

Summer 2006
Volume 1, Issue 1



Caring Connections

Hospice Bereavement Services

- Monthly phone calls
- Monthly Drop-In Grief Support Group
- Spring and Fall 7-Week Bereavement Support Group
- Annual Memorial Service
- Library of books & videos for loan

Call 648-6608

www.hospicesj.ca

Thank you very much for the Grief Support classes. I looked forward to each Wednesday evening...

What I have been learning through this whole process is that "I am normal!" – that grief is a process – a universal experience that affects us all differently but similarly.

There are many "pages" to be digested, but there is hope and even joy if we choose to pursue it – this is indeed good news!

Summer's Journey

Summer is upon us and we are thinking of you as you face this unique time of year without your loved one.

Summer is typically a special time for outdoor activities, travel and visits with friends and family.

With the loss of your loved one this past year, you may find you feel differently about this summer season.

You may not have

the same energy you typically have. Your desire to travel or gather with friends and family may not be the same.

It may be difficult to watch people be happy and carefree. You may wonder when or if you will ever feel that way again.

Or, if you have had the occasion to enjoy yourself, you may feel guilty.

It is important to

remember that a balance of grief and normal living is healthy and helpful.

Be gentle with yourself. You are learning to live differently without your loved one.

"May warm memories bring you peace and comfort. May you be blessed with loving and caring companions on your journey of grief."

The Staff and Volunteers of Hospice

FREE Hospice Grief Groups

Monthly Drop-In Grief Support Group

2nd Wednesday of Every Month
7:00—9:00 pm

282 Douglas Avenue

7-Week Bereavement Support Group

Sept. 27—Nov. 8, 2006

March 14—Apr. 25, 2007

7:00—9:00 pm

Register in Advance

Call 648-6608

HOSPICE MEMORIAL SERVICE

Sunday, Dec. 10
2:00—3:00 pm
The Cathedral
Waterloo Street
Saint John

Healing the Family, Healing the Heart

By Margaret Brownley of Simi Valley, California; Bereavement Magazine January/February 2005

HOSPICE LIBRARY

282 Douglas Ave.
Open Mon to Friday
8:30 am—4:00 pm

Books, videos and
information available
for loan.

*“If you wish to
find closure and
the capacity to
heal, you must
give voice to your
loss.”*

- Accept the fact that not everyone grieves in the same way or in the same time frame. The family member you think is thoughtless or uncaring might be reacting out of fear or shock.

- Learn to recognize denial in others. Some family members protect themselves from grief by overworking or concentrating on things that might seem inappropriate, such as money or estate matters.

- Be aware that you are at your most vulnerable, and are probably overly sensitive to what others say or do. Give others—and yourself—lots of leeway.

- Grief complicated by family problems can be especially draining. Sometimes it helps to take time out. Postpone decisions that do not have to be made right away.

- Plan a family grief evening. Check out a video on grief from the Hospice Library. Watch it and discuss it afterward. Plan a family-project day: Work on a memorial garden or scrapbook.

- If decisions must be made, and no agreement can be reached, ask a family

friend to arbitrate.

- Ask what’s really going on here? A family member, who lashes out in anger or hatred, is probably acting out of fear.

- If you are not on speaking terms with a family member, write a letter to that person. Don’t mail it— just write what you feel. This will help you put things in perspective and identify the source of your anger.

- Attend a Hospice Support Group or seek family counseling. If family members won’t go with you, go alone.

- Try humour. People connect best when they laugh together. Plan a fun outing or share a funny family memory.

- Don’t become discouraged or hurt if other family members pull away or otherwise seem distant. Turning inward is a normal part of grief.

- Be patient. When friends or family members do or say something hurtful, trust is lost and rebuilding that takes time— sometimes lots of time—but it can be done if hearts are willing.

- Discuss the following question with family members: What do we want our loved one’s legacy to be: strife or unity?

Rules for Family Healing

- It’s okay to talk about feelings, even bad feelings. Talking will help the pain go away.

- Feeling guilty or angry is normal. We all do or say things we later regret, but none of us are to blame for our loved ones death.

- It’s okay to cry or feel sad or lonely. Tears help us to heal and feel better.

- It’s okay to share memories and talk about your loved one that has died, even if it brings tears, for memories are gifts that are meant to be opened and shared with each other.

- Most important: Don’t forget to ask for extra hugs whenever you are feeling sad, lonely or confused and be prepared to give hugs back.



