

Celebrating 44 Years of HOPE

Our goal, in this 44th year, is to expand our support, services and outreach to the bereaved with emphasis on helping grieving youth, and to financially solidify HOPE for decades to come.

The purpose of this newsletter is to help those who have experienced the death of a loved one. Each month, we share information and ideas from bereaved people and professionals to help you through your grief journey. Please know you are not alone. HOPE is here to help you. To talk with a compassionate, caring professional, please call us today at 315-475-HOPE (4673).

*This months HOPEline is sponsored by
Walt Stein
I dedicate this months HOPEline to my beloved
parents-Walt & Rita Stein, my late partner,
Westley Ayers and everyone who has touched my
life in a very special way. My prayer is for
everyone to find, love, kindness
and peace of heart during this
holiday season.*



The HOPE Center offices will be closed November 24th & 25th for Thanksgiving and on Monday, December 26th for Christmas.



Share Your Story Underwriting ~ Opportunity

Do you have an article or story to share? We are always looking for articles that inspire *hope, help* and *comfort* to the bereaved.

Email us at: mail@hopeforbereaved.com

Each month, the HOPELine is sent to 1,200 families throughout Central New York and the United States. If you would like to underwrite the cost of the HOPELine for a specific month, please contact Pat Kriesel at HOPE at 315-475-HOPE (4673). It costs \$450 to underwrite the newsletter. Your donation will fund 100% of the expense of a newsletter for a month. You may include a special dedication to your loved one.

Thank you for supporting the HOPELine!

Our Feature Articles

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“ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS “FOR IT TO BE OVER WITH”

By Nan Zastrow

“I just want this holiday to be over with.” That was my mantra months before our very first Christmas after the death of our son, Chad. I repeated it over and over again as though magically, I wouldn’t have to deal with its coming. I believed nothing could ever be the same...how could I pretend or exist in this world forever changed by death? Although holidays aren’t limited to Christmas, for the bereaved, Christmas is often one of the most difficult. Any special day that once offered celebration, gathering, or commemoration such as a birthday, or special event such as a wedding or baptism can create anxiety. Holidays were a “big deal” in our family. It was all about gathering, celebrating and strong family ties. Chad’s death was the first major event that significantly altered our holiday traditions.

I understand the objections the bereaved feel with the imminent holidays. Even though it’s been a long time, I still feel the tug of some of those “if onlys” as though they were new. It took me several years to adjust to change that wasn’t welcome. But I’ve come to know the “good news” and appreciate holiday celebrations in a different way now. Grievers are capable of finding joy in the holiday experience even after the death of a loved one who was a fundamental part of their celebration.

Recently, I polled a group of over 100 bereaved and asked what their objections and concerns were to the holidays since their loss. Three major themes were vividly apparent:

◆ **AVOIDANCE/DENIAL:**

There’s a misconception that “if I can avoid or delay the holiday, I can avoid the pain.” Our Grinch-like attitude quickly surfaces; and we’d just like to run away. For some people, “running away” or taking a mini vacation the first year or two is appropriate. It allows them to get over the immediate pain and make plans in the future. However, next year (or next month) will bring a new holiday to deal with. So it’s probably wise to just face your fears right away rather than allow yourself the dread for another twelve months of anticipation.

If you can determine what you need to avoid, it can be helpful. Ask yourself questions, and give honest answers. Are you uncomfortable around a certain group of people? Is it the traditions that worry you? Whatever the fear, there are ways to modify or change what you previously did to something that causes less anxiety. Don’t be the one to spoil the day for other family. Find ways to compromise, modify, and eliminate rather than avoid. If you are going to be the Grinch, be the one that found the happiness and beauty in Christmas.

◆ **SIZZLING EMOTIONS:**

Ideally, we’d like to be in control of our emotions. Realistically, it might not be that easy, through no fault of our own. Holidays are filled with past memories and making new memories. Months before the holidays begin, the commercialization fills all of our senses with images and ideas that compete with our attempts to block our thoughts about what we will or will not do.

