



IN TOUCH

Bereavement Newsletter

Bereavement Department (602) 530-6970 or hov.org

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MANAGING YOUR GRIEF

Doing grief work

Once you begin to recognize—and experience most intensely—all the reactions to your loss, the real work of mourning begins. In ways that are personal and unique, you will gradually integrate your loss into the framework of your life.

Grief work is an active rather than passive process, which includes coming to terms with your loss, as well as finding meaning in it. It can be done through private activities such as reading and writing, and with others through talking, participating in bereavement counseling, or finding support in a group. Grief work can be emotionally and physically exhausting, but it can also produce tremendous healing and growth.

Identifying a personal support system

Think about and identify the people, groups and activities in your life that form your personal network of support and help give meaning to your life. Consider asking a friend or family member to help you develop a more complete listing. Write down potential sources of support, including their names, telephone numbers and addresses, so you'll have them handy when you need them.

People you can depend on might include family members, relatives, friends, neighbors, teachers, colleagues, clergy, your family physician, family lawyer, accountant, insurance agent and Hospice of the Valley bereavement staff.

Groups might include your church community or your affiliation with work or special interest circles, clubs

and organizations, and Hospice of the Valley bereavement support groups.

Activities include whatever brings you satisfaction, relaxation, comfort, or relief, such as meditating, writing or journaling, engaging in hobbies (gardening, photography, collecting) or arts and crafts (painting, drawing, modeling), listening to or making music, exercising, or simply talking and crying.

Other suggestions

- List all the interests, activities, hobbies, courses, or skills you've enjoyed in the past or always wanted to pursue, and follow up on at least one of them each week or each month.
- Visit your public library or local bookstore and ask for information, literature, films, audiocassettes and videotapes on grief, bereavement and loss.
- Find local chapters of national self-help and support organizations related to your specific type of loss.
- Watch and listen for announcements of lectures, workshops and seminars on grief in the community. Check local radio and television stations, newspapers and bulletin boards in your grocery store, library, church, or school.
- If you have a computer and access to the Internet, use the keywords grief and grieving and visit one of the many sites that offer information and support to people who are mourning.
- If you work outside your home, let your supervisor or employer know what's happening in your life.

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MANAGING YOUR GRIEF *(continued)*

Seeing a bereavement counselor

When it seems that support from family and friends is either too much or not enough, a few sessions with a bereavement counselor may give you the understanding and comfort you need. Individual bereavement counseling is one of the services available at no cost to individuals and families whose loved ones were patients of Hospice of the Valley.

Unlike friendship, a professional counseling relationship offers you the opportunity to relate to a caring, supportive individual who understands the grief process, doesn't depend on you and who will allow you to mourn without interference. Within the safety and confidentiality of such a relationship, you can share your intimate thoughts, make sense of what you're feeling and clarify your reactions. An effective bereavement counselor is knowledgeable about the mourning process, helps you to feel understood, offers a witness to your experience, encourages you to move forward, fosters faith that you will survive and offers hope that you will get through your grief.

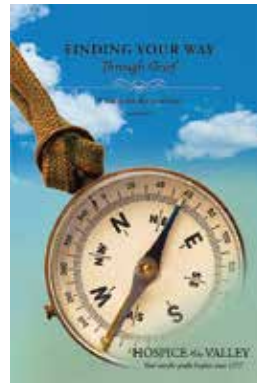
Seeing a bereavement counselor is appropriate if:

- You feel uncomfortable with yourself or find yourself unable to function normally.
- You have reactions from which you can get no relief, or over which you feel no control.

- You wonder if your responses are normal, or if they've gone on too long.
- You have recurring feelings of guilt or anger.
- You simply have a need to talk to someone outside the "family circle."

Finding support in a group

Friends, family members and co-workers may not fully understand or appreciate the attachment you have with your loved one and the pain you may still be feeling weeks and months after the death. A support group may be one of the few places where you can be among others who understand and where you can talk freely about the one you have loved and lost. Information can be found at hov.org or by calling (602) 530-6970.



This is an excerpt from the book, *Finding Your Way through Grief: A Guide for the First Year*, Second Edition, by Marty Tousley, CNSBC, FT, DCC.

If you would like to purchase a copy of this book (\$12), visit <https://hov.org/news/> and click on the "Online Store" link at the bottom of the page.



