

Sharing the *Journey*



Hospice Care | Meals on Wheels
Private Care | Palliative Care

A BEREAVEMENT PUBLICATION OF VNA HOSPICE CARE

Seeking Balance After Loss

Susan Bryan, LPC, Bereavement Coordinator, Collin Branch

After the loss of a close loved one, your life has been changed forever. Yet the love and the memories you have with your loved one will last a lifetime. How do you go on living when someone you love so much has died?

There are many ways to look at the grief process. One newer theory about coping with grief is The Dual Process Model of Coping with Grief by Stroebe and Schut. It maintains that there are two types of tasks that must be dealt with as we grieve, loss-oriented tasks and restoration-oriented tasks. These grief experts recognize the necessity of both dealing with the emotions of loss and grief, and taking care of practical needs and life tasks as you move forward into a new normal. They also take into account that there are times you need to take a break or seek respite. They write that healthy grieving is a dynamic process of dealing with the loss and avoiding the loss. This process can be compared to an oscillating fan, going back and forth. This oscillating is part of a healthy grieving process.



Grievers will move back and forth between

- Tending to the things that need to happen after a death *and* taking breaks from the pain and grief
- Looking back and remembering *and* looking forward to the future
- Dealing with all the negative emotions of your grief *and* seeking the positive in your situation and changes you might make
- Being alone to grieve *and* being with others for care and support

A time of loss can be full of contradictions. Sometimes all you can do is think about the days and hours leading to your loved one's death, the memories, the lost hopes and dreams, the good times, and all you have lost. You may feel like you're going crazy with the many emotions that are part of grieving, including deep sadness, anger, regret, fear and loneliness. Other times you feel relieved that your loved one has died and is not suffering anymore. Sometimes it feels like you're in a fog, unable to concentrate, focus or make decisions. You may want to be alone in your grief,

Continued on next page

The VNA Hospice Care Bereavement Staff hope the information in this quarterly newsletter will comfort, educate, and support you in your time of grief.

SUMMER 2018

Seeking Balance After Loss *(continued)*

to remember and process your memories and sadness. Alternately, you may want to be with family members and friends who care about you and will support you.

There are times you have tasks you must accomplish: getting the death certificate, probate, closing accounts, paperwork, etc. In focusing on your future, you might be tempted to make drastic changes, such as moving, selling everything, getting remarried, or quitting your job. Caution: Go slow before making any big changes after your love one dies; your ability to make good decisions is affected by the emotions of grief.



There are also times you need to take a break from thinking about the past, your loss, your grief. You just want to lie in bed with the covers over your head, or sit and play a mindless game, or watch a silly show on TV. You might go out with friends to have some fun and laugh, and then you might feel guilty for having a good time.

It's important to do the essential grief work to deal with emotions and to rebuild your life. It's also important to take care of yourself and take rests from all the stress and pain. It's normal to oscillate between grief-oriented and restoration-oriented tasks, and also to take a break from both.

Remember that grief is a journey, it is not a race. Take it one day at a time; slowly and surely. When you attend to your grief, the intense grief will lessen. You will find yourself looking ahead to the future, with hope and anticipation. Adjusting to the loss of your loved one is not easy, but it is part of the journey, and worth the work and the wait.

The writer of Ecclesiastes states it well:

For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die;... a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-2, 4

While the experience of grief work is difficult and slow and wearing, it also is enriching and fulfilling. The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss, and have found their way out of the depths. These persons have an appreciation, a sensitivity, and an understanding of life that fills them with compassion, gentleness, and a deep, loving concern.

-- Roy and Jane Nichols

"Funerals: A Time for Grief and Growth" in The Hope Line Newsletter, July 2001, Syracuse, NY

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

The Warm Place - Fort Worth, (817) 870-2272
www.thewarmplace.org

GriefWorks - Dallas, (972) 960-9981
www.christian-works.org/works/griefworks

Journey of Hope - Plano, (972) 964-1600
www.johgriefsupport.org

Lighthouse for New Hope -
Mesquite, (972) 226-3110
www.lighthousefornewhope.org

SAM's Place at Grief and Loss Center of
North Texas, Dallas, (214) 452-3105
www.mygriefandloss.org

Expressing Grief through Art

Julie L. Espey, LMSW, Certified Art Therapist

It was a cold empty afternoon. I sat there staring out the window in a daze. I was thinking about my mother, who passed away six months earlier. I suddenly was aware of my four year old tapping my knee...."Here, Mama." She held out a little crinkled paper with a silver and pink angel that she had created. "It's o-kay, Mom...One day you'll be old and go to heaven too." I couldn't help but laugh. My little four year old was consoling me.

I kept my little angel, because it reminds me how a child can tell his or her story through art. Art is a natural way for children to communicate. Art allows a child to express feelings of sadness, anger, anxiety, pain, and fear. A child may feel abandoned by

both the deceased loved one as well as the surviving parent, since many times parents are overwhelmed with their own grief. Art can be used



for children as well as the whole family. If you are unfamiliar with child art, you may want to keep in mind that it is not about the product. Allow the child to explore grief and loss through the process. Child art is delightful, and once children know that their work is not being judged or criticized they often become willing to share their innermost thoughts and feelings. It is important not to ask "What is it?" or to offer your interpretations. Children can be encouraged by saying "I like the color you're using," or "You're working really hard on that." Listen to their cues.

