

IN TOUCH

HOSPICE OF THE VALLEY BEREAVEMENT NEWSLETTER

JULY/AUGUST 2009

Understanding Different Grieving Patterns in Your Family

GRIEF IS A FAMILY AFFAIR

When one member of a family dies, the entire family is affected, as each person grieves in his or her unique way. Roles and responsibilities shift, relationships change, communication and mutual support among family members may suffer. Over time, the family must identify what the roles and functions of the lost member were, decide whose job it will be to execute those duties now, and learn how to compensate for their absence.

DIFFERENCES IN PERSONALITY

Differing personality styles and patterns among family members will affect how each one individually expresses, experiences and deals with grief. While we all have the capacity to react to loss in a variety of ways, recent personality research shows that there are three basic styles or patterns of grieving: instrumental, intuitive and dissonant. Typically, a person trusts and prefers one pattern of response over the other two and will behave accordingly.

Instrumental grievers experience and speak of their grief intellectually and physically. They are most comfortable with seeking accurate information, analyzing facts, making informed decisions and taking action to solve problems. Remaining strong, dispassionate and detached in the face of powerful emotions, they may speak of their grief in an intellectual way, possibly appearing cold and uncaring to others.

Intuitive grievers experience a full, rich range of emotions in response to grief. Comfortable with strong emotions and tears, they are sensitive to their own feelings and to the feelings of others. Since they feel strong emotions so deeply, they're less able to rationalize and intellectualize the pain of grief and more likely to appear overwhelmed and devastated by it.

Dissonant grievers encounter a conflict between the way they experience their grief internally and the way they express it outwardly, which produces a persistent discomfort and lack of harmony. The "dissonance" or conflict may be due to family, cultural or social traditions. Although their grief may be profound and strongly felt, they struggle to hide their true feelings in order to preserve the image they wish to project to the public. Others may condemn themselves and feel very guilty for not feeling whatever they think is expected of them to feel.

GENDER DIFFERENCES

Men are more often instrumental grievers. They tend to put their feelings into action, experiencing their grief physically, rather than emotionally. They deal with their loss by focusing on goal-oriented activities that activate thinking, doing and acting. Rather than endlessly talking about or crying over the person who died, for example, a man may throw himself into time-limited tasks such as planting a memorial garden or writing a poem or eulogy. Such activities give a man not only a sense of potency and accomplishment as he enters his grief, but also a means of escaping it when the task is done. If a man relates the details of his loss to his closest male friends, it's likely to be around activities they hold in common. Although a man may let himself cry in his grief, he will usually do so alone, in secret, or in the dark, which may lead some to conclude that he must not be grieving at all.

Women, on the other hand, tend to be intuitive grievers. They have been socialized to be more open with their feelings. They may feel a greater need to talk with others who are comfortable with strong emotions and willing to

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listen without judgment. Unfortunately, while it may be more acceptable for women in our culture to be expressive and emotional, all too often in grief they are criticized for being too sentimental or overly sensitive.

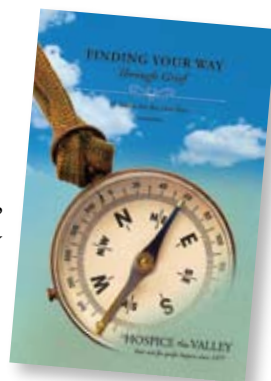
GRIEVING IN CHILDREN

Children grieve just as deeply, but depending on their cognitive and emotional development, they will experience and express their grief differently from the grown-ups around them. Their response will depend on the knowledge and skills available to them at the time of the loss. More than anything else, children need their parents to be honest with them. They need accurate, factual information; freedom to ask questions and express their feelings; inclusion in decisions, discussions and family commemorative rituals; stable, consistent attention from their caregivers; and time to explore and come to terms with the meaning of their loss.

ALLOWING FOR INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

The way we grieve is as individual as we are, and our own gender biases may influence how we “read” another gender’s grieving. Some females may be instrumental in pattern and style, and grieve in traditionally “masculine” ways, and some males may be more intuitive by nature, and therefore, will grieve in traditionally “feminine” ways. Regardless of differences in personality, gender and age, the pressures of grief are still present for all family members, and the tasks of mourning are the same: to confront, endure and work through the emotional effects of the death so the loss can be dealt with successfully. Grief must be expressed and released in order to be resolved, and all family members need encouragement to identify and release emotions, to talk about and share their thoughts, and to accept help and support from others.

This is an excerpt from the book, *Finding Your Way through Grief: A Guide for the First Year*, Second Edition, by Marty Tousley, CNS-BC, FT © 2008. If you would like a copy of the entire book, please call the Bereavement Office: 602.530.6970.



Announcements

Mother Loss: Healing Support for Daughters

Hospice of the Valley – East Valley

East Charting Station

3489 S. Mercy Rd., #101, Gilbert, AZ 85297

Six Wednesdays beginning September 30, 6–7:30 p.m.

