

## VOLUME ONE – What is Grief?

# A Time to Heal

NEWSLETTER SERIES

**MISSION:**  
A community  
where no one  
grieves alone.

STAY IN TOUCH

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Grief and  
Education Center

A caring nonprofit partnership of Bellin Health,  
HSHS St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center and HSHS St. Vincent Hospital

Grief is the natural and normal response to death and a journey you do not need to take alone. Because everyone grieves differently, Unity offers services designed to meet your unique needs. Unity Grief and Education Center supports families and friends of Unity patients, as well as all members of the community. Registration is required. To register or for more information on upcoming dates, please visit [www.unityhospice.org/grief-support/](http://www.unityhospice.org/grief-support/), call 920-339-6700 or 800-990-9249 or email [griefcenter@unityhospice.org](mailto:griefcenter@unityhospice.org).

**Navigating Grief** – A support group held for six consecutive afternoons or evenings throughout Northeastern Wisconsin or virtually via Zoom. Group topics include common reactions to grief, memories, coping and adjusting to new roles, self-care, traditions and finding hope.

**Generations: Hope for Grieving Families** – A group designed to provide support to grieving families. Activities and topics are tailored to children and teens ages 4-18, while adults share their own grief experience. Held the second and fourth Thursday evenings of the month in the Green Bay area.

**Virtual Grief Connect** – A twice-a-month group for adults who have experienced a death. It is recommended, although not mandatory, that participants first attend Navigating Grief. Virtual Grief Connect provides a safe place for those who are grieving to gain tools and insights into the grief process. Held on Zoom the first and third Thursday evenings of the month.

**Healing Thru the Arts** – A hands-on creative workshop for adults who have experienced a death. Led by a Grief Counselor at Unity Grief and Education Center, the workshop will guide participants to process and incorporate memories and their loved one's death. Groups are held for six consecutive November and December Tuesday afternoons or evenings either virtually or in person at Unity Grief and Education Center. Meetings will include topics such as grief around the holidays, traditions, self-care and finding hope.

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**WE ARE GRATEFUL**  
Donations to Unity Grief and Education Center make grief support programming available at no charge. To donate in support of those grieving, call 920-338-1111 or visit [www.unityhospice.org/donate/](http://www.unityhospice.org/donate/)



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What is Grief?

We hope you find this newsletter helpful and supportive. If you no longer wish to receive grief mailings from Unity, please contact our office to be removed from the list.

# What is *Grief*?

Some people describe grief as a roller-coaster ride. You find yourself propelled through ups and downs and turns that you often cannot see or predict. Others share that their grief seems to come in waves as if they were standing on a beach and the waves roll continuously in and out. Some waves seem manageable and some waves knock them over. Still others have compared the early weeks of grief to watching a movie and seeing themselves in it. There is an unreal quality about it -- as if it were a dream. You keep expecting to wake up and find yourself back in your real life, not a life without your loved one.

It is not uncommon for those who have experienced the loss of a loved one to describe themselves, and their behaviors, as going through the motions. Perhaps this has been true for you. You may have taken care of the many details and tasks related to the final arrangements, business items, notifying friends and family, going to the memorial service, and the requirements of everyday life. You may have found yourself wondering "What do I do now?" as your daily life has changed. You may have been sad, overwhelmed, relieved, or scared.

Some say, around this time in their grief, they find the "fog is lifting." The phone may not be ringing as often and the realization that "this is real" may be settling in. There is no part of your body, your actions, or daily life that is immune from the impact of grief. Some find it hard to think or remember things. Some find their sleep or appetite to be altered. Many people find their thoughts or emotions can change moment to moment as they hear or see something that reminds them of their loved one. There is no right or wrong way to grieve so be careful not to compare yourself to others. Everyone grieves differently.

## HELPING YOURSELF HEAL

There are many things you can do to promote your own healing. Most of these ideas revolve around giving yourself permission to experience and express your grief at your own pace. Find strategies that help you heal. Remember, as you move through grief, you may need to change your coping strategies. Here are some ideas:

*"Grief never ends but it changes. It's a passage — not a place to stay. Grief is not a sign of weakness nor a lack of faith. It is the price of love."*

—Unknown

- Allow yourself to cry.
- Talk and share with those you trust.
- Attend a support group (Unity has many grief support groups listed on this newsletter).
- Keep a journal of your thoughts and feelings.
- Practice deep breathing.
- Give yourself permission to laugh or experience joy as you are able.
- Look for comfort in things that are meaningful to you – music, prayer, nature, art.

- Focus on the basics - eat healthy, get plenty of rest as you may be more tired, exercise (may be as simple as taking a walk to get the mail).
- Avoid things that numb your grief – alcohol or drugs.
- Seek out support from friends, family, physician, clergy, counselor, or Unity.

## CONTINUING THE RELATIONSHIP

With this loss, your relationship with your loved one has changed dramatically. Research tells us that an important part of the healing process is finding ways to remember your loved one and continue the relationship in a new way. Remember, grief is unique so it is important for you to do things that give YOU comfort. What gives you comfort now may change over time and may be different from others you know. Here are some things others have found helpful:

- Talk to your loved one out loud or silently.
- Display photos of them.
- Write them letters.
- Visit the places where you feel close to your loved one.
- Keep something meaningful that belonged to them.
- Make a memorial gift in their honor.

Are you looking for a way to honor your loved one?

For more information on the memorial opportunities below, contact Unity at 920-338-1111 or visit [www.unityhospice.org](http://www.unityhospice.org).



**Unity's Forget-Me-Not Ornament** – Honor your loved one in a lasting way with the Forget-Me-Not Keepsake Ornament. Handcrafted from fine porcelain, each ornament includes an inspirational message. Ornaments are available for \$10 each.

**Unity's Gardens** – Located on our 34 acre campus in De Pere, the gardens offer beautiful outdoor spaces for meditation and reflection. When you dedicate an engraved brick, a garden element or a stone bench you contribute to the atmosphere of care and healing.

The Unity Memorial Garden and Brick Dedication is held the third Thursday of August at Unity. All garden tributes made before June 1 are formally dedicated at this ceremony.



## UNITY RESALE SHOPPE, LLC

Unity Resale Shoppe, LLC offers a warm and inviting place where household items and clothing can be donated and purchased. Proceeds from sales help fund grief programs, patient care and hospice respite stays. The Shoppe is located at 1641 Commanche Ave, Green Bay, near the Austin Straubel Airport.

For more information, visit us at [www.unityhospice.org/resale-shoppe](http://www.unityhospice.org/resale-shoppe) or phone 920-339-5501.