



# IN TOUCH

## *Bereavement Newsletter*

Bereavement Department (602) 530-6970 or [hov.org](http://hov.org)

MAY / JUNE 2023

## SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL REACTIONS TO LOSS

### **Social reactions**

There are times when you would give anything to be with your loved one again, if only long enough to be relieved of your loneliness and reassured that your loved one is still a part of your life. At other times, you may feel a need for solitude, to withdraw temporarily from others and the pressures and decisions of daily life. This need to turn inward, to reflect on your loss, to get in touch with your innermost feelings, can be a helpful time for you to find your tears and figure out where you are going from here.

As a child, you may have learned that feelings should be buried and mourning should be done alone. Perhaps you never learned to accept or ask for help. As an adult, you may be too embarrassed or ashamed to let your emotions show in front of others, equating grief with self-indulgence or self-pity. You may feel isolated, different and apart from everyone else, convinced that no one understands. You may feel stunned at the normalcy of life around you as people go about their business, totally unaware that your world has stopped and your entire life has been turned upside down.

Some people you know may be done with your grieving long before you are, expecting you to be “over it by now” or worrying that you’re somehow “hanging on” to your grief. Uncomfortable with your strong feelings, they may change the subject or avoid any mention of your loved one’s name.

### *Suggestions for coping with loneliness and isolation*

- Think about who is supportive to you and the most accepting and caring with your grief. Look for those who will listen without judging you, or for those who have suffered a similar loss.
- Find time with others to talk, to touch, to receive support. Be honest about what you’re feeling. Allow yourself to express your sadness.
- Don’t expect others to guess what you need. When you want to be touched, held, hugged, listened to or pampered, say so.
- If all you want from others is help with simple errands, tasks and repairs, say so.
- Let others (especially children) know if and when you need to be alone, so they won’t feel rejected.
- Go somewhere and have a good, long cry—and do it as often as you wish. You have every right to miss the person who has died. Accept your feelings as normal.
- Identify your loneliest times, and think of ways to alter your routines and environment (for example, rearrange the furniture in a room; plan your weekends ahead of time; use your microwave for quick, easy meals).
- Realize that no one can totally understand the relationship you had with your loved one. Though well-intentioned, things said to you may hurt.
- Ask people to remember, talk about and share stories about your loved one with you.

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## SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL REACTIONS TO LOSS *(continued)*

### Spiritual reactions

Regardless of one's identification or affiliation with an organized religion, spiritual doubts and questions may arise when a loved one dies. Suffering a major loss often leads us to confront and re-think our basic beliefs about God, religion, death and the afterlife. Some may turn to God as a source of strength and consolation at the time of a loved one's death and find their faith has deepened. Others may question the religious teachings they've practiced all their lives and find the very foundations of their beliefs shaken to the core. Even those who had no religious upbringing at all may feel abandoned by God or angry with God for "letting their loved one get sick and die." Not all people respond to loss in the same way, and not everyone shares the same cultural, religious or spiritual beliefs about death and the afterlife.

Death forces us to confront the spiritual questions we may have been avoiding or haven't taken time to address, the questions that get at the very heart and meaning of life: Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going?

Whether a strong religious faith will be a help or a hindrance in your recovery from grief depends on what you believe and how your beliefs are practiced. Like any other tool, religion can be used in healthy, appropriate ways, or it can be abused in unhealthy, inappropriate ways.

Religion can be a great antidote for the loneliness that accompanies every major loss, and it can be a source of strength and group support. What it cannot do is give us immunity from loss or give us back our lost loved ones—nor can it provide us with a shortcut through grief.



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.



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It will never be the same.  
I will never be the same.  
You came. We loved. You left.  
I will survive until I survive.  
And one day I will find myself alive again.

—From *How to Survive the Loss of Love*  
Colgrove, Bloomfield, McWilliams

## ADULT GRIEF SUPPORT GROUPS

**In-person and virtual groups** are available county-wide. Please watch for updates at [hov.org](http://hov.org) or call the Bereavement Dept. at (602) 530-6970. Groups marked virtual below require a call to (602) 636-5390 to obtain the invite link on the Zoom platform.

