. You do not need to allow others to rush you in a direction you do not want, or are not ready, to go.

## 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 griever. 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

Continued...

## Seasons of Grief and Healing *Continued*

and enjoyable. You need to be intentional about how many such 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 Suggestions

- 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

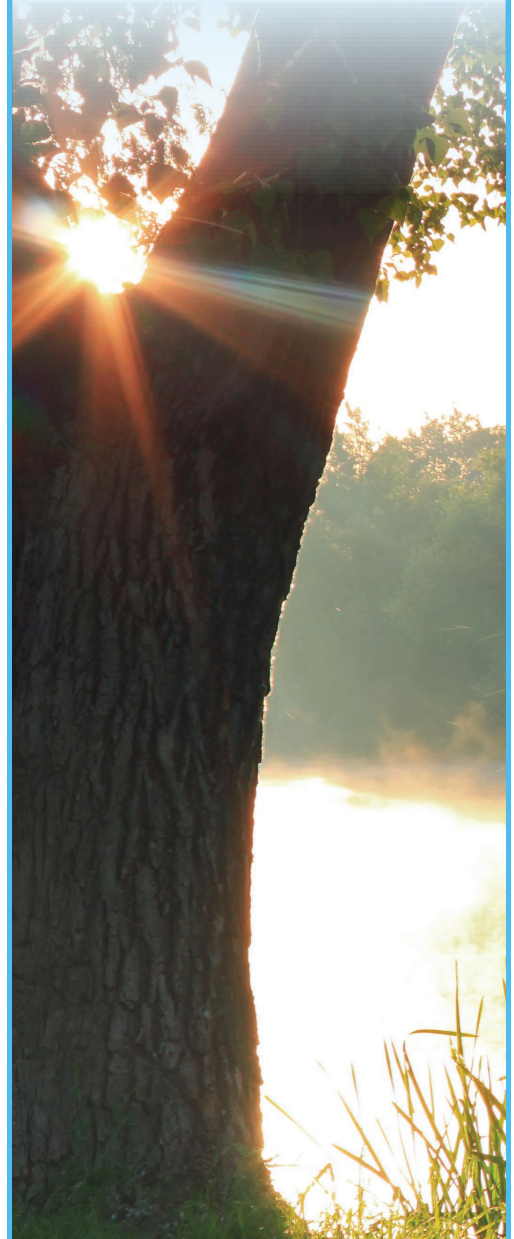
**Going Solo (Virtual)** – A spousal/partner loss support group. This group occurs on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month over Zoom (internet/camera/microphone required) from 10a-11:30a. Limited space available. Please call 616.355.5544 to learn more and register.

**Advanced Grief Walking** – A 6 session outdoor group will focus on nature, movement, mindfulness/meditation, music, companionship, joy, and gratitude. This group will be held at the Upper Macatawa Natural Area (1300 84th Ave in Zeeland) on Wednesday mornings from 10:00-11:30 a.m. starting August 16 and ending Sept 27. Call 616.355.5542 for details and to register by August 9.

**Understanding Grief** – This hour-long workshop and handouts are available via USB. Learn about grief from the comfort of your own home, at your convenience. A computer with a USB port is required to play. Request yours by calling 616.355.5544.

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 616-355-5544 for more information.