Expect surprise reactions to something you never dreamed would create a grief burst. This is the way of grief, and you typically have no way of knowing what will cause an emotional reaction. But, you can prepare for certain triggers that you know will be difficult. Try to determine what triggers may cause your emotions to erupt into outbursts, tears, or sadness (such as a song). Then, purposely plan a way to respond to each anticipated trigger.

The actual holiday is only 24 hours long...and from there the anxiety begins to dwindle. Take time to honor good emotions and remember your loved one through ritual or in a quiet moment alone. Have a get-over-it moment and then refocus and be thankful for what you have and those who care about you.

◆ **OBJECTIONS TO CHANGE**

Bereaved people will behave in one of these ways to change. (1) They will pretend that nothing changed and muddle through their celebrations as though nothing has changed. (2) they will change their traditions so drastically that no one would recognize them. Or (3) families will wisely blend some of the old traditions with new traditions that make everyone feel comfortable and enthusiastic about a unique holiday celebration.

Celebrations and families are destined to change over the years, and death is just one of the factors that initiate change. Families grow, marry, move to new locations, just as frequently as families are divided due to divorce, military service, death, college, and jobs. When you think of it that way, you can accept that modifying traditions is normal, required, and expected throughout life. There are many ways to incorporate or modify meaningful traditions that honor the past and the person who died that can be celebrated with joy and not sacrifice.



HANDLING THE HOLIDAYS

.....AND OTHER SPECIAL DAYS

Holidays, birthdays, and other special days are usually times for family gatherings and celebration. When we come together for the first time after the death of our loved one, it can be really difficult! Our families try to protect us in the best way they can, but it can still hurt. How can we cope? How can we handle these times in a realistic and effective way?

First, acknowledge and accept your feelings. Tears, depression and loneliness are all natural reactions to a loss—months, a year, or even more after the loss. At the same time, do not feel as though you are betraying your loved one if you are able to enjoy some of the festivities.

If the thought of preparing for these special days seems overwhelming, one helpful first step may be to make a list of things to be done in planning for the holiday. Have a family conference and together decide what is really important: What traditions do you want to carry on? What would some members find meaningful, or what things might be too painful? What changes, if any, would you want to make? Consider whether a task can be shared, if someone else can take it on, or whether it should be eliminated. Whatever decisions are reached, this **sharing can demonstrate recognition and respect for each person's values.**

In setting priorities, guidelines to use are: Would the holiday or special day be the same without it? What gave meaning to our holidays in the past? If you have family traditions, decide together whether you want to carry them on this year or if this is a good time to begin new ones. Consider and discuss ways of keeping traditions while trying to lessen the pain of loss, perhaps by making some changes in the usual way of doing things. Remember that although we may decide to do some things differently this year, we can decide to return to earlier customs another year if we wish.

It is important to realize that while holidays and special days are traditionally a time of festivity, they can also be a time of frantic busy-**ness and resultant fatigue. Don't set unrealistic expectations for yourself. As grieving** persons, we must recognize that we may simply be unable to function at our usual pace. We may need to break things down into smaller, more manageable +++goals we can achieve. Fatigue can be deadly, and lead to feelings of depression under the best of circumstances. **Don't overextend---don't over commit. Eliminate the unnecessary** and reduce the pressure on yourself and others. By talking over what is really important with family members, priorities can be set, tasks shared, and plans made to accomplish those things considered essential. Decide what you can handle comfortably, and then let your needs be known to friends and relatives.

If your faith has been an important part of your life, allow time for its expression during these holidays and special days. If it has not, this may be a fitting time to approach the clergyperson or church/synagogue of your choice. In either case, you may find that by enriching and deepening your religious experience, you have added a new dimension to your life.

Our lives have changed. Our holidays will be different. It's not a choice of pain or no pain, but how we manage the pain we feel. The important thing to remember is to do what is comfortable for you and your family. It **may help to know that those of us who've been through these holidays and special days before have found** anticipation is frequently worse than the day itself!



