



We are Here to Help

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Our Services...

are open to Pathways families and the community without charge.

- ❖ Grief support groups for all ages and losses ❖ Individual counseling
- ❖ Community remembrance services ❖ Summer grief workshops
- ❖ Holiday support workshops ❖ Educational workshops
- ❖ Seasonal newsletters ❖ Grief information

Grief services are made possible through generous donations to Pathways Hospice Foundation from the community. For information about all of Pathways services, volunteering or how to make a donation, call 888-755-7855 or visit pathwayshealth.org.



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Pathways

Through Grief

Pamphlet three of a four-part series to support your healing as you grieve.



Grief Waves

A Metaphor for Understanding Grief

There may be moments when you begin to feel “okay,” when you aren’t overwhelmed with feelings of grief. You may not yet feel like yourself and there may be a stillness of grief where the emptiness of life resounds. Other times the waves of grief wash in, flooding your mind with memories and drenching your emotions with sadness, anger, relief, despair, confusion or worry. These waves may rush in at unpredictable and inconvenient times. This experience of feeling so much at one time can leave you lost, as if you were floating without your feet on the ground and your head barely above water. Pathways is here to support you through the turbulent waters.



About Grief

At six to nine months you may have fully accepted the reality of the loss. You know that your loved one is truly gone, and you are experiencing the pain of grief. Day by day, you are slowly adjusting to an environment in which the loved one is missing. You are not only grieving the loss of this person, you are grieving their role in your family and your relationship with them.

Everyday moments, such as preparing daily meals, as well as milestone accomplishments such as birthdays, retirements, and graduations, take great strength to face. Realizing that you are making plans that don’t include them, sharing meals with others, and going about daily life without them may bring on a mixture of resignation, guilt, or depression. Or you may feel resentment at the unfairness of life. You may wonder how you and the world can keep going without your loved one.



Helping Yourself to Heal

Your “new normal” includes a thread pulled out of the fabric of your life. It can make your own existence seem confusing, empty and sometimes pointless. The shared moments and experiences are now only memories, a time limited to the past. There may also be moments where the weight of grief lifts and you feel relief that you don’t think of your loved one with such pain. As your intense grief lightens and you

continue to live, you may also begin to feel guilty. All these feelings are normal and are expected as you reestablish your presence in the world.

Grief is not “all or nothing” and as it continues its unpredictable pace it may be helpful for you to plan time and activities that support you to keep going through these first twelve months. Allow yourself to feel whatever you are feeling in the moment, whether it is sadness or relief. These feelings will continue to move and shift over time. Consider sharing stories of your loved one with other people as a means of feeling close to him or her. The bonds of love continue as you live on with the loss.

“Your absence has gone through me like thread through a needle, everything I do is stiched with its color.”

-W.S. Merwin

“Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding.

Even as the stone of the fruit must break, that its heart may stand in the sun, so must you know pain.

And could you keep your heart in wonder at the daily miracles of your life, your pain would not seem less wondrous than your joy;

And you would accept the seasons of your heart, even as you have always accepted the seasons that pass over your fields.

And you would watch with serenity through the winters of your grief.”

-Kahlil Gibran