



IN TOUCH

Bereavement Newsletter

Bereavement Department (602) 530-6970 or hov.org

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2017

GETTING THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS

When your loved one dies, you grieve not only for the person, but also for the life you used to have, the love the person gave you and all the special times you spent together. Perhaps there is no time of the year when you're more aware of the empty space your dear one has left behind than during the holiday season.

Holidays can create feelings of dread and anxiety in those who are bereaved. The clichéd images of family togetherness and the often unrealistic expectations of a season filled with picture-perfect, joyful gatherings can cause tremendous stress for those who are not grieving, let alone for those in the midst of the painful, isolating experience of loss. Holidays by nature are filled with nostalgia and tradition, but in grief, even the happiest memories can hurt. When you're in the midst of pain, and the rest of the world wants to give thanks and celebrate, you need to find ways to manage your pain and get through the season with a minimum amount of stress.

Suggestions for coping with the holidays

Have a family meeting. List all the things you ordinarily do for the holidays (sending greeting cards, decorating the house, stringing outdoor lights, putting up a tree, holiday baking, entertaining business associates, buying something special to wear, going to parties, visiting friends, exchanging gifts, preparing a big meal, etc.) Decide together what's important to each of you, what you want to do this year, what you can let go of, and what you can do differently. For each task on the list, ask yourself these questions: Would the holidays be the holidays without doing this? Is this something I really want to do? Do I do it freely, or out of habit or tradition? Is it a one-person job, or can it be a group effort? Who is responsible for getting it done? Do I really like doing it?

Do some things differently this year. Trying to recreate the past may remind you all the more that your loved one is missing. This year, try celebrating the holidays in a totally different way. Nothing is the same as it used to be anyway. Go to a restaurant. Visit relatives or

friends. Travel somewhere you've never gone before. If you decide to put up a tree, put it in a different location and make or buy different decorations for it. Hang a stocking in your loved one's memory, and ask each family member to express their thoughts and feelings by writing a note to, from or about your loved one, and place the notes in that special stocking for everyone to read. Buy a poinsettia for your home as a living memorial to your loved one for the holiday season.

Do other things more simply. You don't have to discard all your old traditions forevermore, but you can choose to observe the holidays on a smaller scale this year.

Take good care of yourself. Build time in your day to relax, even if you're having trouble sleeping. Eat nourishing, healthy meals, and if you've lost your appetite, eat smaller portions more frequently throughout the day. (Sweet, sugary foods are everywhere, from Halloween until Easter, but too much sugar will deplete what little energy you have.)

Continued on page 2

GETTING THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS *(continued)*

Get some daily exercise, even if it's just a walk around the block. Avoid drinking alcohol, which intensifies depression and disrupts normal sleep.

Just do it. We all know that we ought to think positively, eat right, exercise more and get enough rest—but grief by its very nature robs us of the energy we need to do all those good and healthy things. Accept that in spite of what we know, it's often very hard to do what's good for us—then do it anyway. Don't wait until you feel like doing it.

Pay attention to yourself. Notice what you're feeling and what it is you need. Feelings demand expression, and when we acknowledge them and let them out, they go away. Feelings that are “stuffed” don't go anywhere; they just fester and get worse. If you need help from others, don't expect them to read your mind. It's okay to ask for what you need. Besides, doing a favor for you during the holidays may make them feel better, too. Be patient and gentle with yourself, and with others, as well.

Expect to feel some pain. Plan on feeling sad at certain moments throughout the season, and let the feelings come. Experience the pain and tears, deal with them, then let them go. Have faith that you'll get through this and that you will survive.

Seek support from others. Grieving is hard work, and it shouldn't be done alone. You need to share your experience with someone who understands the pain of your loss. If your spouse, relative or friend cannot be the source of that support, you can find it elsewhere. See page 3 for a list of support groups sponsored by Hospice of the Valley.

Give something of yourself to others. As alone as you may feel in your grief, one of the most healing things you can do for yourself is to be with other people, especially during the holidays. Caring for and giving to others will nourish and sustain you, and help you to feel better about yourself. If you can bring yourself to do so, visit someone in a nursing home, or volunteer your time at your church or synagogue. Do whatever you can, and let it be enough.



This is an excerpt from the book, *Finding Your Way through Grief: A Guide for the First Year, Second Edition*, by Marty Tousley, CNSBC, FT, DCC. If you would like to purchase a copy of this book (\$12), please visit hov.org/publications and click on the “Online Store.”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bereavement Services

Hospice of the Valley provides bereavement support for 13 months following the death of your loved one. Support groups throughout the Valley, and grief counseling support are available. Information can be found at hov.org/grief, or by calling (602) 530-6970.

New Song Center for Grieving Children

New Song Center for Grieving Children, a program of Hospice of the Valley, provides grief support groups for children, youth, young adults and adults at several locations Valleywide at no cost to participants.

Families with children ages 5 through young adults up to age 25 may participate regardless of the cause of death or whether they received care from Hospice of the Valley.

For more information, call (480) 951-8985 or view thenewsongcenter.org.

GRIEF SUPPORT GROUPS

Adult drop-in groups, no registration needed. If the date of a meeting falls on a national holiday, please call to check whether the meeting will take place. For bereavement support, call (602) 530-6970.

