You Don’t Have to Grieve Alone

By Jolene Currie, Director of Bereavement

Hopefully, a person dying in the sphere of our world is not a frequent occurrence. In the course of a lifetime, grandparents, aunts, uncles, parents, maybe a sibling or close friend will die but it is not a common event. I am often told, “I have never done this, I don’t know what to do.” My reply, “That is OK, we are here for you, we will help you figure out what is most beneficial for you at this time.”

Since a person dying in our lives is something so infrequent, it can make the feelings we experience even more overwhelming. It may make us feel lost and separated from life, which is going on as usual all around us.

When we look around, we don’t always see another person dealing with the same situation. At times, we may find people who have had a similar loss, currently or in the past, who can lend a hand. Consequently, we hear the phrase, “You don’t really understand it until you go through it yourself.”

Grieving can be a very isolating, lonely experience. It puts a wedge between us and other people when we need them the most. We need people, we want them around us, but at the same time we don’t want them around. So confusing. People want to be there for you, but they don’t know what to say or do so they avoid you. This might leave a griever feeling uncertain and guilty because of their grief. The friend or family member who senses the griever’s feelings may be fearful or standoffish of their own feelings. It is the perfect storm for grief.

One might be more likely to experience multiple losses with age. The older we get the more losses we will have lived through, the bigger our families the more losses we tend to have. What of the less experienced griever? Multiple deaths or losses can overwhelm a person’s ability to cope and drive them into isolation, afraid to share their feelings, afraid they will not be understood. Some people may even become embarrassed by their grief; embarrassed by the emotionality that accompanies the experience or embarrassed by the time needed to grieve and their inability to cope with the fallout.

We will not tell you how to feel, you feel what you feel. We can tell you that to grieve for the loss of a loved one is not only normal, it is an important journey that every one of us will experience in our lifetimes. Some experience it more often or more intensely than others, but what is most important is to let yourself grieve in your own way. There is no right way to grieve, but there could be a wrong way if you are over self-medicating (drugs or drink), so emotionally distraught that you are abusive, or threatening harm towards yourself or others. Even if you are grieving the wrong way, we can still help. It is nothing we haven’t seen before. We can also point you towards others, usually mental health professionals, who can (Continued on page 2)
Interested in Support Groups?

We have had requests for specific support groups - groups specific to a person’s needs. We would like to start some new support groups this year. If you are interested in a specialized group, please let us know!

Groups we are currently considering are:
1. Loss of a Spouse
2. Widowed with children in the home
3. Loss of a Parent
4. Loss of a Child (of any age)
5. Groups for children/teens

If you have any interest in one of these groups, or some other topical group, let us know. Call Director of Bereavement, Jolene Currie, at 716-280-0782 and let us know which groups you would consider attending.

Depending upon the response, this will determine the days, times, and locations of the groups.

Warm Your Heart
Winter Memory Walk

Inspired by the life of Robert G. Hoch

Saturday, February 11
1-3:00pm

After party to follow!


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help, if you have unique or extenuating circumstances or needs.

How do you begin to alleviate the burden of grief? First, acknowledge the universality of grief, then reach out to friends, family, and/or to your Niagara Hospice family. We are here for you, for individual, family, and/or group counseling, you are not alone.

2017 Niagara Hospice Volunteer Pet Calendars Available!

Available on-line, at Niagara Hospice and several other locations. Visit the How to Help page at www.NiagaraHospice.org for additional locations and details or call 280-0780.
## Bereavement Support Groups & Educational Workshops

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>Support Group/Workshop</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, February 8</td>
<td>Newly Bereaved Workshop</td>
<td>5:30 - 7:00pm</td>
<td>Lockport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, February 10</td>
<td>Newly Bereaved Workshop</td>
<td>1:30 - 3:00pm</td>
<td>Niagara Falls*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, February 9</td>
<td>Bereavement Coffee Hour</td>
<td>10:30 - 11:30am</td>
<td>Niagara Falls*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, February 14</td>
<td>Bereavement Coffee Hour</td>
<td>10:30 - 11:30am</td>
<td>Lockport</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, February 16</td>
<td>Growing Through Grief</td>
<td>5:30 - 6:30 pm</td>
<td>Niagara Falls*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, February 21</td>
<td>Growing Through Grief</td>
<td>5:30 - 6:30 pm</td>
<td>Lockport</td>
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</tbody>
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### Bereavement Coffee Hour
Join us for coffee and friendship to socialize with others who have experienced loss. Coffee Hours are open to men and women of all ages at no charge.

### Growing through Grief
A peer support group for adults grieving the loss of a loved one. Growing through Grief is open to men and women of all ages at no charge.

### Newly Bereaved Workshop
This educational workshop is for those who have lost a loved one in the last one to three months. You will learn about the process of grief, common grief responses, and helpful suggestions for navigating this journey.

### Lockport Location
Niagara Hospice Administrative Building
4675 Sunset Drive
Lockport, NY 14094

*NEW LOCATION*
Niagara Falls
2424 Niagara Falls Blvd.
Niagara Falls, NY 14304

Entrance: Use second door on left-hand side of the building, see picture below.

Individual counseling is also available. Call (716) 280-0777 to register for workshops and groups, or for more information.

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### How will I know?
Don’t wait. Ask us.
716-HOSPICE

Niagara Hospice has launched an education campaign, using the above theme, to help families better understand the benefits of calling Hospice sooner. And YOU can help!

**Help bust the myths of hospice care**

If you belong to a service group, faith community or other organization that accepts educational presentations, please call our **Speakers Bureau line** at **716-280-0742** with contact information, and help bust the myths of hospice care - and help your neighbors in your community. Or, scan this code to make an on-line request for a presentation.
Niagara Hospice Bereavement Services

Hours: 8:30am - 4:30pm Monday - Friday

Phone: (716) 280-0777

TDD # for hearing impaired: 1-800-662-1220

Please visit www.NiagaraHospice.org for more information and resources.

Niagara Hospice is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Caregiver Survey Alert

The Centers of Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has developed a family caregiver survey that helps assess patient and family experiences with hospice care. Much of the survey helps measure if caregivers received adequate training from hospice staff to care for their loved one. All hospice providers are required to participate in this national survey. Niagara Hospice has selected DSS Research to conduct our survey.

Family members designated as the primary caregiver for their loved one receive the survey by mail. Niagara Hospice encourages those family members to complete and return the survey as soon as possible. You may also receive a follow-up phone call if the survey is not received within a specific amount of time. We truly appreciate your taking the time to help us assess our services.

YOU can help others faced with serious illness…

Do you belong to a Niagara County service group, faith community or other organization that would accept an educational Niagara Hospice presentation? Please call our Speakers Bureau line at 716-280-0742 with contact information, and help advocate for hospice services.

YOU can help others faced with serious illness…

What other kinds of bereavement programs, groups, or educational opportunities would you like to see offered?

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Niagara Hospice Bereavement Services

4675 Sunset Drive

Lockport, NY 14094

***NEW LOCATION***

Liberty Home Care/Kalos Health

2424 Niagara Falls Blvd.

Niagara Falls, NY 14304

If you would like to be removed from our mailing list, or you would like to stop receiving supportive bereavement calls, please contact us at: BereavementServices@NiagaraHospice.com or call (716) 280-0777.