

Bereavement Bulletin

Holidays and Grief

By: Beth Brittain, M.Div., LPC

Holidays can be difficult for anyone, but particularly for those who have recently experienced the death of a loved one. When a death occurs, many things change. Rather than being times of sharing, family togetherness, and joy, holidays can often intensify feelings of loneliness, sadness, and brokenness. They remind one who is grieving of the pain and emptiness of loss. The very nature of most holidays is celebration, yet often each element of celebration - sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste - serves as a painful reminder of what used to be, but will never be again. There are no easy answers or pathways through the holidays, but there are some guidelines that may help with coping during these sad/happy special days.

First and foremost, talk about your feelings of grief. Find caring family and friends who will listen and support you through these difficult times. Sharing special memories can often encourage others to remember the unique role your loved one played in their life as well. If friends or family are not a good option for you, consider a clergy person or counselor for additional support during any special season. Remember, that while the calendar notes familiar holidays, individuals also have personal 'holidays,' such as birthdays, family vacations, reunions, or

anniversaries. These days can function in the same way. Communicating your feelings and plans can help make even the most challenging ones a bit more bearable.

Inside this issue:

Family Projects	2	
In Good Company	3	
Holiday Workshops	3	
Support Groups	4	Second, take care of yourself.
LUAL Services	4	Acknowledge your limits by intentionally communicating

to friends and family what you feel you can and cannot do in regard to your traditions. Do what is right for you during the holidays. Keep in mind that you are not the only one grieving. Other family members are also more vulnerable during this time. Thus, communication is so very important. Plan ahead for family gatherings, special events, and religious services, in order to better anticipate and prepare for the activities involved. The holidays are stressful enough without being caught off guard and feeling even greater anxiety. If the day for a special

activity comes and you feel too anxious, leave yourself an opening to decline involvement. Also, as part of your self care, take time to explore and also express your spirituality. Give yourself the grace of rest, the expression of all you feel (joy and sadness), allow others to do kind things for you, and try to find a healthy balance.



*Light Up a Life
 offers
 Tree Lights and
 Commemorative Bells.
 To place an order, please
 contact: Nancy Cole at
 colen@hpccr.org, or call
 704.335.4312
 For information about our
 Interfaith Memorial
 Services, see page four.*

Finally, do allow yourself times of celebration ... both your memories and your moving on. It is not being disloyal to your loved one to experience joy and laughter. Keep in mind that your grief is a necessary privilege. **Grief is a love word. We do not grieve what we do not love.** During the holidays, experience and express your grief, be kind and loving to yourself, and surround yourself with those you love who cherish and care for you.

Family Projects for Holidays

By Janice Olive, MHDL, LPC

Holidays are times when we think of gatherings with loved ones. It seems the more we try not to think of those who died, and the harder we try to hold back the tears, the more tense, anxious, and angry we become. A better way may be to invite the memories and pass them on as part of our holiday exchange. Here are a few ideas about ways to share with family members and friends about memories we want to keep, and lessons learned from our time together.



If your family lives out of town, you may need to think outside the box about how to get together to share memories. One way would be to put together a memory book to circulate among family members. Write about your favorite holiday or vacation with the loved one. For inspiration, think about a funny story, special moment, or a gift you will not forget. Include a picture if you have it. Ask each family member to add a page along the same lines. Have them send it to the next family member. Email and facebook are also great ways to carry out this family project.

Make a holiday ornament. Clear glass balls are available at many craft stores. Decorate them with paint pens, glitter and glue, and/or stuff them with sparkling garland or sequins. Add the loved ones name, create symbols, and use colors that represent

their special interests and favorite sayings. Include a small photo of your loved one. These creations make inexpensive gifts that will be a part of the celebration for years to come.

Volunteer your time preparing a special meal for a family in need, or assist with small household tasks or repairs through a volunteer program. Shelters for the homeless often need fresh foods or help with meal preparation. Nursing homes accept small gifts for residents. Giving is rewarding in itself, and it can be done in memory of your loved one.

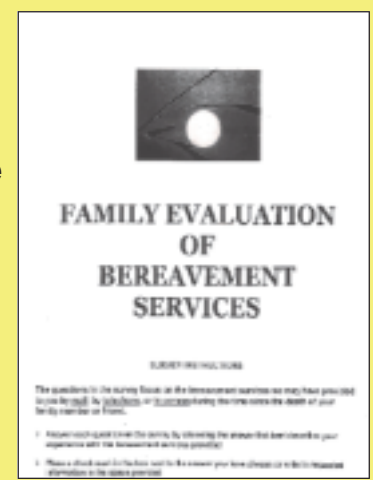
Put together a snuggly shape. This is a simple pillow made from a loved one's old shirt, pajamas, blanket, robe, or other soft material. Stuff it with foam or cotton. Keep it handy for times when you want to embrace the memory in a tangible way. These simple gifts can be given to children to take to bed at night. Comfort comes from touching and remembering.

