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HOPEline is a **monthly newsletter** of **HOPE FOR BEREAVED**, a nonprofit community organization providing support 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 member of our peer support team, **please call us at 315-475-9675.**

Everyone has a story. This is from someone who wishes to remain anonymous:

I lost my partner from fourth stage cancer. We had been together for 30 years. After he died, I was in shock, then storms of grief swamped me, and I was in such a hole of despair that I just wanted to die. I got in touch with HOPE for Bereaved and started counseling. I cannot overstate how much it helped. I have been feeling very light, optimistic, and am getting out trying new things. It's astonishing to me how differently I feel now than I did a year ago. Having an understanding and empathetic person to talk with has a value far beyond any other. I sincerely hope all those trying not to drown get the help I did from HOPE.

Do you want to share your story?

Contact us today to share how HOPE helped you or how you are progressing through your journey.



Kelley Butterfield
12/7/61 - 2/17/16

Part city girl, part country woman. With her love of traveling, football, camping, and cooking the most amazing meals - she was one in a million. A fierce love for her family and friends, she took the vows of "in sickness and health" to heart in everything she did. Missed and loved dearly forever.

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Dear Friends of HOPE,

As we move into February, the month often associated with love, I invite you to view your grief through a different lens.

While Valentine's Day highlights the joy and beauty of love, it also brings into focus the pain we feel when someone we deeply love is no longer with us. To do this, we must remember that grief and love are inextricably linked.

Grief is the price we pay for love. The depth of your grief mirrors the depth of your love. It is not a measure of weakness or failure; it is a testament to the bond you shared. And within that pain is a love that continues to exist, even if in a different form.



From Executive Director
Kelly Ocampo

There is a common misconception about grief: that healing requires moving forward and away from our loved one. On the other hand, holding onto their memory is sometimes seen as being "stuck," unable to progress toward healing. But what if there is a way to honor both your love and your pain?

You don't have to let go of the love you feel for the person you lost. Nor do you have to remain trapped in a cycle of pain and longing. Instead, you can bear witness to your grief while finding a way to live without your loved one by your side.

Love is not the enemy; it is the answer. By acknowledging your pain, you are also acknowledging how much your loved one meant to you. It is an act of bravery to try to build a new life while carrying the memory of their love with you. February, the month of love, serves as a reminder that your grief is not something to "fix" or escape but rather a reflection of the love you had for someone special.

So this month, I encourage you to show yourself kindness and patience. Lean into the love that remains - love for your person, love for yourself, and love for the journey ahead.

With gratitude and warm wishes,
Kelly

Valentine's Day Blues and Other Colors

by Laura Slap-Shelton, Psy.D.

Valentine's Day, a day when love is officially celebrated in the United States, can be a day of increased pain and sadness for the bereaved. Many individuals report images of their heart being shattered or smashed as they describe the pain their loss has created. They find it hard to assemble the pieces back into the beautiful wholeness they once knew.



Others feel frozen and disconnected from those they love. Their feelings no longer flow freely, and they carry a sense of emotional isolation. It is hard to keep one's heart open when it has been hurt and traumatized by a loss, and yet staying open to the sources of love in your life and remaining a source of love for others is one of the best paths to healing.

One way of turning the difficulty of Valentine's Day around is to re-label it as a time of opening the heart. Take some time to identify your feelings and openly accept them. It is likely that a variety of feelings are crowding together, making it hard to feel much of anything. Sometimes making a list of the different feelings you are aware of can help to sort them out. Noticing what problems the negative feelings stem from and thinking of possible solutions may help to release some of the worries and negative emotions that are present.

Focusing on the greatest source of love currently in your life is another positive way to reconnect with loving feelings. The source could be anyone or anything: a memory, a poem, a painting, an old letter, and spiritual or religious writings, whatever has positive meaning to you. Try relaxing and letting the positive feelings that this inspiration creates fill your mind. What colors does it bring to mind? As you relax see if you can notice a warm feeling in your chest and let it spread slowly throughout your body.

Connecting with friends and family can be helpful too. You might create a buddy system and agree to exchange flowers or candy with a friend, just for the fun of it. Send a card to someone whom you care about. Call a friend or relative. Go out for lunch or dinner. Let those close to you know that you love them even if it's been hard to show it recently. Reach out to someone who might need your attention.

Some people find it comforting to write a note to the person they have lost, and let the person know how they are feeling and what they are doing. Others might honor the person they have lost with a ceremony in their honor.

If Valentine's Day feels too big to handle, it may be a good time to find a counselor or therapist who can help you through it. Connecting with a support group of other bereaved people may be a great way to open up in a community who understands your experience and is able to offer support.

While the blues might well be a realistic part of your Valentine's experience, taking steps to reconnecting with your feelings and with others will allow other colors to flow in, and keep an open path of healing.

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Marking Milestones

By: Leandra Walker



We humans tend to measure our days by predictable events. Holidays like Easter or Passover, special family days like birthdays and anniversaries. Something as personal as "we always went to the beach on THAT weekend." Or something as nationally recognized such as Independence Day - picnics & fireworks together.

When you lose the one you love, those days can be misery. Or they can be a healing reminder of all the wonderful things you shared. It depends on how you plan to face

them.

My first difficult milestone was Thanksgiving, shortly after John's memorial service. I had to find some way to get through the holiday with some semblance of grace. Sorry to say, I didn't handle it well. I cried on my way to my family celebration, and cried harder on my way to my in-laws. It was then that I realized that "business as usual" wasn't going to cut it.