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. **Crisis Text Line:** Text 741741 or visit <https://www.crisistextline.org/text-us/>. **Mental Health and Suicide Crisis** (national 3-digit code): 988

### PHOENIX

**Memories of the Heart...When a Loved One Dies with Dementia – Virtual**  
1st & 3rd Tuesday; 10:30 a.m.–Noon  
Call for link: (602) 636-5390

**Healing Rainbows: Phoenix – Virtual**  
(Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender)  
2nd & 4th Tuesday; 6–7:30 p.m.  
Call for link: (602) 636-5390

**Hospice of the Valley – In person**  
1510 E. Flower St., Bldg. 1  
Phoenix, AZ 85014  
2nd & 4th Tuesday; 5:30–7 p.m.

**Hospice of the Valley – In person, Beginning in June**  
1510 E. Flower St., Bldg. 1  
Phoenix, AZ 85014  
1st & 3rd Wednesday; 5:30–7 p.m.

**Luz del Corazón for Spanish Speakers**  
Hospice of the Valley  
1510 E. Flower St., Bldg. 1  
Phoenix, AZ 85014  
Call to register: (602) 410-5252

**Phoenix – Virtual**  
1st & 3rd Thursday; 5:30–7 p.m.  
Call for link: (602) 636-5390

**La Siena Retirement Community – In person, Beginning in June**  
909 E. Northern Ave.  
Phoenix, AZ 85020  
To be determined; please check website  
2:30–4 p.m.

### EAST VALLEY

**East Valley – Virtual**  
1st & 3rd Tuesday; 1–2:30 p.m.  
Call for link: (602) 636-5390

**Hospice of the Valley – In person**  
2020 E. Woodside Ct.  
Gilbert, AZ 85297  
1st & 3rd Thursday; 1–2:30 p.m.  
Lost Dutchman Room

**Hospice of the Valley – In person, Beginning in June**  
2020 E. Woodside Ct.  
Gilbert, AZ 85297  
2nd & 4th Wednesday; 5:30–7 p.m.  
Lost Dutchman Room

**Leisure World – In person**  
908 S. Power Rd.  
Mesa, AZ 85206  
2nd & 4th Tuesday; 1–2:30 p.m.  
Recreation #1 Banquet Room

**Mountain View Funeral and Cemetery – In person**  
7900 E. Main St.  
Mesa, AZ 85207  
1st Monday; 10–11 a.m.

**Pecos Community Center – Virtual**  
1st & 3rd Wednesday; 6–7:30 p.m.  
Call for link: (602) 636-5390

**St. Matthew's – Virtual**  
2540 W. Baseline Rd.  
Mesa, AZ 85202  
1st & 3rd Tuesday; 6–7:30 p.m.  
Call for link: (602) 636-5390

**Mountain View Funeral and Cemetery – In person**  
21809 S. Ellsworth Rd.  
Queen Creek, AZ 85142  
2nd Monday; 10–11 a.m.

### WEST VALLEY

**Hospice of the Valley – In person**  
9435 W. Peoria Ave.  
Peoria, AZ 85345  
2nd & 4th Wednesday; 2–3:30 p.m.

**West Valley – Virtual**  
Every other Thursday; 1–2:30 p.m.  
Call for link: (602) 636-5390

### NORTHEAST VALLEY

**Granite Reef Senior Center – In person**  
1700 N. Granite Reef Rd., Room 8  
Scottsdale, AZ 85257  
1st & 3rd Monday; 1:30–3 p.m.

**Northeast Valley – In person**  
2nd & 4th Tuesday; 3–4:30 p.m.

**Virginia G. Piper Center – Virtual**  
1st & 3rd Tuesday; 1:30–3 p.m.  
Call for link: (602) 636-5390

### NORTHWEST VALLEY

**Wickenburg Community Hospital – In person**  
520 Rose Lane  
Wickenburg, AZ 85390  
2nd Thursday; 3–4:30 p.m.

### PET LOSS SUPPORT GROUP – Virtual

1st Saturday; 9–11 a.m.  
Call for link: (602) 636-5390



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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](http://hov.org/grief-support-groups), or by calling (602) 530-6970.

### **Special group for the newly bereaved**

#### ***“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, this might be the right group for you.

For more information, call (602) 636-5390 or visit [hov.org/grief-support-groups](http://hov.org/grief-support-groups).

### **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 and in-person in Gilbert, Scottsdale and North Phoenix, at no cost to participants.

***“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 (602) 776-6789 (Spanish), email [info@newsongcenter.org](mailto:info@newsongcenter.org) or view [newsongcenter.org](http://newsongcenter.org).

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