Continued on page 7

From the Executive Director

December 2022

Dear Friends,

In November, HOPE held our annual Celebration of HOPE commemorating 44 years of HOPE! We are so grateful for our generous community who graciously gives back to HOPE! Thank you for providing donations, sponsorships, and for participating in **HOPE's** annual auction! Each of **HOPE's** dedicated supporters are very special people who share their time, talents, and funds to ensure those who are grieving can access the free core services provided by HOPE. This success would not be possible without YOU!

May your days be filled with warm memories and determination to support those who are working on their grief journey.

Gratefully, Alicia-Executive Director

Memorial & Year End Donations

Please consider making a Year End donation to HOPE For Bereaved. This has been an extremely difficult year for HOPE with restrictions on counseling and support groups due to COVID. Requests for our services, especially for children, have tripled. We held our annual fundraisers, Run/Walk, Golf Tournament, and Celebration Of HOPE with limited participation. We are so grateful for everyone who has supported our fundraisers, designated HOPE when a loved one has died or made donations to HOPE throughout the year. Thru the generosity of our clients, friends and the community we are able to provided our core services free of charge to the grieving children, adults & families who turn to HOPE. A special thank you to the families of Clara Ramsden, Jane Kwasigroch, William "Bill" Schoeneck, Susan Jo Franchina, Anna "Flo" Kowalczyk and Richard Kriesel for designating HOPE recipients of memorial contributions in their name. Memorial donations this year resulted in over \$1,800 in much needed funds. Thank you for considering this request!



26th Worldwide Candle Lighting

Sunday, December 12th from 7 p.m.

Join The Compassionate Friends for the annual candle lighting in memory of all children who have died "*...that their light may always shine.*" People around the world are invited to light a candle on Sunday, Dec. 12th at 7 p.m. As candles burn down in one time zone, they will be lit in the next, thus creating a virtual 24-hour remembrance of all children who have died too soon.



World AIDS Day -Each year on December 1st **World AIDS Day** commemorates the millions who have died of AIDS or are living with AIDS. It also raises awareness to AIDS and to efforts to find a cure.



REMINDER: CopingWithThe Holidays Programs are as follows

- Monday—Nov. 14th, 6:30 at **St. Charles Church, 417 S. Orchard Rd., Syracuse**
 - Friday—Nov. 18th, 6:30 at **Sponsored by Safe Harbor Wills & Trust at St. Matthews Episcopal Church Parish Hall, 900 Vine St., Liverpool**
 - Monday—Nov. 21st, 6:30 at **All Saints Church, 1340 Lancaster Ave., Syracuse**
- ALL ARE WELCOME —OPEN & FREE TO THE PUBLIC**



Please keep Therese Schoeneck, Bob Kriesel, Christy Dannible, Kathy Spencer, Christine Hart, Lanie Moses, Ann & Dan Emond, Kevan and all our medical, front line workers and their families in your prayers for good health .





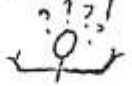











Hope
For
Youth



12/2022

Dear Friends,

The holiday season     can be a very
confusing  time for those of us on our journey
through grief.  The holidays are filled with
gatherings of friends and family,  and
yet we might feel lonely  because we miss our
loved one who died,  We may be around
happy celebrations , but at the same time
feel sad . Is it O.K. to be happy during the
holidays?  Is it O.K. to also be sad? 
My friends, it is important to give ourselves permission
to have whatever feelings may come up, and know 
that all of these feelings (pleasant or not) are OK!

LOVE, Mark 



**for
Teens & Adolescents**

Dear Friends,

Vol 1 #9 12/2022

Our journey through grief has guided us into another holiday season. Whether we are experiencing our first holiday, or there have been several holiday seasons since our loved one died, each set of holidays brings its own unique circumstances and challenges. This is a good time of year to remind ourselves that we don't have to push ourselves to "do it all". We don't have to attend or participate in every holiday event if we are feeling too stressed or are having a difficult day. It is imperative to give ourselves permission to say "no" to a gathering if we aren't up to celebrating. It is equally important to permit ourselves to reach out to friends and/or family to talk, or get together when we need companionship. Ultimately, we must allow ourselves to do whatever we need to get through the holidays.