It is important to consider the child's age when selecting art projects as well as materials. Children will naturally gravitate towards a medium they are used to or comfortable exploring. Here are some art projects that can be used with a child or

together as a family:

1. Draw the first thing that comes to mind. Use large paper (18"x 24") and markers. You can also do a shared drawing. Encourage journals if age appropriate, or make a journal together. A journal with no lines allows room for creativity.
2. Finger Paint! It's great, messy and wonderful! Put on some old clothes and use lots of newspaper. You can start with themes such as: "Our happy memory with....." or "Sad, to me, looks like....." Paint feelings.
3. Collages are wonderful. Use tons of old magazines and just tear away. If the child is fairly young, you might want to have pre-cut images. Use pictures or words that "speak" to you. A family poster can be made. A memory box can be made with collage. Inside the box you can put special items, special pictures or even special words that were once said by your loved one.
4. Playdough works fine, and clay, even better. Cover the your work surface with paper or plastic. You can roll, cut, pinch and poke the clay. Plastic utensils will come in handy. You can use themes if you want, such as: "My family today." or "An image of my loved one."
5. Pillow making. You can use clothes from your loved one and create a memory pillow. Fabric glue works wonders. Some people use clothes to make a stuffed animal or a teddy bear.

Art projects are limitless. A little creativity goes a long way. Most importantly, allow children to experience their own grief. Acknowledge their feelings and listen ever so carefully. We hope these suggestions will be comforting and helpful. If you would like more information and support in caring for bereaved children, please contact our bereavement staff.

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For more information, email gethelp@vnatexas.org or contact your local VNA branch:

VNA LOCATIONS

VNA Headquarters & Dallas Branch

1600 Viceroy Drive, Suite 400
Dallas, TX 75235
(214) 689-0000

Sue Rafferty (214) 689-2922
rafferts@vnatexas.org

Counties Served: Dallas & Tarrant

Collin Branch

5601 Virginia Parkway, Suite 1
McKinney, Texas 75071
(972) 562-0140

Susan Bryan (214) 733-5543
bryans@vnatexas.org

Counties Served: Collin & Grayson

East Texas Branch

874 Ed Hall Drive, Suite 105
Kaufman, TX 75142
(972) 962-7500

Kevin Moore (972) 962-7500
moorek@vnatexas.org

*Counties Served: Ellis, Henderson,
Hunt, Kaufman, Navarro, Rockwall &
Van Zandt*

VNA Ann's Haven

1204 W. University Drive, Suite 150
Denton, TX 76201
(940) 349-5900

Jerald Garner (940) 349-5900
garnerj@vnatexas.org

*Counties Served: Cooke, Tarrant &
Denton*

VNA encourages family members to wait a minimum of one year following the death of a loved one before serving as a hospice patient care volunteer or bereavement support volunteer.

VNA Hospice Care Calendar for Summer 2018

VNA bereavement events provide an opportunity for bereaved individuals to meet with others who understand loss and learn more about helping themselves. We hope you join us and experience the encouragement and comfort bereavement events and activities can provide. Bereavement support groups and activities are open to bereaved adults in the community and are offered free of charge. **Please contact the appropriate branch to RSVP (or register) if attending or for more information.**

Dallas County

Grief Support Luncheon

Thursdays, July 26, August 30, Sept. 27 & Oct. 25
Noon to 1:00 p.m.

Church of the Incarnation
3966 McKinney Avenue, Dallas, TX 75204

Bereavement Luncheon Line: (214) 689-2633

Bereavement Luncheon, Garland

Thursday, September 6, at Noon
First United Methodist Church
801 West Avenue B, Garland, TX 75040

Sharing the Journey: Coping with Grief

6 Weeks – Starting July 24
Tuesdays, 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
First United Methodist Church
801 West Avenue B, Garland, TX 75040

Contact Sue Rafferty (214) 689-2922
rafferts@vnatexas.org

Kaufman County

Grief Support Luncheon

Thursday, Oct. 18, Noon to 1:00 p.m.
Community Room at Kaufman County Library
3790 S. Houston St., Kaufman, TX 75142

Grieving Well Workshop

Tuesday, August 7, from 10:30 a.m. to Noon
Cedar Creek Bible Church
700 N. Seven Points Blvd., Kemp, TX 75143

Sharing the Journey: Coping with Grief

5 Weeks – Starting September 4
Tuesdays, 10:00 a.m. to Noon
Cedar Creek Bible Church
700 N. Seven Points Blvd., Kemp, TX 75143

Annual Memorial Service

Sunday, September 16, 3 p.m.
Cedar Creek Bible Church
700 N. Seven Points Blvd., Kemp, TX 75143

Contact Kevin Moore (972) 962-7500
moorek@vnatexas.org

Collin County

Grief Support Luncheon

Tuesday, August 21, Sept. 18 & Oct. 16
Noon to 1:00 p.m.

First United Methodist Church, Allen
601 S. Greenville Ave., Allen, TX 75002

Grieving Hearts - Death of Spouses/Partners

Tuesday, August 7, Sept. 4 & Oct. 2
9:45 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
First Christian Church, Plano
813 E. 15th, Plano, TX 75074

Sharing the Journey: Coping With Grief

6 Weeks – Starting September 20
Thursdays, 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
First United Methodist Church, Allen
601 S. Greenville Ave., Allen, TX 75002

Contact Susan Bryan (214) 733-5543
bryans@vnatexas.org

Denton County

Grief Support Luncheon

Tuesday July 10, August 14, September 11
Noon to 1:00 p.m.

Denton Elks Lodge #2446
228 E. Oak Street. Denton, TX. 76201

Grieving Well Workshop

Tuesday, August 14, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
VNA Ann's Haven Office
1204 W. University Dr. Suite 150, Denton, TX 76201

Please RSVP now. Space is limited

Contact Jerald Garner (214) 546-8544
garnerj@vnatexas.org