Hospice of the Valley – Northeast

5111 N. Scottsdale Rd. #108, Scottsdale, AZ 85250

Six Wednesdays beginning October 14, 6–7:30 p.m.

“Picking Up the Pieces in Mid-Life” Support Group for Widows and Widowers

Hospice of the Valley – Northeast

5111 N. Scottsdale Rd. #108, Scottsdale, AZ 85250

Six Thursdays beginning October 15, 6–7:30 p.m.

Space is limited for these special groups. Please register by calling 602.636.5390.

Bereavement Services

Hospice of the Valley provides bereavement support for 13 months following the death of your loved one. Support groups throughout the Valley, and grief counseling support are available. Information can be found at hov.org, or by calling 602.530.6970.

Our online grief discussion groups are monitored by professional grief counselors and are privately administered to ensure the highest level of quality, safety and security for participants. Membership is free and simply requires that visitors register with a username and password of their own choosing. (On the hov.org home page, click on “We Offer Various Forms of Grief Support.” Scroll down until you see “On-Line Grief Healing Discussion Groups.” Once at the site, click on “Register” next to the “Welcome Guest” greeting at the top of the page, and follow the instructions there.)

Also on our Web site, you can view previous issues of *Bereavement In Touch* newsletters, as well as other information, including social groups, writings by the bereaved, available books and other resources.



Grief Support Groups (Adult Drop-In Groups, No Registration Needed)

APACHE JUNCTION

Horizon Bay*
2080 S. Ironwood Dr.
Meets 2nd and 4th Monday
9–10:30 a.m.

* formerly Merrill Gardens

FOUNTAIN HILLS

Fountain Hills Senior Activity Center
13001 N. La Montana Dr.
Community Center
Meets 2nd and 4th Wednesday
10–11:30 a.m.

GILBERT

Hospice of the Valley
3489 S. Mercy Rd., Suite 101
Meets 2nd and 4th Monday
6–7:30 p.m.

GOODYEAR

Hampton Inn & Suites
2000 N. Litchfield Rd.
(North of McDowell Rd., next to
Macaroni Grill)
Meets 2nd and 4th Monday
6–7:30 p.m.

PHOENIX

Hospice of the Valley, Central Office
1510 E. Flower St.
Meets 1st and 3rd Thursday
6:30–8 p.m.

The Stratford Assisted Living
1739 W. Myrtle Ave.
Meets 2nd and 4th Tuesday
3–4:30 p.m.

MESA

LGBT Community*
Hospice of the Valley East Office
777 W. Southern Ave., Suite 301
Meets 2nd and 4th Monday
6–7:30 p.m.

* Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender Community

Hospice of the Valley East Office
777 W. Southern Ave., Suite 301
Meets 1st and 3rd Tuesday
6–7:30 p.m.

Fellowship Square
6945 E. Main St., Building 4
Meets 1st and 3rd Monday
1–2:30 p.m.

NORTH PHOENIX

Paradise Valley Community Center
17402 N. 40th St.
Meets 1st and 3rd Tuesday
6:30–8 p.m.

PARADISE VALLEY

Valley Presbyterian Church
6947 E. McDonald Dr.
Circular Chapel (off McDonald)
Meets 2nd and 4th Thursday
6:30–8 p.m.

PEORIA

Hospice of the Valley, West Office
9720 W. Peoria Ave., Suite 128
Meets 2nd and 4th Wednesday
2–3:30 p.m.

Hospice of the Valley, West Office
9720 W. Peoria Ave., Suite 128
Meets 1st and 3rd Thursday
6–7:30 p.m.

SCOTTSDALE

Scottsdale Senior Center
at Granite Reef
1700 N. Granite Reef Rd., Room 8
Meets 2nd and 4th Monday
1:30–3 p.m.

Virginia G. Piper Center
10460 N. 92nd St.
Research Pavilion
1st Floor Group Room*
Meets 2nd and 4th Monday
1:30–3 p.m.

* Note room change

SUN CITY

CIGNA Office Building
13041 N. Del Webb Blvd.
Classroom 2
Meets 1st and 3rd Monday
3–4:30 p.m.

SUN LAKES

Sun Lakes United Methodist Church
9248 E. Riggs Rd.
(North of Riggs Rd., 2 mi. East of I-10)
Meets 1st and 3rd Thursday
1–2:30 p.m.

**PET LOSS
Support Group**
Hospice of the Valley
Administrative Office
1510 E. Flower St.
Meets 1st Saturday each month
9–10:30 a.m.

Please note: If date of a group falls on a national holiday, please call to verify the group will be meeting.

For bereavement support, please call 602.530.6970



HOSPICE
of the VALLEY

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*When all is said, when all is done,
I will remember you with love.
When all is said, when all is done,
you will be in my heart forever.
You're the thread that weaves my soul,
when the fire turns to ember
and the grass has turned to gold.
When all is said, when all is done,
I will remember you...
remember you with love.*

—Paul Alexander Music, 1992