



November/December 2016

grief MATTERS

On The Journey

Holidays can be difficult for those who are grieving. Do we keep the same traditions and rituals from when our loved one was with us? Do we change everything so that nothing is the same? These are difficult decisions. Perhaps what we could do is prioritize the demands and activities of the holidays by taking inventory of the activities that we "always do." Being able to decide what is best for each of us during the holidays is essential. We may drop some activities and traditions to start new and simpler ones. One of the tasks of grieving involves making choices all along the way.

It may be helpful to share your feelings with your family and friends to help them understand why you feel you need to make changes. Help them to understand that even though you are making some changes this year, it does not necessarily mean they will be set in stone. Allow yourself a holiday season to try something different. Then you can decide next year what you need to do at that time.

Hospice of Lansing, Ionia Area Hospice and Stoneleigh Residence offer individual grief counseling to those who have used our hospice service and also to community members. Please feel free to call us if you would like to meet individually with a grief counselor.

Blessings on your journey,

Rev Kris Abbey

Rev. Kris Abbey
Chaplain

Drop-in Grief Support

HOSPICE OF LANSING/STONELEIGH RESIDENCE

3186 Pine Tree Road, Lansing • 1:30-3:00pm.
November 28, December 12, January 23

IONIA AREA HOSPICE

601 East Washington, Ionia • 1:30-3:00pm.
November 29, December 13, January 25

You are welcomed to call **517.882.4500** or **877.882.4500** for more information or you may just "drop-in".

LEGACY OF *Memories*

ANNUAL MEMORIAL CELEBRATION

Sunday, November 6, 2016 • 5:00-6:30pm
Okemos Community Church Fellowship Hall

4734 Okemos Road • Okemos, Michigan 48864
Please join us for a special evening of music and remembrance. Light hors d'oeuvres and desserts will be served. **RSVP to 517.882.4500 or 877.882.4500 by October 28.**



Hospice of Lansing

Ionia Area Hospice

Stoneleigh Residence

Getting Through the Holidays after the Loss of a Love One —

The first Thanksgiving, the first Christmas, the first birthday and all other firsts without your loved one may be very difficult. There is no way to avoid the memories and the accompanying grief that these times call up.

For most of us holidays are full of traditions: "We always went to Mom's on Thanksgiving." "Harry always decorated the tree and lit it on Christmas Eve." "We always went to Coral Gables on our anniversary because she loved their bread pudding." These memories will forever be sacred AND painful. They are signs that our relationship with our deceased loved one was meaningful and real. They are signs that our love does not end when a life ends.

Holidays, like losses, cannot be avoided. Sometimes our grief feels unbearable and we may try to escape the pain. The key is to try to find a balance.

What is helpful for one may not be so for another. You may want to experiment with different ways to cope with the holidays; different ways to face the empty chair, allowing your grief to be a part of the occasion. Some people want to be alone. Some want to be with someone they feel close to. You may want to start a new ritual to acknowledge your loss and celebrate your love that lives on. Something as simple as lighting a candle and saying: "on this day I remember----- and give thanks for the time we had together."

Whatever choices you make; remember to be kind to yourself. Respect your needs. You may want to be with others or you may want to be alone. Take note of what feels right for you even if others make suggestions that they think you should follow.

Honor where you are. This may be the year that you don't celebrate the holidays even though it seems everyone else is in a joyful mood. This may be the year you help serve Christmas dinner at a homeless shelter, or just stay home and write a letter to your loved one who is no longer with you.

Wherever you are on your grief journey, know that there are others who are also dealing with losses. You will find them in Grief Support Groups offered by your local hospice or funeral home. One of the best tools for dealing with your grief is sharing with a fellow griever. Grief partners honor each other's right to mourn and offer a quality of support that those inexperienced in the death of a loved one cannot.

~Ann
Hospice Social Worker



The staff at *HOSPICE OF LANSING & STONELEIGH RESIDENCE* invites you and your family to join us and learn more about hospice care in a relaxed, comfortable setting.

Our *Legacy of Love* information sharing sessions are held at Stoneleigh Residence and will last only one hour.

