



General Grief Support Drop-In Group
Wednesdays, 3-4pm

Remembering Our Children

If you are a parent who has experienced the death of your child (of any age), we invite you to join us for grief education, support, and healing.

Meets on the first Monday of the month from 5:30 pm until 7pm.

New! Mother Loss – Expressive Arts Workshop
Saturday, November 7, 9am – noon

Poetry, writing, drawing/painting, and collage making offer a new ways of expressing your grief and telling the story about your mom and your loss. In this workshop we will use the arts in a group setting to gently explore your loss, reflect on meaning, and cultivate healing and hope. For more information, please call 434.817.6915. Space will be limited to eight participants. RSVP by October 30.

Participants will receive a box of supplies and materials.

New! Virtual Holiday grief workshops

(See attached information)

Thursday, November 12, 2-3 pm and

Thursday, December 10, 6-7 pm



Pre-Registration required for all groups.
Please Call [434-817-6915](tel:434-817-6915) to Register

*** WINTER
SCHEDULE***

**NEW! AND
CONTINUING
ZOOM GROUPS**
(GROUPS WILL BE
OFFERED VIRTUALLY AS
LONG AS NEEDED.)

GRIEF IS A UNIVERSAL EMOTION AND NATURAL PART OF HEALING. THE CENTER FOR GRIEF AND HEALING ALLOWS ADULTS, CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND FRIENDS PROCESS THEIR LOSS AND HEAL AFTER THE DEATH OF A LOVED ONE IN A SUPPORTED, SAFE ENVIRONMENT. INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT AND A VARIETY OF SUPPORT GROUPS ARE AVAILABLE.

**IF YOUR LOSS IS RECENT,
PLEASE CONTACT US BEFORE
ATTENDING A GROUP**

There are moments in life when you miss someone so much that you just want to pick them from your dreams and hug them for real.



Positivity, Love and all things Good.

The Holiday Blues

Contributed by *Craig Wilt, Bereavement Coordinator, Hospice of the Piedmont*

It has been said that we grieve all losses and that, after experiencing a loss, the first sign that healing-grief has begun is the first time you laugh. If so, then healing began on the first Thanksgiving following my mother-in-law's death. As a way to honor her memory, the family decided to prepare her favorite recipes for the family meal. For my wife, this was a very stressful occasion; however, the tension was broken when our four-year old looked at my wife and remarked, "So, how's Grandma going to eat her food now that she's dead?"

Indeed, healing-grief can occur in spite of or even because of the holidays. As we head into this holiday season, those of us who have experienced loss may be feeling a wide range of emotions. Coupled with unrealistic expectations and commercial hype, the holiday season may seem more overwhelming than happy or merry. This is NORMAL. Under the best circumstances, holidays are stressful. Therefore, it's important to hold onto the hope that this season can be a positive experience if we consider some of the following suggestions* for facing the holiday blues:

First, be realistic. Often, the anticipation of the holidays may be more challenging than the actual days themselves and most of the worst-case scenarios never materialize. Also, identify and focus on your blessings. It's hard to be thankful and blue at the same time.

Second, communicate your wishes. It is okay to avoid activities if they are out of sync with how you are feeling or they consume too much energy. Tell those around you what you truly need and ask for their understanding if you choose to decline an activity. Moreover, be open to creating new holiday traditions for, as families and circumstances change, traditions may need to change as well.

Third, make time for physical activity, preferably outdoors on sunny days, which may help relieve stress and improve your mood. Consider volunteer activity that can help lift your spirits, too, as well as broaden your social circle. Also, limit junk foods and avoid using alcohol or drugs. If you experience intense and persistent feelings of sadness, contact a health care professional as you may be suffering from clinical depression and the sooner you begin treatment, the sooner you can recover.

Finally, I recall speaking with a lady whose son had died. She told me of her decision not to mention her son's name last Christmas and she now realizes it was a huge mistake that she won't repeat this year because he deserves to be remembered. This lady reminded me that healing-grief is an active process that is influenced by the choices we make. With this in mind, seek and accept the support of family and friends whose company you value and who will allow you to share your loss. Consider tapping into support programs offered at Aging Together or other organizations and by your faith community, too.

In addition, we invite you to explore the upcoming *virtual* holiday grief workshops offered by *The Center for Grief & Healing* on Thursday, Nov. 12, 2-3pm and Thursday, Dec. 10, 6-7pm.

These workshops are free of charge and open to everyone, so please contact **Sonja Fahy**, *Center for Grief & Healing Administrative Coordinator*, at 434.817.6915 or sonja.fahy@hopva.org to register.

*Adapted from "Facing The Holiday Blues," Copyright 2007 Healthy Exchange, Jenican Communications. Used with permission.