



IN TOUCH

Bereavement Newsletter

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

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2023

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.) Get some daily exercise, even if it's just a walk around

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GETTING THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS *(continued)*

the block. Avoid drinking alcohol, which intensifies depression and disrupts normal sleep.

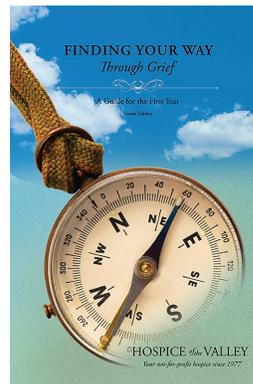
Just do it. We all know that we ought to think positively, eat right, exercise more and get enough rest—but grief by its very nature robs us of the energy we need to do all those good and healthy things. Accept that in spite of what we know, it's often very hard to do what's good for us—then do it anyway. 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), visit <https://hov.org/news/> and click on the “Online Store” link at the bottom of the page.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bereavement services

Hospice of the Valley provides bereavement support for up to 13 months following the death of your loved one. Virtual support groups and telephonic or virtual grief counseling support are available. Information can be found at hov.org/grief-support-groups, 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. Support groups are now being held in Central Phoenix, North Phoenix, Scottsdale, Gilbert and Peoria, at no cost to participants.

“**Enduring Ties**” is an evening support group for families that have experienced the death of a minor child. There is also a support group for grandparents grieving the death of a grandchild.

“**Luz del Corazón**” is a support group program for families whose first language is Spanish and who have experienced any type of loss through death.

ADULT GRIEF SUPPORT GROUPS

In-person and virtual groups are available county-wide. Please watch for updates at hov.org or call the Bereavement Dept. at (602) 530-6970. Groups marked virtual below require a call to (602) 636-5390 to obtain the invite link on the Zoom platform.

If you are in need of crisis support, please call the **Maricopa County Crisis Response Network:** (602) 222-9444 or **Non-Crisis Warm Line:** (602) 347-1100. **Crisis Text Line:** Text 741741 or visit <https://www.crisistextline.org/text-us/>. **Mental Health and Suicide Crisis** (national 3-digit code): 988

PHOENIX

Memories of the Heart...When a Loved One Dies with Dementia – Virtual
1st & 3rd Tuesday; 10:30 a.m.–Noon
Call for link: (602) 636-5390

Healing Rainbows: Phoenix – Virtual
(Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender)
2nd & 4th Tuesday; 6–7:30 p.m.
Call for link: (602) 636-5390

Hospice of the Valley – In person
1510 E. Flower St., Bldg. 1
Phoenix, AZ 85014
2nd & 4th Tuesday; 5:30–7 p.m.

Hospice of the Valley – In person
1510 E. Flower St., Bldg. 1
Phoenix, AZ 85014
1st & 3rd Monday; 5:30–7 p.m.

Luz del Corazón for Spanish Speakers
Hospice of the Valley
1510 E. Flower St., Bldg. 1
Phoenix, AZ 85014
Call to register: (602) 410-5252

Phoenix – Virtual
1st & 3rd Thursday; 5:30–7 p.m.
Call for link: (602) 636-5390

La Siena Retirement Community – In person
909 E. Northern Ave.
Phoenix, AZ 85020
1st Wednesday, 1–2:30 p.m.

EAST VALLEY

East Valley – Virtual
1st & 3rd Tuesday; 1–2:30 p.m.
Call for link: (602) 636-5390

Hospice of the Valley – In person
2020 E. Woodside Ct.
Gilbert, AZ 85297
1st & 3rd Thursday; 1–2:30 p.m.
Lost Dutchman Room

Hospice of the Valley – In person
2020 E. Woodside Ct.
Gilbert, AZ 85297
2nd & 4th Wednesday; 5:30–7 p.m.
Lost Dutchman Room

Leisure World – In person
908 S. Power Rd.
Mesa, AZ 85206
2nd & 4th Tuesday; 1–2:30 p.m.
Recreation #1 Banquet Room

Mountain View Funeral and Cemetery – In person
7900 E. Main St.
Mesa, AZ 85207
1st Monday; 10–11 a.m.

Pecos Community Center – Virtual
1st & 3rd Wednesday; 6–7:30 p.m.
Call for link: (602) 636-5390

St. Matthew's – Virtual
1st & 3rd Tuesday; 6–7:30 p.m.
Call for link: (602) 636-5390

Mountain View Funeral and Cemetery – In person
21809 S. Ellsworth Rd.
Queen Creek, AZ 85142
2nd Monday; 10–11 a.m.

WEST VALLEY

Hospice of the Valley – In person
9435 W. Peoria Ave.
Peoria, AZ 85345
2nd & 4th Wednesday; 2–3:30 p.m.

West Valley – Virtual
Every other Thursday; 1–2:30 p.m.
Call for link: (602) 636-5390

NORTHEAST VALLEY

Granite Reef Senior Center – In person
1700 N. Granite Reef Rd., Room 8
Scottsdale, AZ 85257
1st & 3rd Tuesday; 1:30–3 p.m.

Northeast Valley – In person
16117 N. 76th St.
Scottsdale, AZ 85258
2nd & 4th Tuesday; 3–4:30 p.m.

Virginia G. Piper Center – Virtual
1st & 3rd Tuesday; 1:30–3 p.m.
Call for link: (602) 636-5390

NORTHWEST VALLEY

Wickenburg Community Hospital – In person
520 Rose Lane
Wickenburg, AZ 85390
2nd Thursday; 3–4:30 p.m.

PET LOSS SUPPORT GROUP

1st Saturday; 9–11 a.m.
Call for link: (602) 636-5390



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Light Up a Life

This annual remembrance event honors departed loved ones through a photo montage set to music. Join us for a special night of remembering loved ones who are no longer with us.

AZTV-Channel 7
Sunday, Nov. 19, 2023
6-7 p.m.

Please Join Us for a Child and Family-Focused Time of Remembrance

New Song Center, Ryan House and Phoenix Children's Hospital invite your children and family to participate in an in-person gathering to remember and honor your special loved one who died. Enjoy special arts and crafts, beautiful music and a meaningful remembrance ceremony.

Sunday, Nov. 19, 2023 2-3 p.m.
Steele Indian School Park Ramadas 300 E. Indian School Rd
RSVP (602) 776-6785