



Grief and Loss Newsletter



Spring Edition

Weathering the Storm

Different locations in the United States are more likely to experience certain kinds of severe weather. Kansas is known for our tornadoes and very hot temperatures but other states are known for their earthquakes, mudslides, and blizzards.

How do you weather the storm of grief? What can you do when the waves of sorrow threaten to pull you under? You can begin by trying to identify when grief is triggered. Perhaps it is a specific time of day or a particular season or holiday. A wave of grief may come because your child would have been returning to school this month or a local disaster in which people were killed may have reminded you of the death of your own family member and how hard it has been to cope. Perhaps you heard a song on the radio or at church that reminds you of your loved one.

When you have identified specific times that are more difficult, then you can begin to plan activities you know will be comforting. Friends and family can be very helpful but you may need to let them know how to best help you. If you anticipate being alone on a difficult day make plans as to what you will do. Those plans could include setting aside a specific amount of time to cry, or spending some time writing about your grief, or reflecting on how you are doing and how far you have come.

Utilize rituals. The rituals should give you comfort rather than add stress. Comforting rituals may be associated with your faith, culture, or your daily routine. They can be as simple as having a favorite food or watching a favorite movie. You can even choose to create new rituals as a way to celebrate surviving the storm.

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Regrets Only

Have you ever received an invitation that read RSVP Regrets Only? Persons who are grieving the death of a loved one often express regret. Regrets are the things we wish we had done or said.

The widow who had planned on doing extensive traveling with her husband after he retired from work, and then was unable to fulfill their dream as he was suddenly diagnosed with a terminal illness. Or the regret of not being with a person at the time of death. Perhaps you regret expressing frustration at the amount of care your loved one needed. Or wish you had expressed your love and how much you would miss him.

Feeling regretful is not the same as feeling guilty. Guilt is feeling like you did something wrong. People with certain religious beliefs may feel guilty about being angry with God. Helen Fitzgerald in *The Mourning Handbook: A Complete Guide for the Bereaved* offers several suggestions for dealing with regrets and guilt.

1. Begin by identifying what is causing you to feel regretful or guilty. Make a list and determine what causes you to feel guilty and what causes you to feel regretful. Writing the list may in itself be beneficial. Look at your list. Think about what you could do to reduce the regrets.

2. Be careful not to second-guess yourself. Don't be overly critical of your behavior. People are generally doing the very best they can during a stressful time. Fitzgerald says "don't assign greater strength to yourself now than those circumstances would have allowed." We are not super human beings.

3. Try to be objective. If the guilt is real you may need professional help to deal with it. But if the guilt is more your own way of looking at the situation, talk about it with a trusted friend. Perhaps another person can help you look at the situation differently.

4. Plan to do something to eliminate your guilt. Maybe there's a task you've been putting off doing or something you could do for someone else. You need to decide how much you should do in order to let go of your feelings of guilt.

5. Be ready to forgive yourself. If that seems hard to do; then think about why it is difficult.

6. Think about what you have learned. Ask yourself what you could do to prevent having similar feelings in the future. If you wish you had expressed your feelings of love then resolve to do it now to people you care about.

7. Finally, don't forget the many good things you did for that person. Remember those good things when you start feeling bad about yourself. Writing them down may be helpful.

“Journey one day at a time. Don’t try to solve all the problems of your life at once. Each day’s survival is a triumph.”
- Earl A. Grollman

Remembering Loved Ones

Remembering in its literal sense means putting the “members back together.” While grieving, remembering is important for those who are left behind. The power of memory can never be minimized. Remembering enables us to reach beyond the limits time and space impose on us. This makes it possible to connect with loved ones who are no longer physically present to us.

Sources for remembering a loved one can take many forms such as pictures and other objects; letters and other writings carefully kept; visiting the place where the remains are preserved or having a place of memorial in the home. These are all reminders of those prior times when a loved one was present.

Some people “talk” with deceased loved ones, telling them “Good morning” or “Good night”, finding comfort in talking with them as they did in the past. For some engaging in this

“conversation” may seem weird, and therefore feel reluctant to acknowledge this to others, fearing criticism.

Talking with a loved one can be a normal part of grieving. These “imaginary” conversations are another way of remembering. Such conversations with deceased loved ones help to facilitate the journey toward healing after saying “goodbye.”

Harry Hynes Hospice is available to help with grief and loss counseling. To contact a grief counselor, visit hynestemorial.org under Care Services / Grief and Loss Support tab, or call (316) 265-9441.



Grief Support

Harry Hynes Memorial Hospice offers grief support for families and caregivers of those we have served and to the community at large. Our bereavement staff supports people in finding healing, growth, and renewed hope for living. We want to provide support to you in a manner that is comfortable for you.

Services we currently have available include:

Rising Sun

A quarterly grief and loss newsletter with articles about common experiences and helpful ways to cope. A calendar listing special events and bereavement groups is included. Newsletters can be mailed electronically, by postal service, or viewed on our website at hynesmorial.org.

Grief Support Groups

Support groups where you can find help and healing for the hurt of losing a loved one.

Grief & Loss Counseling

Counseling that focuses on adjusting to the death of a loved one.

Grief Support is available to anyone regardless of if Harry Hynes Hospice served their loved one. Memorials, contributions, and grants help fund the Grief Services we offer.

For more information contact the Harry Hynes Hospice Bereavement Department at (316) 265-9441 or (800) 767-4965 or visit hynesmorial.org/grief-and-loss-support/.

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