PHOENIX

Hospice of the Valley
1510 E. Flower St., Bldg. 1
Phoenix, AZ 85014
1st & 3rd Thursday, 6:30–8 p.m.
[Holiday workshop 11/02](#)

The Stratford Assisted Living
1739 W. Myrtle Ave.
Phoenix, AZ 85021
2nd & 4th Tuesday, 3–4:30 p.m.
[Holiday workshop 11/14](#)

Anthem Civic Building
3701 W. Anthem Way
Anthem, AZ 85086
1st & 3rd Tuesday, 6:30–8 p.m.
[Holiday workshop 11/07](#)

La Siena Retirement Community
909 E. Northern Ave.
Phoenix, AZ 85020
1st & 3rd Thursday, 2:30–4 p.m.
[Holiday workshop 11/02](#)

Healing Rainbows: Phoenix
(Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender)
Hospice of the Valley
1510 E. Flower St., Bldg. 1
Phoenix, AZ 85014
2nd & 4th Tuesday, 6:30–8 p.m.
[Holiday workshop 11/14](#)

EAST VALLEY

St. Matthews United
Methodist Church
2540 W. Baseline Rd.
Mesa, AZ 85202
1st & 3rd Tuesday, 6–7:30 p.m.
[Holiday workshop 11/07](#)

Hospice of the Valley
2020 E. Woodside Ct.
Gilbert, AZ 85297
2nd & 4th Monday, 6:15–7:45 p.m.
[Lost Dutchman Room](#)
[Holiday workshop 11/13](#)
No group 12/25

Pecos Community Center
17010 S. 48th St.
Phoenix, AZ 85048
Every other Wednesday, 6–7:30 p.m.
[See hov.org for dates, or call \(602\) 530-6970.](#)
[Holiday workshop 11/01](#)

Sun Lakes United Methodist Church
9248 E. Riggs Rd.
Sun Lakes, AZ 85248
1st & 3rd Thursday, 1–2:30 p.m.
[Multipurpose Education building; park on North side.](#)
[Holiday workshop 11/02](#)

San Tan Mtn. View Funeral Home
21809 S. Ellsworth Rd.
Queen Creek, AZ 85142
2nd & 4th Monday
2nd Monday, 5:30–6:30 p.m.
4th Monday, 10–11 a.m.
[Holiday workshop 11/13](#)
No group 12/25

WEST VALLEY

Benevilla
13576 W. Camino Del Sol #22
Sun City West, AZ 85375
2nd & 4th Thursday, 3–4:30 p.m.
[Holiday workshop 11/09](#)
No group 11/23

Hospice of the Valley
9435 W. Peoria Ave.
Peoria, AZ 85345
2nd & 4th Wednesday, 2–3:30 p.m.
[Holiday workshop 11/08](#)

Hospice of the Valley
9435 W. Peoria Ave.
Peoria, AZ 85345
1st & 3rd Thursday, 6–7:30 p.m.
[Holiday workshop 11/02](#)

Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church
918 S. Litchfield Rd.
Goodyear, AZ 85338
Every other Wednesday, 6–7:30 p.m.
[Park in back lot. See hov.org for dates, or call \(602\) 530-6970.](#)
[Holiday workshop 11/01](#)

NORTHEAST VALLEY

Fountain Hills Community Center
13001 N. La Montana Dr.
Fountain Hills, AZ 85268
2nd & 4th Monday, 1–2:30 p.m.
[Activity Center](#)
[Holiday workshop 11/13](#)
No group 12/25

Granite Reef Senior Center
1700 N. Granite Reef Rd., Room 8
Scottsdale, AZ 85257
2nd & 4th Monday, 1:30–3 p.m.
[Holiday workshop 11/13](#)
No group 12/25

Virginia G. Piper Center
10460 N. 92nd St.
Scottsdale, AZ 85258
2nd & 4th Tuesday, 3–4:30 p.m.
[Educational Conference Room](#)
[Holiday workshop 11/14](#)

Paradise Valley Community Center
17402 N. 40th St.
Phoenix, AZ 85032
1st & 3rd Tuesday, 6:30–8 p.m.
[Holiday workshop 11/07](#)

Hope Lodge Brusally Center
5811 E. Mayo Blvd.
Phoenix, AZ 85054
2nd & 4th Wednesday, 3–4:30 p.m.
[Holiday workshop 11/07](#)

NORTHWEST VALLEY

Wickenburg Public Library
164 E. Apache St.
Wickenburg, AZ 85390
4th Thursday, 3–4:30 p.m.
No group 11/23

PET LOSS SUPPORT GROUP

Hospice of the Valley
Administrative Office, Bldg. 1
1510 E. Flower St.
Phoenix, AZ 85014
1st Saturday, 9–11 a.m.



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Administrative Office

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Phoenix, AZ 85014

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Light Up a Life

This annual remembrance event honors departed loved ones through a photo montage set to music. The event will be held at 6 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 19, at Steele Indian School Park, 300 E. Indian School Road, Phoenix.

The highlight of Light Up a Life is a photographic tribute to loved ones who have died. Everyone is welcome to submit a photo for the tribute, regardless of whether that person received Hospice of the Valley services. Please submit photos as soon as possible. Final deadline is 5 p.m., Nov. 2, 2017. Information: (602) 530-6992 or LUAL@hov.org.

- Please submit only one photo (do not send multiple photos of the same person or collages)
- Photos should not include graphics or text
- Digital photos must be high-resolution (at least 300 dpi); high-quality smart phone photos are okay
- Minimum size is 2" x 3"
- Photocopies, newsprint or prints made from desktop printers are not accepted (photo lab prints only)

Upload your photo

High-resolution digital photos may be submitted electronically through our website: hov.org/LUAL.

Use your previously submitted photos

If you would like a previously submitted photo to be included in this year's tribute, call (602) 530-6992, or email LUAL@hov.org to request its inclusion.

Mail your photo

Photos may be mailed to Hospice of the Valley, Light Up a Life, 1510 E. Flower St., Phoenix, AZ 85014. Include your name, phone number, email address and a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want the photo returned.