There is a sacredness in tears.
They are not the mark of weakness, but of power.
They speak more eloquently than 10,000 tongues.
They are the messengers of overwhelming grief,
of deep contrition and of unspeakable love.

—Washington Irving

ADULT GRIEF SUPPORT GROUPS

At the time of printing, we are making plans to reopen some of our groups for in-person participation. Please watch for updates at hov.org or call our Bereavement Dept.: (602) 530-6970.

If you are in need of crisis support, please call the **Maricopa County Crisis Response Network**: (602) 222-9444 or **Non-Crisis Warm Line**: (602) 347-1100.

FINDING COMFORT IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

People who are grieving can be especially vulnerable to outside stressors such as uncertainty caused by COVID-19. Here are some ideas to successfully move through these changing times:

- **Stay calm.** Focus on the positive. Remind yourself this is a temporary situation and do what you can to assist others in a safe way.
- **Have a daily plan.** Whether you are working from home or not working during this outbreak, organize your time and keep your schedules as normal as possible, so life can still feel manageable.
- **Maintain your environment.** Keeping things orderly in your personal world counters feeling of helplessness. Do things that give you a sense of control. Clean a cupboard. Make your lunch and eat it on schedule.
- **Manage anxiety as it occurs.** Thought stopping can be an effective technique to prevent our imaginations from spiraling out of control.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** This is very important. Empty calories do not give you the healthy fuel you need to feel good. They can bog down your system and weaken your emotional immunity. Be aware that alcohol significantly lowers physical immunity. Find alternative ways of relaxing.
- **Breathe.** To stay calm and centered, breathe in short bursts through your nose for a count of 4, hold your breath for a count of 6, and slowly release for a count of 8. Do this hourly for a few minutes or whenever you're anxious.
- **Exercise.** Exercise is a must to help manage stress, depression or anxiety. Your body's natural serotonin is one of nature's most important mood stabilizers. Research shows even a short brisk walk can effectively manage depression.
- **Listen to uplifting music.** Whatever genre you enjoy, play music, sing along and dance a little. It's a great way to fit in a little exercise and lift your spirits.
- **Find your positive voice.** Watch your narrative. Our thoughts tend to be more negative when we are hurt and grieving. Connect with positive people. Read, watch programs and find uplifting stories to engage your mind.
- **Don't isolate.** Isolation is a huge trigger when grieving. Call, text or email at least two people daily to avoid negativity and maintain social connections. Everyone benefits.
- **Embrace the extra time you gain through social distancing.** Choose to be creative. Enjoy your current hobby or create a new one. Take advantage of YouTube or other social media to learn something new. Spend time with pets and pamper yourself.
- **Limit how much you talk about the virus.** Set limits on news watching. Stay informed but do normal activities.
- **Don't collapse.** To center yourself, create a schedule, put things on paper, engage in a project, organize a meal or a family activity.
- **Do a spiritual reset.** Instead of getting lost in uncertainty, realize that all we really know about is today. Challenge yourself to appreciate "living in the moment." Practice mindfulness or short meditations to help you focus on the present. hov.org/our-care/mindfulness



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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bereavement services

Hospice of the Valley provides bereavement support for up to 13 months following the death of your loved one. Virtual support groups and telephonic or virtual grief counseling support are available. Information can be found at hov.org/grief-support-groups, or by calling (602) 530-6970. In-person groups and counseling sessions will be returning over the coming months.

“Gone from our Sight, Never from Our Hearts”

If you have recently suffered the death of a loved one and would benefit from sharing with other adults who are also newly bereaved (3–6 months), this might be the right group for you.

This group is 80% psychosocial education with the goal of providing greater understanding of the grief journey; the tasks of mourning; and how to grow forward to a meaningful life without the physical presence of our loved one.

For more information or to pre-register for this virtual group, call (602) 636-5390.

New Song Center for Grieving Children

New Song Center for Grieving Children, a program of Hospice of the Valley, provides grief support groups for children, youth, young adults and adults. Support groups are currently being offered for all age groups virtually, at no cost to participants. We will update you as soon as we can safely return to in-person groups.

“*Enduring Ties*” is an evening support group for families that have experienced the death of a minor child. There is also a support group for grandparents grieving the death of a grandchild.

“*Luz del Corazón*” is a support group program for families whose first language is Spanish and who have experienced any type of loss through death.

For more information, call (480) 951-8985 or view newsongcenter.org.

Additional resources are available at
<https://hov.org/our-care/grief-support/>