

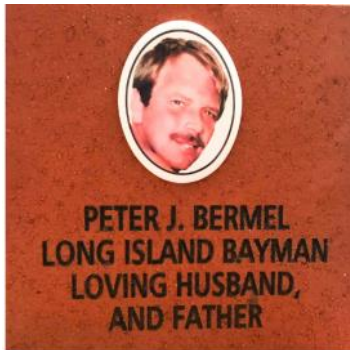


Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, & LinkedIn

HOPEline is a **monthly newsletter** of **HOPE FOR BEREAVED**, a nonprofit community organization providing hope, support and services for the bereaved. The **purpose** of **HOPEline** 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 at 315-475-9675.**

Order a Picture Brick TODAY!

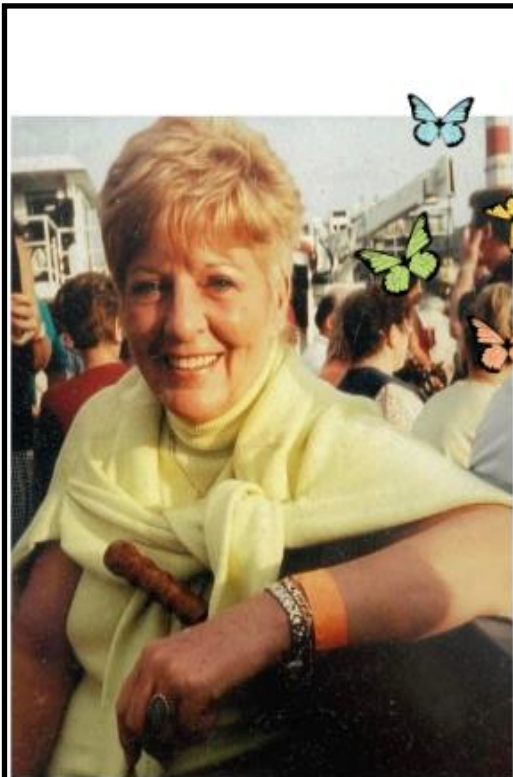
Space is Limited



We are accepting orders for 8x8 photo bricks. The bricks come with 4 lines and a permanently affixed raised tile with a photo of your loved one. The cost is \$325. You may also purchase a symbol for an additional \$25 and/or up to 2 extra lines for \$15 each. The space is limited so we urge you to reserve a spot by contacting **Kim**

315-475-4673 or
kbermel

@hopeforbereaved.com



In loving memory of an incredible and selfless mother, sister, grandmother, and friend. A beautiful and giving soul who helped everyone before herself. An amazing artist and baker, Geri spread her love to her family and friends through her generous talents and gifts. She was the wings beneath us who taught each of us to fly without fear.

We love you more,
Your loving family

Geraldine Benton

4/20/1943 - 9/17/2021

On Tuesday, December 3rd, we kick off our Year-End Appeal.



Contribute to our mission of helping the bereaved by making a donation that is meaningful to you. \$5 or \$50 - every dollar helps!

| TOPIC | PAGE |
|--------------------------------------|------|
| Cover Page & Dedication | 1 |
| From the Executive Director | 2 |
| Navigating Grief During the Holidays | 3 |
| New Traditions for Holiday Grief | 4-5 |
| HOPE for Youth | 6 |
| HOPE for Teens | 7 |
| Happening at HOPE | 8 |



Dear Friends of HOPE,

As the holiday season unfolds, many of us feel the stark contrast between the joy and celebration around us and the deep ache of loss within. With all the added expectations of the holidays, this time of year can be especially difficult for those who are grieving. At HOPE for Bereaved, you are never alone in these feelings. Our grief support team is available to help you navigate these challenging days. Our individual services and support groups are designed to provide a safe space to process your feelings and find healing. If you're looking for a space to specifically address your feelings around the holidays, join us for our upcoming Coping with the Holidays series.



**From Executive Director
Kelly Ocampo**

As 2024 comes to a close, I reflect on all that we have accomplished at HOPE for Bereaved. Together, we have supported countless individuals through their grief journeys. 448 people received individual support, 283 people attended one of our eight monthly support groups, over 2,000 people received resources from us, and our grief support team spent almost 80 hours in the community with businesses, schools, and nonprofits. HOPE started two new groups; one to support parents who are raising children while grieving their own parents, and the other within the Clay Senior Center to make accessing our services easier for people north of Syracuse. Looking ahead to 2025, we are excited to continue expanding our programs, enhancing the group activities we offer, and strengthening our connections and partnerships with the community.

Thank you for being an integral part of our HOPE family. Your support, compassion, and belief in our mission make all the difference for those navigating the difficult journey of grief. This holiday season, we honor the memories of loved ones who are no longer with us while celebrating the strength of the community we have built together.

We wish you peace, hope to light your way, and the comfort of knowing that you are never alone. May this season bring moments of reflection, connection, and the promise of brighter days ahead. Thank you for walking this path with us and for making a profound impact on the lives of those we serve.