Spend a few minutes at a gathering of friends and relatives, sharing stories about your loved one. Perhaps, this act can be done in a thanksgiving prayer such as; *We thank you for the time we were given with Grandpa Smith and for his sense of humor. May we follow the example of his love for you and for this family.* Each family member may then want to add a line about something for which they are thankful.

To help us improve our services to you, please complete and return the *Family Evaluation of Bereavement Services Survey*, that you will receive approximately a year after the death of your loved one. Your opinion is very valuable.

Thank you so much!

- Larry Dawalt, M. Div.
Director of Spiritual & Grief Care Services



Holiday Workshops

Join us for *“Skipping the Holidays?”* an engaging workshop that will address the approaching holiday season and the many emotions, decisions, and alternatives that survivors face after the loss of a loved one.

Tuesday, November 1 at 9:30am

Lincoln County Senior Center
514 South Academy Street
Lincolnton, NC 28092
To register, call 704.732.6146.

Monday, November 7 at 6pm

Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region-Uptown
1420 East Seventh Street
Charlotte, NC 28204
To register, call 704.335.4334.

Tuesday, November 8 at 10:30am

Fitzgerald Senior Center – Union County
323 South Hayne Street
Monroe, NC 28110
To register, call 704.335.4334.

Thursday, November 10 at 10:30am

Tyvola Senior Center
2225 Tyvola Road
Charlotte, NC 28210
To register, call 704.335.4334.

Monday, November 14 at 12:00 –1:30pm

McCrorey YMCA
3801 Beatties Ford Road
Charlotte, NC 28216
To register, call 704.335.4334.

Tuesday, November 15 at 6pm

Mt. Zion United Methodist Church
19600 Zion Avenue
Cornelius, NC 28031
To register, call 704.335.4334.



In Good Company

“Hearts Healing & Hoping Together”

(All are welcomed!)

Meet Us for Coffee & Conversation

4th Tuesday of each month at 10am

Julia’s Coffee

1133 North Wendover Road, Charlotte 28211

Contact Marge Brokaw, Grief Counselor, at
704.335.4308

Lunch Grief Support Group

2nd Thursday of each month at 11am

Court Street Grill

113 Court Square, Lincolnton 28092

Contact Carol Ann Lawler, Grief Counselor, at
704.732.6146

Lunch Grief Support Group

4th Thursday of each month at 11:30am

Bob Evans Restaurant

16707 Northcross Drive, Huntersville 28078

Contact Amy Thomas, Grief Counselor, at
704.650.1949

Dinner Grief Support Group

2nd Thursday of each month at 6pm

Bob Evans Restaurant

16707 Northcross Drive, Huntersville 28078

Contact Amy Thomas, Grief Counselor, at
704.650.1949

SUPPORT GROUPS

Groups are forming now for “**Grief: The Reluctant Journey**” support groups, beginning in early fall of 2011, at our various HPCCR locations. A pre-group interview with one of our grief counselors is required prior to registration for the grief support groups. To find out more about them, and to schedule an interview, please email cummingsg@hpccr.org, or call 704.335.4334. For our Lincolnton support groups, email lawlerc@hpccr.org, or call 704.732.6146.

Men’s Grief Support Group

Mondays, October 3 - November 21 at 6:30pm

Levine & Dickson Hospice House

11900 Vanstory Drive, Huntersville 28078

Healing Grief for Mind, Body and Spirit

Tuesdays, September 20, October 4, and October 18 at 6pm

Levine & Dickson Hospice House

11900 Vanstory Drive, Huntersville 28078

Light Up A Life Interfaith Memorial Services

Start a new tradition of remembering your loved ones by attending one of our five services.

Emanuel Reformed Church

Thursday, December 1 at 6:30pm

329 East Main Street, Lincolnton

Levine & Dickson Hospice House

Sunday, December 4 at 2:30pm, and

Saturday, December 10th at 5pm

11900 Vanstory Drive, Huntersville

St. Martin’s Episcopal Church

Saturday, December 3 at 5pm

1510 East Seventh Street, Charlotte

Mt. Zion United Methodist Church

Tuesday, December 6 at 6:30pm

19600 Zion Avenue, Cornelius

Sardis Baptist Church

Thursday, December 8 at 6:30pm

3602 Unionville-Indian Trail Road,
Indian Trail



For more information, please contact Gerri Cummings at 704.335.4334.

The mission of Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region is to relieve suffering and improve the quality and dignity of life through compassionate hospice care for those at the end of life, palliative care for those with advanced illness, and through community education. How we care for you: Hospice Care, Palliative Care, Hospice Care, Palliative Care Consultants, Pediatric Care-Kids Path®, Grief Care, Inpatient & Residential Hospice Care, and Professional & Community Education

704.375.0100 • hpccr.org

Charlotte, North Carolina 28204

1420 East Seventh Street



NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
CHARLOTTE, NC
PERMIT NO. 1400