The first time through the year without a partner, every significant day is like a knife wound. You know your own style best, but here are some suggestions to help get you through.

Holidays: Take a break from them if you can. Let family know you aren't up to "celebrating" this year. Make plans to do something entirely different from the way you shared the day with your partner, something you find enjoyable. Visit a museum, the zoo, go shopping, go out instead of dinner at home, whatever will make you feel "in charge" and keep the calendar at bay.

Your Birthday: This was a tough one for me. I spent my birthday with friends who didn't know it was my birthday. We had a big dinner and good conversation and I was able to lose myself in the day. One young widow threw herself a party, invited only her closest girlfriends and they took turns giving each other makeovers. OR you could buy something special for yourself and know your partner is watching and approving.

HIS/HER Birthday: This is worse yet. I dreaded it for weeks. Finally, I decided to send John's mother flowers and when she called me, we talked for hours about the good times. That evening, I attended a spiritual discussion group where everyone KNEW it was a tough day and they supported me and didn't mind my tears. Being around people who love you and take care of you is a great way to get through a tough day. For parents, a grief counselor suggested having a party for your spouse that you and your kids can enjoy. A special meal, your partner's photo at the place of honor, a cake with candles the kids can blow out. For older kids, this may be a good time to present them with special keepsakes that belonged to the missing parent. This also gives you a chance to share both your grief and your memories with your children -- they are grieving too, and it's very healing to let them see that, however much you miss someone you love, life continues and that person is always in your heart.



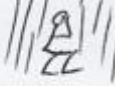











Hope
For
Youth



2/2025

Dear Friends,

Our grief journey can lead us to surprising  and unexpected places.  Some of these surprises can be difficult; for example having a painful reminder of our loved one's death when we weren't expecting it.  But there are also pleasant gifts that we come across on our journey. This might happen when we see (or hear) something  that tells us that our loved is doing O.K. Perhaps someone will remind us of something funny that happened with our deceased loved one that sparks a happy memory.  There will also be times  on our journey through grief that we surprise ourselves by overcoming or surviving a tough period.  We then realize  that we are growing , and stronger  than we thought! Therefore, expect the unexpected!  Love,
Mark 



for
Teens & Adolescents

Dear Friends,

Vol 3 #11 2/2025

There are times when the season and the weather may reflect our mood as we navigate through our grief journey. The days are shorter, the nights are longer, and it feels like the cold will never go away! Warm, sunny days with a gentle breeze may seem like a far-off dream. The dark days of our grief could seem a lot like this – we may be sad and angry about our loved one's death, and we begin to wonder if we'll ever feel good again.

It is important to remember that, like the seasons and the weather, our journey through grief is constantly changing. From day to day, we may not notice any differences. We can feel "down in the dumps" for days on end, as we miss our loved one, and the pain feels like it won't go away. Yet, as the seasons gradually give way to increasing light and more warmth, our grief journey will lead us to growth and healing. As fellow travelers on this journey, our end of the bargain is to hang in there and lean into our grief, not avoid it. It is good to seek help as we cope, such as talking to others about our feelings. Friends, relatives, and/or professionals can provide us with insights and "helpful hints" to guide us.

Good practices such as keeping a journal can assist us in recognizing the subtle changes that occur on our grief journey. I am often surprised at changes in my attitude and emotions when I read from earlier days and entries in my journal. I can then appreciate the movement and growth I didn't realize. This process motivates me to continue my quest for healing on my journey through grief!

Take Care -Mark

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

SAVE THE DATES for our 2025 Events

- ♥ Tournament of HOPE Golf Tournament - Monday, June 23rd
- ♥ Remembrance Run/Walk for HOPE - Saturday, August 2nd
- ♥ Celebration of HOPE - Friday, October 24th

Memorial and sponsorship opportunities are available.
Contact us to learn more!

E: kocampo@hopeforbereaved.com

P: 315-475-9675

SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

**All groups are 6:30 to 8:30 PM at HOPE for Bereaved unless otherwise noted*

- 1st Wed. | February 5th - Widows/Widowers, Engaged & Significant Others
- 2nd Tues. | February 11th - Family & Friends
- 2nd Wed. | February 12th - Survivors of Suicide
- 2nd Friday | February 14th - Family & Friends
**Clay Senior Center, 4948 State Rt 31, 11:30-1:30*
- 3rd Tues. | February 18th - Death By Drug Overdose
- 3rd Wed. | February 19th - Bereaved Parents (separate groups held for death of all ages + infant, newborn, & pregnancy death)
- 3rd Wed | February 19th - Senior Widows/Widowers
**10AM to 12PM*
- 3rd Thursday | February 20th - Parents without Parents

Individual counseling is also available

happening at HOPE



Grief Yoga



Join us on **Thursday, February 13th at 6pm** for Grief Yoga at HOA (5490 Cobbler Way in Camillus).

There is no charge, thanks to the generosity of **Kelsey Sawyer of Riverbend Grief Movement, LLC**, but advanced registration is required.

Call us for more details!



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FEBRUARY 2025

SIGN UP FOR THE
33RD ANNUAL
TOURNAMENT OF
HOPE

JUNE 23, 2025
📍 **SUNSET RIDGE GOLF CLUB**
Presented by *Molly Elliot*

 **INFORMATION & REGISTRATION:**
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