With gratitude and warm wishes,
Kelly

Navigating Grief During the Holidays

The pain of grief tends to surface with great intensity during “milestone” events. Birthdays, anniversaries and holidays are typical events that are associated with our grief journeys. The intensity of grief is usually highest for many during the first year that these milestone events are experienced. However, people will experience pain of varying intensity during these milestone events beyond the first year. There is no timetable to resolve grief and in many cases; journeys are lifelong. Experiencing pain at any time during the process is to be expected.

Under normal circumstances, preparing for any holiday can be stressful as well as tiring. When a loved one dies, completing these holiday tasks become complicated by the intense pain of grief and the physical, emotional, and cognitive changes that accompany it. Our grief may be so painful that we question whether to celebrate the holidays at all.

Although there are no sure solutions as to how to prepare for the holidays, there are some things that may be helpful:

- Educate yourself by reading books or articles on grief and attending a lecture on coping with the holidays.
- Identify strengths or strategies that helped you adjust to previous losses in your life. These may be losses related to death or losses not related to death (e.g., divorce).
- Try to develop as much support from family and friends as you can. Tell them that the holidays may be emotionally and physically draining for you, and how they can best help you during this time.
- Allow some time to feel sad. Have a good cry if you need to.
- Be careful with use of alcohol and medications, either separately or together.
- Save your energy for the most important things.
- Delegate! Let others share the workload by preparing food and helping with decorations.
- If you need quiet time, take it.
- If you aren't up to a large family affair, have a scaled down gathering with a few close family members and friends.



Others may have difficulty saying the name of your loved one for fear of upsetting you or because they are uncomfortable with their own feelings. You may decide to initiate the discussion of your loved one and may be hesitant to do so because it may be very painful. That is completely understandable, but the pain may be lessened or replaced by joy due to some wonderful shared memories. Plus, we want to say and hear the names of our loved ones.

The anticipation of the holiday season and the days leading up to it may be more stressful than the actual day. Also, if there are certain holiday functions that you don't have the emotional strength to confront, it is ok to avoid them. Remember, you can grieve as you see fit!

David J. Roberts became a bereaved parent after his daughter Jeannine died of cancer at the age of 18. You can read more of his work here: www.bootsyandangel.com ^[2] This article was originally posted on www.opentohope.com.

8 New Traditions to Help Holiday Grief

By Rachel Schelb, writer, speaker, and podcaster, lisaappelo.com

'Tis the season to be jolly – except, sometimes, the holidays aren't so jolly. How do we deal with holiday grief without being a Scrooge? Creating new traditions to help holiday grief can provide moments of healing and joy during the holidays.

A tradition, as defined by Merriam-Webster, is “an inherited, established, or customary pattern of thought, action, or behavior.” Anything can be a tradition if it is passed on to others. You have the freedom to create traditions that work with your grief and healing rather than looking a specific way.

Traditions provide us with a sense of security and stability. Studies show doing the same activities year after year with friends or family can be beneficial to our emotional and mental health. However, it can be hard to carry on with traditions after the death of a loved one. In these moments, we have three options.

We can choose to cancel the holidays and let the season carry a cloud of heavy darkness around. While it may come easiest to us, we can all agree it is likely not the best for our emotional and mental health. There are times to be gentle with your time and space to manage grief during the holidays. Taking a sabbatical from much of the holiday hubbub might make sense, but we should be cautious not to avoid things we loved because the emotions are overwhelming.

We can continue with the same traditions as in previous years not wanting anything to change, even though their absence is fiercely palpable. We refuse new decorations and insist that the Christmas meal has the same casseroles and side dishes as Mom always had. We may feel like changing the tradition erases some, or all, of their memory during the holidays. Continuing some of the traditions is excellent! However, refusing to change at all may be us denying the reality of the grief.

We can create new traditions that honor the memory of the loved one who has died. This option is what I've found is best for me; perhaps it is for you as well. This option allows room for healing and new things while still incorporating the memory of our loved ones in a way that reflects and includes their legacy.

Below are eight suggestions for new traditions that may help you honor your loved one this holiday season.

- 1. Use their recipe:** Every year I make my grandmother's corn casserole. My Mimsey wasn't the best cook. There were only three things I remember her making that consistently turned out edible. Her strawberry-rhubarb pie was a hot item at the church bake sale as was her peanut brittle. Corn casserole was her third dish that turned out yummy each time. Now, to incorporate her legacy, I make it every year at Thanksgiving and Christmas.
- 2. Set the table with their dishes:** We are fortunate to have my husband's great-grandmother's fine china. Every major holiday we use her china, combining it with my dishes, to remember her and the way she loved well.
- 3. Visit a place they loved:** Perhaps your loved one loved going to a cabin in the woods or to the beach. Maybe they served in a soup kitchen. Or perhaps, even more simply, they loved looking at neighborhood Christmas lights every year. Whether it was a vacation spot or a place they enjoyed during the holidays, maybe going to that place would be a good way to honor them and start a new tradition for yourself.
- 4. Decorate with their ornaments:** My friend's grandmother had gorgeous vintage glass-blown ornaments. When she passed, her mom got them and began decorating a tree with them. The tree became a sort of “remembrance tree” so that she still has a place during the holidays.
- 5. Create a playlist:** Playing music can invoke memories. Create a playlist with your loved one's favorite holiday songs or artists. Give yourself the space to listen to the songs and remember your friend or family member.
- 6. Share stories:** Simply doing a tradition without talking about the “why” of the tradition defeats the purpose. We have to talk about and share stories of those we grieve over. Talk to your kids about your favorite memories and ask for theirs. Talk together to come up with the new traditions. Allow yourself to laugh and cry with your other family members.
- 7. Create a gratitude/memory box:** Ask family members to write down a favorite memory from years past. If it's an especially challenging year of grief, also write down something you're grateful for this past year. After the meal, read them out loud.
- 8. Give to charity:** My brother was a combat medic who died in Afghanistan. I try to give to charities that support Gold Star Families or veterans each year to honor the sacrifice he made. Similarly, there may be a way you can honor your loved one through giving to others.