3411 STONELEIGH DRIVE • LANSING, MI 48910

FIRST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 12:00 PM & THIRD TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 8:30 AM

Please note that the Legacy of Love is not a fundraising event and attendees will not be asked for a donation. Please call 517.882.4500 to reserve your space or visit our website at www.hospiceoflansing.org

The Countless Tasks that Need Doing

I finally made that phone call and said to the cable company operator, "I need to terminate a cable TV account." "O.K.," she responded, "I can help you with that, may I have the account number and name?" "Yes, it is 321456789 and my name is Jane Smith." "I'm sorry, but that is not the name on the account. May I speak with the person whose name is on the account?" "Well," I said, "you can't. That's why I'm calling. That person died and I want to close the account." "I'm sorry, but since you are not the name on the account, I am unable to do that. I'll be happy to help you after you supply the following information and documents...."

Just a simple call, you think, to take care of a needed task after someone dies- just one task out of many-and when it can't easily be crossed off, it can become overwhelming.

Grief isn't just about the loneliness or the ache of missing someone. It's also about the energy-consuming tasks that need to be done: the bank accounts, medical bills, utilities and taxes, a lengthy list of jobs you may never have faced before. You're juggling decisions in uncharted territories. No wonder your emotions are on a roller coaster.

No one has a definitive "grief" road map to follow, but here are some thoughts gained from experience that might offer solace.

Remember that after someone dies, you have permission to go at your own pace. So be gentle with yourself. A significant chunk of your energy is being siphoned off for processing your grief, leaving you more exhausted and vulnerable than usual. Honor this. Rules and policies seem cold, and you can't change that. You can decide what you need to do and commend yourself for prioritizing your needs and doing those things that are most important now.

Acknowledge and appreciate what you did right, and from these experiences know that in your own time, you'll be ready to take the second step. That step might be to pull together requested materials to close an account or pay a bill. Maybe you'll choose to go on to something else, or you might ask someone for help or ask them to do the task. Maybe it's even time to step back for a bite of dark chocolate. However you're feeling in the circle of life; trust the strength inside you to nurture you along your own unique grief journey.

~Joey
Hospice Volunteer

Hospice of Lansing, Stoneleigh Residence and Ionia Area Hospice offer free bereavement counseling to community members as well as to families who have used our hospice service. Please call our office at 517/882-4500 or 877/882-4500 for more information.

THE LEGEND OF THE *Lotus*

*Out of the depths
and shadows from
the bottom of a pond, the lotus
emerges, untouched and unstained.*

*Representing the purity of the mind and soul,
the lotus flower is a powerful symbol of
peace, hope, transcendence and rebirth.
The lotus reminds us to strive through
difficulties and that beauty and light
can rise from the murky darkness.*



Grief Workshop

GETTING THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS

Wednesday, November 2, 2016 • 10:00-11:30am

Hospice of Lansing, Main Office

3186 Pine Tree Road • Lansing, 48911

A time of discussion and sharing to help during the Holiday season. **RSVP to 517.882.4500 or 877.882.4500 by October 26.**

This workshop is sponsored jointly by Hospice of Lansing and Sparrow Hospice.



Hospice of Lansing
Ionia Area Hospice
Stoneleigh Residence

3186 Pine Tree Road
Lansing, MI 48911

The Calley Office Building
PO Box 124
Ionia, MI 48846

3411 Stoneleigh Drive
Lansing, MI 48910

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HOSPICE OF LANSING

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Lansing, MI 48911
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www.hospiceofLANSING.org

IONIA AREA HOSPICE

The Calley Office Building, PO Box 124
Ionia, MI 48846
Phone: (616) 527-0681
Fax: (517) 882-3010
www.IONIAareahospice.org

STONELEIGH RESIDENCE

3411 Stoneleigh Drive
Lansing, MI 48910
Phone: (517) 882-1620
Fax: (517) 882-3010
www.hospiceofLANSING.org

Grief Services Online

For information on upcoming grief support meetings and events, visit us online at www.hospiceofLANSING.org or www.IONIAareahospice.org.

Mailing List

Please call 877.882.4500 or e-mail kabbey@hospiceoflansing.org if you wish to be removed from this mailing list or if you want to receive this newsletter electronically. Please be assured we do not sell or share our list with other organizations or businesses.

Online Donations

We have made donating to Hospice of Lansing, Stoneleigh Residence and Ionia Area Hospice even easier!

Save yourself the time it takes to write a check and attach a stamp by visiting us at www.hospiceofLANSING.org or www.IONIAareahospice.org to make a donation. Please visit our website and make a secured donation today!