



Comfort for the Grieving Heart

St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

484-526-2499

June 2026

The Quiet Weight of Summer

As the summer months approach, many emotions may feel more visible—almost intensified by the long, bright days. You may notice your grief surfacing more strongly, and it can be helpful to gently explore why that might be. Grief is deeply personal and cannot be generalized. Our hope is that these reflections resonate with you and offer some comfort in knowing you are not alone in how you feel.

Grief is often described as a roller coaster or like ocean waves—constantly shifting, rising, and falling. At times, you may find yourself in calm waters, at others, in rough seas. Taking a moment to acknowledge where you are emotionally can be helpful. When we name and recognize our feelings, we allow ourselves to move through them.

Another common experience in grief is periods of time when we may return to work, resume previous activities and the days appear more possible. Then suddenly, often without warning, we may be knocked down with deep sadness, loneliness and/or anger. Even after many months of feeling that those intense emotions are long past, they may hit us again. This fluctuation between emotions can feel frustrating, upsetting and confusing. This is a common experience in our grief journey.

So, what is it about summer that can feel different? The season is often associated with relaxation, celebration, and connection—filled with vacations, gatherings, and time outdoors. Yet, you may find yourself experiencing what could be called a “joy gap”: a sense of deep sadness that feels out of sync with the energy and expectations around you. When your internal experience doesn't match your environment, feelings of loneliness can grow stronger.

Summer can also bring many reminders. Family vacations, graduation parties, and backyard barbecues may highlight the absence of someone you love. These moments can stir thoughts like, “What's the point of this without them?” Such reactions are a natural part of grieving.

If this is your first summer after the loss of a loved one, these feelings may be especially intense. This is when you follow what feels comfortable for you. There is no right or wrong way to move through this season. As you've made it through difficult days before, trust that you will continue to find your way forward.



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 - Hospice grief)



Five Thoughts to Consider This Summer

- Acknowledge your triggers. Recognizing when events or traditions bring up strong emotions can be empowering. It helps you understand that increased sadness or tears are connected to meaningful reminders of your loved one.
- Accept your emotional reality. It's okay if your mood doesn't match your surroundings. You are allowed to decline invitations or leave early when needed. Also, you can decide for yourself if your presence will be helpful for your long-term healing.
- Allow space for both joy and grief. Experiencing moments of enjoyment does not mean you are no longer grieving. Both can exist at the same time.
- Prioritize self-care. Give yourself permission to care for your physical and emotional well-being, in both small and significant ways.
- Adapt or create traditions. Traditions may look different now, and that's okay. Finding ways to honor your loved one, whether by continuing or reshaping traditions, can be a meaningful part of your journey.

Ideas for Honoring Your Loved One This Summer

- Make a memorial sand bottle. Collect sand and stones in a jar or bottle from your favorite beach together. On the stones you can write your loved one's name, birth and death date or favorite sayings. Invite family and friends to contribute.
- Take a memorial road trip to their favorite places. This can be around your own town or at a distance. Create a map of their favorite stops and take time visiting and remembering their reasons why they loved those spots.
- Gather family and friends to have a picnic or barbeque and take time to honor your loved one. Create a playlist of their favorite songs, serve their favorite foods or include their memory in a toast.

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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.**



Lehigh Valley Area Support Groups

NEW Location: Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church 323 Nazareth pike, Bethlehem 18020 **10-11:30am: 6/5, 7/3**

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Brodheadsville Area Support Group

Western Pocono Comm. Library, 131 Pilgrim Way, Brodheadsville 18322 **1-2:30pm: 6/24, 7/22**

Carbon/Schuylkill Area Support Group

St. Luke's Lehighton Campus, 211 N. 12th Street, Lehighton PA 18235 **1-2:30pm: 6/3, 7/1**

Sellersville Area Support Group

Zwingli UCC Church, 350 Wile Ave, Souderton PA 18964 **1-2:30pm: 6/8, 7/13**

IMPORTANT—There will be no support groups in August. All will resume in September.

Good Grief Workshops

These virtual 90-minute workshops are offered monthly to provide you with a better understanding of what grief is. 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: June 25, July 9

Join us from 6-7:30pm: June 10, July 29

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. **ALL ARE OFFERED WEEKDAYS ONLY.**

- **Anderson, Carbon, Upper Bucks & Warren Campuses – DINNER 4pm-6pm**
- **Geisinger/St. Luke's—DINNER 4:30pm-6pm**
- **Miner's Campus— LUNCH 11:15am –1:30pm; DINNER 4:15pm-6pm**
- **Monroe Campus—LUNCH 11am-2pm; DINNER 4pm-6pm**



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 givinggriefavoices.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.

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.

A Thought to Carry with You....

“What we have once enjoyed we can never lose,
for all that we love deeply becomes part of us.” Helen Keller

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