



IN TOUCH

HOSPICE OF THE VALLEY BEREAVEMENT NEWSLETTER

MARCH / APRIL 2009

Normal Reactions to Loss

Grief does not occur in easily defined stages; rather it is a blend of emotional, cognitive and behavioral responses. The death of your loved one will affect the whole of you, body and soul. Your initial and later reactions will be felt and expressed physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually.

PHYSICAL REACTIONS TO LOSS

The stress of an emotional injury may be expressed through physical symptoms such as fatigue, high blood pressure, muscle tension, headaches, shortness of breath, erratic sleeping and eating patterns, or aggravation of chronic or new medical conditions.

Nutrition can suffer. In an effort to comfort and nurture yourself, you may eat more or less than usual. Stress can interfere with the absorption of important nutrients, while fats and sugars deplete energy.

Rest and relaxation are essential. Because rest relieves, restores and refreshes, it is important that you make time for routine “mindless” activity, or get away for a relaxing weekend. You may sleep less or more than usual as a way to avoid or shut out the pain.

Although grief saps your energy, exercise is good for you. Regular physical activity increases your circulation, stimulates your heart, cleanses your body, discharges negative energy and gets you out and about.

Human contact is a basic human need. Touching, hugging, holding and having contact with another is comforting and healing.

SUGGESTIONS FOR COPING WITH PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

- Inform your physician about what is happening in your life, so your health can be monitored.
- If your diet is not well balanced, try supplementing with vitamins and minerals. Add fruits, vegetables and grains. Eat smaller, more frequent meals rather than three big ones. Eat foods that are easy to fix and digest, and include a special treat now and then.
- Drink lots of water.
- Avoid self-medicating and alcohol, which can offer only temporary escape and may have serious side effects.
- Cut back on your caffeine intake, and drink a cup of warm milk or water at bedtime (plain milk is a natural sedative).
- Take a relaxing bath or warm shower before bed.
- Stick to a regular routine; retire and get up at the same time each day.
- Follow a deep relaxation routine; perform deep breathing exercises in bed.
- Listen to music that soothes your soul and decreases tension.
- Visualize being in your favorite pleasant place.
- Recognize that your thinking processes, coordination and reaction time aren't up to par right now.
- Find an exercise you can do (stretching, walking, swimming, dancing, swinging or swaying to music), and set aside time to do it regularly.

Continued on page 2

Announcements

Continued from page 1

- Ask someone to stay with you to help you focus and prioritize what needs to get done.
- Reach out and touch someone. Cuddle children and pets; hold hands with your friends; get a massage.
- Attend to personal grooming (hair, skin, nails, wardrobe) that will enhance your body image. There is truth in the saying that when you look good, you feel good too.

EMOTIONAL REACTIONS TO LOSS

For weeks, months, or even years after the death occurs, the shock of loss continues in a wave of disbelieving aftershocks. You recognize that your loved one has died, but you're unable to grasp all the ramifications of that reality. Even simple tasks like getting out of bed in the morning, tending to personal grooming, fixing a meal or going somewhere with friends may seem overwhelming and exhausting. You may have difficulty concentrating and remembering, and feel incapable of making the simplest decision. You may experience nightmares, dreams and phobias, and you may fear that you're going crazy. You may find yourself crying at the slightest provocation or at unexpected moments. Alternatively, you may fear that if you permit yourself to cry, the tears will never stop. You may have the pessimistic belief that things will never get any better, as if life and living are useless, and you may even want to die. While not unusual in grief, such thoughts are usually fleeting and simply reflect how desperately you want the pain of loss to end.

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.



Mother Loss: Healing Support for Daughters

Hospice of the Valley – **Central Valley**
1510 E. Flower St., Phoenix, AZ 85014
Six Wednesdays, April 1–May 6, 6–7:30 p.m.

Mother's Day Remembrance

Hospice of the Valley – **Scottsdale**
5111 N. Scottsdale Rd. #108, Scottsdale, AZ 85250
May 9, 1–3 p.m.

Hospice of the Valley – **East Valley**

777 W. Southern Ave., #301, Building C, Mesa, AZ 85210
May 9, 1–3 p.m.

Hospice of the Valley – **West Valley**

9720 W. Peoria Ave., #128, Peoria, AZ 85345
May 9, 1–3 p.m.

Father's Day Remembrance

Hospice of the Valley – **Central Phoenix**
1510 E. Flower St., Phoenix, AZ 85014
June 20, 1–3 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.
Education Conference Room
Meets 2nd and 4th Tuesday
3–4:30 p.m.

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



*The only courage that matters
is the kind that gets you
from one moment to the next.*

—Mignon McLaughlin



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of the VALLEY

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