*Yet there may be points during the holidays where we may actually enjoy ourselves and have a good time! If this happens, we should allow ourselves to feel good, and to feel joy **without** guilt. Our deceased loved one would certainly want us to experience happiness during the holidays! It is important to pay attention to our feelings, needs, and wants during this time of year, and to know that choices we make to survive (and even enjoy) the holiday season is not being selfish, but exercising **self-care**. Healthy grieving will make our holiday journey more fruitful!*

Take Care, -Mark

Please forward your questions, comments, and ideas to mail@hopeforbereaved.com

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As you seek to make sensible plans, remember to make them firm enough to support you but flexible enough to leave you some freedom:

Know When Your Holidays are:

Holidays are not just at Thanksgiving, Chanukah, Christmas or New Year's. They are the times when family and friends get together for fun or celebration. It may or may not be associated with one of the traditional days.

Mark on your calendar the months during which your family's holidays occur.

Begin early to plan your coping strategies.

Be intentional about How You Plan Your Holiday:

Together, as a family, examine the events and tasks of the celebration and ask the following questions:

Do we really enjoy doing this? Is it done out of habit, free choice, or obligation?

Is this a task that can be shared?

Would the holiday be the same without it?

Decide What You Can Handle Comfortably:

Whether we are open to talk about our loved one.

Whether we feel able to send holiday cards this year.

Whether we can handle the responsibility of the family dinner, holiday parties, etc. or if we wish someone else to take over some of these traditions this year.

Whether we will stay at home for the holidays or choose a different environment.

Shopping is definitely easier if you make the entire list out ahead of time. Then when one of the "good days" comes along, you can get your shopping done quickly and with less stress. It is important to remember there is no right or wrong way to handle the holidays. Do whatever you feel comfortable with and believe will work best for you!

It is important to remember there is no right or wrong way to handle the holidays. Do whatever you feel comfortable with and believe will work best for you!

SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

TIME 6:30 to 8:30 PM

1st & 3rd Tues. Dec. 6th. & 20th Death By Drug Overdose

1st Wed. Dec. 7th HOPE for Widows/Widowers, Engaged & Significant Others

2nd Tues. Dec. 13th HOPE For Family & Friends

2nd & 4th Wed. Dec. 14th & 28th Survivors of Suicide

3rd Weds. Dec. 21st. Bereaved Parents & Infant, Newborn, Miscarriage Death

Other Support Group Meeting Times

3rd Wed Dec. 21st. 10am to noon (seniors)

**DAYTIME GROUP FOR WIDOWS/
WIDOWERS**

Masks are optional

Meetings are held at HOPE's Center,
4500 Onondaga Blvd. Syracuse

All meetings held at HOPE's Center are in person & by ZOOM.

One-on-one counseling- Call HOPE (315) 475-4673 (HOPE) for an appointment. This can be done in person or by phone. No charge for counseling, but donations are welcome.

If you would like to help collate the HOPEline newsletter, spend time with friends & enjoy a lunch prepared by the staff, it is held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, 10am to usually 1 & that includes



HOPE for bereaved

As you journey from grief to HOPE

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December 2022



THAT IS CHRISTMAS

Every time a hand reaches out to help another—

THAT IS CHRISTMAS

Every time someone puts anger aside and strives for understanding—

THAT IS CHRISTMAS

Every time people forget their differences and realize their love for each other—

THAT IS CHRISTMAS

May this Christmas bring us closer to the spirit of human understanding and closer to the blessing of peace!

Unknown

HOPE'S HOLIDAY WISH LIST

- ◆ Copy Paper 8x11 (White or Color)
 - ◆ Cleaning Products
 - ◆ Garbage Bags
 - ◆ Paper Plates
 - ◆ Coffee K-Cups
- ◆ Coffee Cups (Not Styrofoam)
 - ◆ Hand Soap
 - ◆ Kleenex
 - ◆ Napkins
 - ◆ Paper Towels
 - ◆ Toilet Paper

Thank you for considering this request!

