



September/October 2016

grief MATTERS

On The Journey

Time passes. We notice this especially during this time of the year in Michigan when we see the birds fly south for the winter season. They know it is time to move on and to take flight into the future and change.

Time can be a difficult issue for those who grieve. We may resent time passing because we fear that our memories of our loved one will start to fade. Or, time might become a heavy burden, not moving fast enough through the grief and pain of loss.

In this issue of Grief Matters you will find that grief can have many effects on our lives; and just like the issue of time, our grief can take us many "places" and produce a myriad of feelings. It is important to remember that we cannot compare grief; our experience of grief is our own.

There is help available for you who are moving along on this journey of grief. Included in this publication is an article exploring the importance of being present to our own grief.

And as time passes we will come, again, to that point in the year when we hold our annual memorial service, November 6 at Okemos Community Church Fellowship Hall (See full details in this newsletter). We invite you to participate in this event for memorial services do help in the grieving process.

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.
September 19, October 17,
November 28, December 12

IONIA AREA HOSPICE

601 East Washington, Ionia • 1:30-3:00pm.
September 20, October 18,
November 29, December 13

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

Being Present To Our Own Grief

What does “being present” mean? Maybe this illustration will help; all of us have probably experienced those times when we are engaged in conversation with someone and when it was our turn to listen our minds begin to wander and we are off thinking about someone or something else. We are not being present for that person.

There are also times when we may not be present for ourselves, especially in the midst of grief. It may be very difficult to pay attention to what our own needs are or what our own best interest is. But paying attention is important for moving along on the journey of grief.

We may not be paying attention to our health, to what our body is telling us. We may not be paying attention to whether we are taking care of ourselves – are we eating well and getting enough sleep?

We may not be paying attention to how we are dealing with others socially. Are we avoiding social contact and staying to ourselves? Are we experiencing a high degree of anger? These may be signs that we need to talk to someone about what we are experiencing.

We may not be paying attention to the spiritual part of our lives. Are we able to find hope again? Are there unresolved questions about the meaning and purpose of life since the death of our loved one?

Following is a list of signs of grief that we should be paying attention to. It is normal to experience a variety of these feelings and symptoms of grief, but if we are having difficulties--if we feel as if we are stuck in place and can't move forward--then it can become a problem. That is why being present, paying attention, is so important.

Experiencing many of these feelings and thoughts is completely normal. It is normal to experience these at different times following a loss. We don't grieve in an orderly way, and each of us grieves differently. However, being present to how we are doing will help us to know if we need help on this journey of grief.

Remember you do not have to “go it alone” as help is available. Grief education groups and individual bereavement counseling are both available through Hospice of Lansing, Stoneleigh Residence and Ionia Area Hospice. Paying attention may help you determine if you need to talk with someone or see your doctor or mental

Physical

- Anxiety/
heart palpitations
- Lack of energy
- Weight loss/gain
- Physical pain
- Anorexia/
GI disturbance
- Muscle weakness
- Loss of sexual desire/
hyper-sexuality
- Breathlessness
- Hollowness in stomach

Emotional

- Shock/numbness
- Denial
- Guilt/self-reproach
- Anxiety
- Anger
- Helplessness
- Powerlessness
- Abandonment
- Loneliness
- Regret

Spiritual

- Loss of faith and belief system
- Questions of meaning/purpose
- Loss of self-identity
- Unable to find hope

Cognitive

- Disbelief/denial
- Confusion
- Repetition of events
- Visual/auditory
hallucinations
- Forgetfulness/
Absentmindedness
- Difficulty concentrating

Behavioral

- Sleep disturbance
- Appetite changes
- Social withdrawal
- Treasuring objects
- Restlessness
- Crying
- Inability to initiate and
maintain organized
activities

health professional. It is important not to ignore your grief or try to make it go away. If we are not present to ourselves and paying attention to the signs that might indicate we need help; being present to life in all its fullness may be difficult. Grief is a life-long journey, but we have choices that we can make. We can choose to move along the journey, to get help if needed and to look for those things in life that bring joy to us even in the midst of our grief.

Paying attention to our grief may even lead us to a time of discovery. We might find strength that we never knew we had, or re-discover skills long unused, or find a new capability for reaching out in empathy to others-because we have been there. We don't really like to acknowledge the possibility of "something good" coming out of such a heart-breaking time, but it is indeed possible. The potential is great for each of us who mourn the loss of a loved one to grow and change. We may even feel as if we have been "stretched" into new awareness, knowledge and wisdom. Losing a loved one causes us to reassess our priorities and our values. We might find ourselves asking, "What is important to me now?"

This does not mean we are leaving our loved one behind. It does not mean we are rejecting the past for what may be. It simply means that we are who we are because of our relationship and history with our loved one and because of our experience of loss. Life is filled with loss, pain and grief but in the same way life can be filled with joy, hope and fulfillment.

Grief takes work. It takes paying attention. It takes making choices not to remain stuck in our grief but to move along the journey of grief. And it means we must be patient with ourselves. We will always experience grief over our loss, but as we cope and grow, we become reconciled to it. It remains a part of who we are, but it will no longer dominate our lives as it does in the beginning. Yes, there are still moments of deep grief and at times we may yearn for things to be what they once were, but as our journey continues, we find we are able to look forward more than we look back.

I would like to leave you with the following thought by Martha Whitmore Hickman, from *Healing After Loss*.



Healing After Loss

What a truckload of responsibilities and potential for pain we take on when we love another human being: all the dangers of misunderstanding, of betrayal, of indifference, and ultimately, of loss.

To more than balance those dangers, we feel the possibility of life made rich through sharing experiences with another – of physical and spiritual warmth and communion, or enriched understanding and common achievement, of a stay against loneliness and isolation.

Most of us have no trouble opting for love. But then, to have invested so much of our life's energy in the life of a loved one then to find that loved one gone! Is it any wonder we are, for a time, laid low?

But the love we have shared helps form the strength to deal with loss. The hope and joy we have known help us believe in the possibility of hope and joy again.

And the intensity of grief (which will moderate, though we may find that hard to believe) mirrors the intensity of shared love, which will continue to beam through our life, to illumine and nourish all that we do and are.

Love never ends. Never.

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

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Lansing, MI
Permit #575

HOSPICE OF LANSING

3186 Pine Tree Road
Lansing, MI 48911
Phone: (517) 882-4500
Fax: (517) 882-3010
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!