



Comfort for the Grieving Heart

St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program 484-526-2499

July 2025

You Can Hold Both...

Grief brings all sorts of feelings to the surface. Some are expected, some are unexpected, and some are downright shocking. But what happens when you find yourself feeling conflicting emotions at the very same time?

Our brains like to feel safe and sure and are, therefore, used to thinking and feeling in black and white, all or nothing, either/or. Someone is either all bad or all good. Something is either totally easy, or totally impossible. We feel either happy or sad.

But suddenly, grief has opened this unsettling and confusing grey area of **both/and**. You may find yourself thinking, "How can I possibly be feeling both frustration *and* relief? Anger *and* gratitude? Longing *and* peace? Loneliness *and* support?" *All these conflicting feelings make you feel like you're losing it or need to get yourself together.*

And even more unsettling, since death and loss are, on the surface, something we have identified as bad, we often find ourselves feeling guilty for feeling anything beyond that.

In these moments of doubt or guilt, it is important to remember that experiencing waves of hope, relief, happiness, or gratitude is not a betrayal of the person who has died. It is a part of loss. It doesn't indicate the absence of pain, grief, or deep sadness. The truth is that it is normal for opposing emotions to coexist. Grief, as in life, is not either/or; all or nothing...it is messy and full of complexities.

The loss you have experienced has revealed in you the ability to hold two (or more) opposing feelings at the same time. It may not be a superpower, but it certainly reflects your strength and the deeply complex and beautiful relationships you share with one another.

At certain times or moments on your journey, it's hard to imagine having the capacity to hold anything but sadness, much less gratitude or happiness or hope. But trust that, in time, those moments will come, and you *can hold both*.

For more information about the services offered by the St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program or if you would like to be added or removed from our mailing list, please contact us at 484-526-2499. Newsletters are also available electronically by calling our office or online at www.sluhn.org (search - grief).

Some of the “Both/And’s” you may be holding (and are normal & okay to feel):

I miss my loved one...**AND**...I am grateful for the time we shared.

I struggled with the difficulty and exhaustion of caretaking...**AND**...I am so glad I was able to care for my loved one.

I wish I hadn’t seen my loved one die...**AND**...I am so glad they weren’t alone.

I wish my loved one was still alive...**AND**...I am so glad they aren’t suffering anymore.

I feel so exhausted by my grief, I don’t want to get out of bed...**AND**... I am looking forward to playing with my grandchildren.

I am totally overwhelmed at the thought of going back to work...**AND**... I am looking forward to the distraction and routine.

The thought of looking at photos of my loved one breaks my heart...**AND**... I love seeing their smile and remembering the good times.

Doing the things we used to do together by myself makes me feel alone...**AND**... doing those things makes me feel closer to them.

I love them...**AND**... I am angry with them for leaving me with a mess of paperwork and bills to pay.

I dread seeing people I know at the grocery store because I might cry when they ask me how I am doing...**AND**...it is nice to be cared for and reminded of my support system.



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Our Monthly Support Groups

Our bereavement support groups are facilitated by one of our grief counselors. We provide a safe and collaborative space to process your grief journey. For more information, call us at 484-526-2499.



Bethlehem Area Support Groups—

Wesley United Methodist Church, 2540 Center St., Bethlehem, PA 18017

Join us from 10-11:30am: July 11 (no meetings in August)

Hanover Township Community Center, 3660 Jacksonville Rd, Bethlehem, PA 18017

Join us from 6:30-8pm: July 15 (no meetings in August)

Brodheadsville Area Support Group

Western Pocono Community Library, 131 Pilgrim Way, Brodheadsville, PA 18322

Join us from 1-2:30pm: July 23 (no meetings in August)

Carbon/Schuykill Area Support Group

St. Luke's Miners Campus, 360 W. Ruddle St. Coaldale, PA 18218

Join us from 1-2:30pm: July 2 (no meetings in August)

Good Grief Workshops

These virtual 90-minute workshops are offered monthly to provide you with a better understanding of what grief is. How it affects us emotionally, physically, cognitively, spiritually, and socially, and providing ways to understand, process, and work through your grief. This workshop is informational, interactive, and a good starting point towards entering our in-person support groups. Sign -up is recommended for those 4-6 weeks out from their loss. For more information, call 484-526-2499.

Join us from 1-2:30pm: July 24; August 7

Join us from 6-7:30pm: July 9; August 27

St. Luke's Senior Meals

St. Luke's University Health Network provides healthy, affordable meals for seniors (65 or older).

It's a great opportunity for a great meal at a great price (under \$5 for an entrée, salad, side, veggie, dessert and drink) and enjoy meeting new people.



- **Weekdays 4pm—6pm : Anderson, Carbon, Miners (4:15p), Monroe, Sacred Heart, Upper Bucks, Warren Campuses**
- **Bethlehem Campus:** Thursdays, 4-6pm (Speaker on the first Thursday)

Video Library

St. Luke's website includes a dozen short videos that provide information about the grieving and mourning process and ways to care for yourself after a loss.

To view the videos, go to <https://www.sluhn.org/vna/hospice>.

Scroll down to "Grief Support".

Click onto the video library heading "Want to understand your grief?" at the bottom of the page.

Then view the videos from the comfort of your



Other Places to Find Support

We encourage you to call the number on the back of your insurance card to find resources paid by your individual insurance plan. Find an individual therapist at psychologytoday.com

Community Bereavement Resources

Bradbury Sullivan LGBT Community Center offers bereavement support for LGBT people who have experienced loss. Visit bradburysullivancenter.org or email at reilly@bradburysullivancenter.org.

Cancer Support Community of the Greater Lehigh Valley provides professional programs of emotional support and education. Visit cancersupportglv.org.

The Compassionate Friends offers ongoing support for parents, grandparents, and adult siblings grieving the loss of a child, grandchild, or sibling. Visit thecompassionatefriends.org. Enter your zip code to locate the local chapter and contact person near you.

Doylestown Hospital Hospice offers a variety of support groups and programs that change seasonally. Visit doylestownhealth.org/hospital/services/bereavement or call 215-345-2079.

Gentle Yoga for Grief, Stress and Life Transitions is currently being offered virtually by Wendy Littner Thompson, M.Ed., LPC, RYT. Visit givinggriefavoice.com or call 610-730-1992. Be sure to indicate if your loved one was a St. Luke's Hospice patient.

GRASP (Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing) currently offers two virtual evening meetings per month, plus an afternoon meeting at the Oasis Center. Call 484-788-9440.

Grand View Hospice offers groups & services that change seasonally. Call 215-453-4210.

Grief Share is a faith-based support group offered throughout the Lehigh Valley. Visit griefshare.org and enter your zip code to find the contact person and program near you.

Lehigh Valley Health Network offers many groups and services for adults and children between the ages of 6-17. Call 610-402-7481. For information about program offerings in the Pocono area, call 272-762-3826 or email Bryson.Boes@lvhn.org.

OASIS Community Center offers a variety of support groups to those grieving a loss due to substance-related causes. Therapist-led meetings are held in-person and virtually for bereaved parents and young adults (siblings, partners, friends, etc.). Visit oasisbethlehem.org, call 484-747-6825 or email at rhonda@oasisbethlehem.org.

Suicide Loss. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention has excellent information on risk factors, statistics, and education about suicide. Visit afsp.org and enter your zip code to find the chapter/contact person near you. All chapters are run by people who have experienced the suicide of a loved one.

Support Information in New Jersey

Karen Ann Quinlan Hospice offers support to those who are grieving the death of a loved one. For more information, call 973-948-2283 or visit karenannquinlanhospice.org/services/bereavement.

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