



Pathways

Exploring Hopeful Paths
of Healing

catholic  community hospice

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Resources

Ongoing Support Groups:

Support groups which are ongoing are generally groups that meet once or twice a month, year round, on a continual basis. The advantage of such groups is that they provide a place to begin sharing your grief with others who have suffered loss and provide the opportunity to build long term supportive relationships. The following groups are open to all and are free of charge.

<i>Church of the Ascension</i>	913-681-3348
<i>Cure of Ars</i>	913-649-1337
<i>Holy Cross</i>	913-226-8745
<i>Prince of Peace</i>	913-782-8864
<i>St. Patrick's</i>	913-299-3370
<i>St. Marks, MO</i>	816-373-2600

What you can expect from Catholic Community Hospice in the coming months:

- Contact from the Bereavement Coordinator offering grief support such as counseling, literature and referrals
- Periodic newsletters with information about the grieving process.
- Information involving grief support groups and special events
- A satisfaction survey by mail
- Information regarding Memorial Services

**For Bereavement Support or
Questions Contact:
Brent Doster at 913-433-2058**

Month 1

What Now? The Way Forward

Grief often begins in a state of confusion. You are shocked by the death of a loved one and find it hard to accept. You are unsure of what to do and you do not know what to expect. You are barraged with advice of which you are unsure. To compound this, often extreme and sometimes unexpected feelings of loneliness, guilt, frustration and even anger well up within you. Suddenly you are overwhelmed. It seems everything has changed. This is the new normal.

Complicating this process is our society's tendency to ignore grief or deny it. Because of this, many of our wounded hearts never heal. As a result we are not taught how to mourn or cope with grief. Some simply expect time to heal the wounds of grief and wait for it to pass. Others try to "push through" it by ignoring the pain. Neither option is optimal.

In fact the best way forward is to work *through* your grief. This newsletter has thus been designed to help you do just that. As an initial source, its purpose is to provide you with an understanding of the grieving process as well as some practical ways to begin moving through it. In essence, it is a place to begin.



First Steps: Practical Advice for Coping

Since working through grief is a process, you need not feel as though you are unable to do anything about it. In fact, your healing depends on your active participation. Below are some practical suggestions for grieving.

- 1. Seek out and accept support from family, friends and others.** In grief you may feel overwhelmed by the special tasks of grieving and the ordinary tasks of life. The ability to make everyday decisions is compromised and many find this difficult. Therefore, accept help. Allow others to serve you by performing chores or simply by lending an ear. A little help can go a long way.
- 2. Express your grief.** Your grief is real and it needs to be acknowledged. A good way to express your grief is by telling your story. Tell the story of your relationship with the one you have lost and what he or she meant to you. Journal your feelings or write a letter to your loved one. To express your grief is to heal.
- 3. Accept your feelings.** There are no inappropriate feelings. Anger, guilt, depression, frustration, confusion, fear, loneliness and many other emotions all have their place in the grieving process. Be easy on yourself and accept your emotions as true and authentic expressions of your grief.
- 4. Pace yourself.** While it is important to face the reality of your loss, you need not do so all at once. To do this could be overwhelming. It is thus important to know your limitations and to process your grief in small doses. Allow yourself to rest through hobbies, social functions, or spiritual practices which give you room to breathe.
- 5. Take care of your health.** Your physical health can affect your emotional state and your ability to cope. It is thus important for you to take care of yourself, perhaps now more than ever. Exercise. Eat healthily. Drink lots of water. Rest appropriately. Continue to regularly see your doctor.

Q&A

How do I respond to others who tell me how I should grieve?

While we want to remember that others care and do mean well, their suggestions and advice sometimes leave us feeling isolated and misunderstood. Sometimes people incidentally give advice which is harmful or hurtful. Realize that not all advice is good advice while being thankful for their concern. Also, a simple "thank you" acknowledges their intent without allowing elaborations on the topic of your grief.

Helping Children Grieve

One popular misconception is that children do not grieve. Yet as life-long grief counselor Alan Wolfelt has observed, "A child old enough to love, is old enough to mourn." It is therefore imperative that adults and caregivers guide children through the process of grieving.

The way to begin this process is simply by being open and honest. Try not to hide your grief from your children. Be open and able to talk with them about their feelings. Do your best to answer any questions they might have in an age appropriate manner using more concrete language for smaller children since abstractions may only confuse. Seek out other resources for them such as counseling, if you see they are in need. Most importantly, let them know you are there for them.