What I Know About Healing

By Sandra Gaines of Independence, Kentucky; Printed in Bereavement Magazine
January/February 2005—www.bereavementresources.com

When I recently returned home after major surgery, I began to make notes about the healing process that was taking place within my body. As I was writing, I realized how similar healing from a physical wound is to healing from a grief wound.

- ♥ Healing is a process, it takes time, it happens in stages, it can be painful and it will leave scars.
- ♥ I need to heed the advice of experts in order to facilitate the healing and avoid relapses.
- ♥ If I am in good overall health going in, I will be stronger and more able to work my own recovery program. This is true whether the wound is physical, spiritual, or emotional.
- ♥ Healing takes energy. I am not surprised that I don't have much energy for other things.
- ♥ Healing is meant to happen from the inside out, so the visible signs of healing may not be noticed for quite awhile. However, occasionally things may appear to be healed on the outside, but are far from it on the inside.
- ♥ I take the experiences of others with a grain of salt and try not to compare my pain and healing to that of others.
- ♥ It helps to engage in activities that "feel" like healing, even if they are not a part of the prescribed regimen, like getting a massage, watching a funny movie, surrounding myself with lit candles, good music and pets.
- ♥ I honour the messages my body sends me. I rest when I am tired, cry when I need to and laugh when I can.
- ♥ I am willing to tell people how I am feeling and what I need from the.
- ♥ At some point, I need to start engaging in normal activities again, testing the waters and my strength. However, I don't overdo it. I will know when I am ready to fully embrace life again.
- ♥ Finally, I recognize that changes have taken place within my body, mind and spirit and I'm ready to share with others who may walk on a similar path someday.

We Remember Them

From the "Gates of Prayer"

*"In the rising sun and in its going
down,
We remember them.
In the blowing of the wind and in the
chill of winter,
We remember them.
In the rustling of leaves and the beauty
of autumn,*

*We remember them.
When we have joys we yearn to
share;
We remember them.
So long as we live, they too shall
live, for they are now a part of us as
We remember them."*



**Attend a Hospice
Grief Support
Group
Call 648-6608**

My Grief Rights: *Ten Healing Rights for Grieving Children*

By Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.

Fort Collins, Colorado

"This bill of rights for grieving children is intended to empower them to help themselves heal and to help direct the adults in their lives to be supportive as well."

Bereavement Magazine

Nov/Dec 2003

wolfelt@bereavementmag.com

The following ten rights will help you understand your grief and feel better about life again. Post this list on your refrigerator or on your bedroom door or wall. Re-reading it often will help you stay on track as you move toward healing from your loss.

1. I have the right to have my own unique feelings about death. I may feel mad, sad or lonely. I may feel scared or relieved. I may feel numb or sometimes not anything at all. No one will feel exactly like I do.

2. I have the right to talk about my grief whenever I feel like talking. When I need to talk, I will find someone who will listen to me and love me. When I don't want to talk about it, that's okay too.

3. I have the right to show my feelings of grief in my own way. When they are hurting, some kids like to play so they'll feel better for awhile. I can play or laugh too. I might also get mad and scream. This does not mean I am bad, it just means I have scary feelings that I need help with.

4. I have the right to need other people to help me with my grief, especially grown-ups who care about me. Mostly I need them to pay attention to what I am feeling and saying and to love me no matter what.

5. I have the right to get upset about

normal, everyday problems. I might feel grumpy and have trouble getting along with others sometimes.

6. I have the right to have "grief bursts" - sudden, unexpected feelings of sadness that just hit me, even long after the death. These feelings can be very strong and even scary. When this happens, I might feel afraid to be alone.

7. I have the right to use my beliefs about my god or higher being to help me deal with my feelings of grief. Praying might make me feel better and somehow closer to the person who died.

8. I have the right to try to figure out *why* the person I love died. But it's okay if I don't find an answer. *Why* questions about life and death are the hardest questions in the world.

9. I have the right to think and talk about my memories of the person who has died. Sometimes those memories will be happy and sometimes they might be sad. Either way, these memories help me keep alive my love for the person who has died.

10. I have the right to move toward and feel my grief and, over time, to heal. I'll go on to live a happy life, but the life and death of the person who died will always be a part of me. I'll always miss this special person.



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Hospice Grief & Bereavement Services are made possible through community donations. Please donate to Hospice and help us help others when they need it most.