No tradition, established or brand-new, will bring back your loved one. The holidays will be tricky and grief-laced for a long while, if not forever. The good news is that new traditions during the holidays might help you find some of the “jolly” that's been lost.









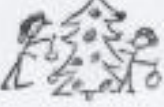



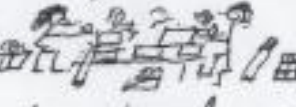




Hope
For
Youth



12/2024

Dear Friends,

The holiday season     is here. All around us, we see decorations, TV shows, and gatherings of family and friends.   This is certainly a joyous time of year!  And yet, for those of us in grief, it is also a time of pain  and sadness, ^{soo} as we miss our loved one who died. This is a time of year when we wish we could do the things we used to do with that person.  Even though we realize that things can never be the same  , this may be a good  time to continue these holiday traditions, even if we share them with other loved ones.  This is a way to keep our deceased loved one alive in our hearts!  Love, 
MARK



**for
Teens & Adolescents**

Dear Friends,

Vol 3 #9 12/2024

The holidays are upon us. There are many festive activities, get-togethers with friends and family, and celebrations of the season. The stores and malls are filled with decorations, and commercial ads constantly remind us of happy times and cozy evenings with others by the fireplace. However, many of us in grief may not have these same warm feelings of joy and contentment. We might be missing our deceased loved one, and feeling the pain and sadness of that empty hole in our heart. It is important to give ourselves permission to feel the pain of grief, even though everything around us appears festive and happy. Grieving is a necessary part of the process of letting go of the hurt, and discovering ways of coping and moving toward a new normal without our loved one's physical presence. This process is effectively called **healing**.

In what seems like a paradox, the only way through the difficult feelings of grief is to fully experience them. For instance, the way to get through our sadness is to allow ourselves to be sad. We can overcome periods of anger by simply being angry; and so on, with the many emotions of grief. Conversely, when we try to avoid those difficult feelings, or pretend they don't exist, then we begin to experience complicated and often unhealthy expressions of our grief. During this holiday season, allow the "paradox" to work in our favor. If we can "lean into" our pain and difficult feelings of grief (even if this involves talking to others or seeking help), this will eventually free us to experience times of contentment, and even moments of joy that the holidays can provide!

Take Care -Mark

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

Coping with the Holidays



November 18th
6:30–8:30 pm
@HOPE: 4500
Onondaga Blvd,
Syracuse, NY 13219

December 12th
6:30–8:30 pm
@All Saints Catholic
Church: 1340
Lancaster Ave,
Syracuse, NY 13210

December 16th
1:00–3:00 pm
@OneGroup: 706 N
Clinton St, Syracuse,
NY 13204

SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

**All groups are 6:30 to 8:30 PM unless otherwise noted*

1st Wed. | December 4th - Widows/Widowers, Engaged & Significant Others

2nd Tues. | December 10th - Family & Friends

2nd Wed. | December 11th - Survivors of Suicide

3rd Tues. | December 17th - Death By Drug Overdose

3rd Wed. | December 18th - Bereaved Parents (Death of all ages, infant, newborn, & miscarriage)

3rd Wed | December 18th - Senior Widows/Widowers

**10AM to 12PM*

3rd Thursday | December 19th - Parents without Parents

Meetings are held in-person at the

Center of HOPE
4500 Onondaga Blvd. in Syracuse

and through Zoom.

One-on-one counseling is available.

Call us at 315-475-9675 for an appointment. Counseling can be done in person, by phone, or over Zoom.

There is **no charge** for counseling, but donations are always welcomed.



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Syracuse, NY
Permit NO. 713

4500 Onondaga Blvd.
Syracuse, NY 13219

Electronic Service Requested

DECEMBER 2024



COMING SOON:

Adolescent Support Group

We are very excited to announce that after the first of the new year, HOPE will be offering a support group for teens on Monday evenings. We have recognized an increasing need among our local youth and are happy to be able to continue to support them through this new resource.

More information to come soon!

Please email HOPE at

mail@hopeforbereaved.com or call us at
(315.475.9675) if you and your family have questions.