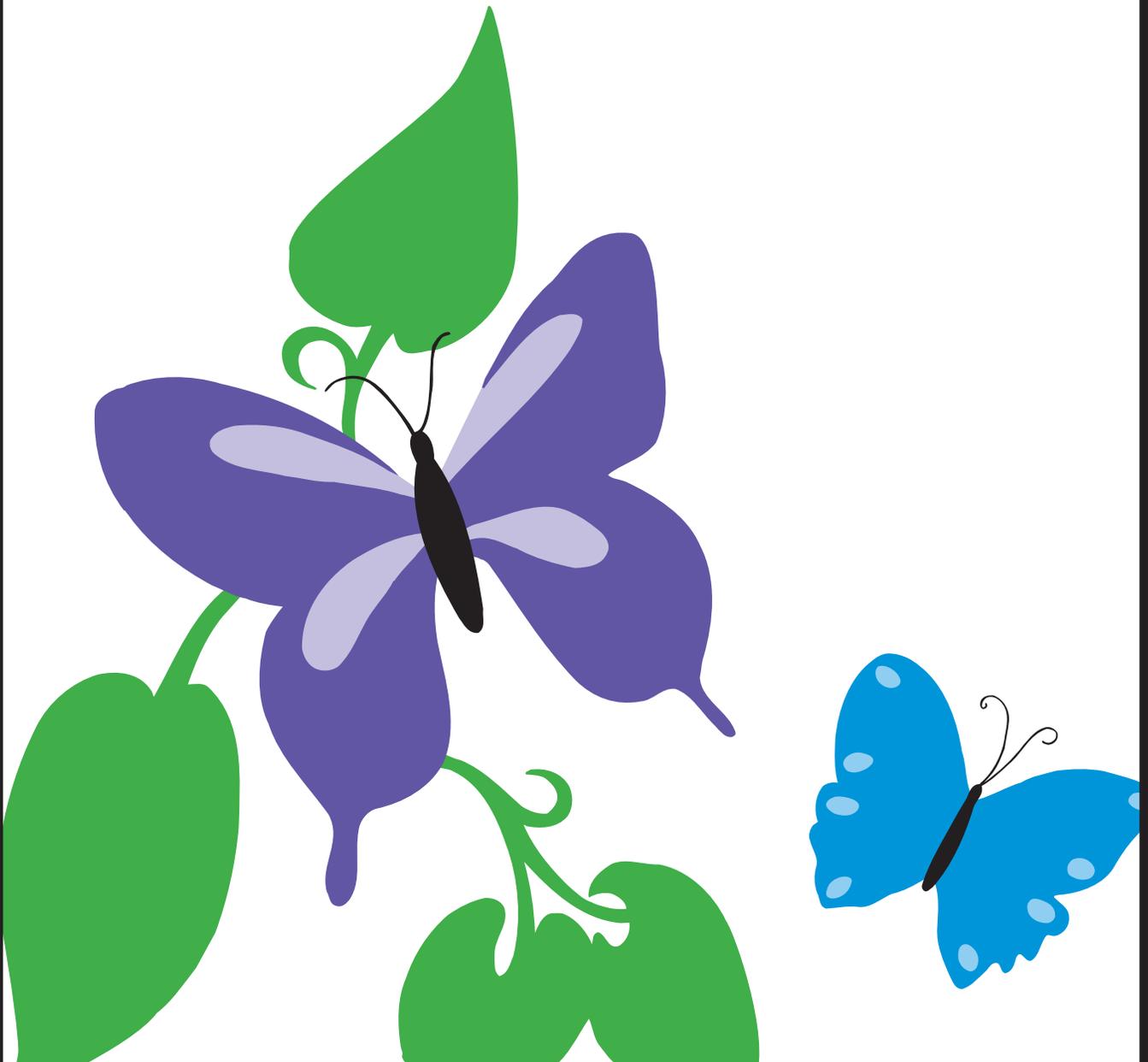


# **Family Bereavement Resource Manual**



created by Full Circle Grief Center

Manual created by:

Allyson Drake, M.Ed.  
Founder and Executive Director, Full Circle Grief Center

Brett Alcarese, MA, NCC  
School Counselor, Henrico County Schools  
Group Counselor, Full Circle Grief Center

Graphic Design by Coulson Graphics

Front cover artwork by Jenny Jacobs

Copyright © 2010 Full Circle Grief Center. All rights reserved.  
*Revised February 2011*

# *Table of Contents*

---

Introduction .....5

Full Circle Grief Center .....7

Grief & Loss .....11

Children, Adolescents & Grief .....17

When Additional Support is Needed.....25

How to Help & Support Grieving Families .....29

Self Care .....30

Rituals & Remembrance Activities .....32

Additional Community Support Services .....34

Grief Support Organizations.....39

Resource List for Children, Teens & Adults .....50

Affirmations & Inspirations .....53



# Introduction

---

## Full Circle

Full Circle is a comprehensive grief resource center whose mission is to provide children and their families with creative ways to express their grief and remember their loved one. Our organization offers grief counseling, remembrance activities, and educational services to children, adolescents, and their families.

We have built an environment where personal relationships are built with the families and these connections are cultivated throughout their grief journey. We take the time to get to know each family, learn their story of loss, and find the ways to best support them, wherever they are in their grief. We place families in our programs, refer them to outside organizations or individuals that can provide additional services, and communicate with them on a regular basis.

All of our services are provided by licensed counselors or social workers, with extensive experience in the bereavement field. Therefore, these professionals have the training, knowledge, and experience to properly support the children, adolescents, and adults and develop a customized plan that will assist them in the best possible way.

All of the services at Full Circle are offered at no cost to the families. The families are asked to make a donation for services, but all families are invited to participate regardless of ability to contribute. Full Circle strives to create a compassionate place where families feel comfortable, find on-going support and resources, share their experiences, and begin healing.

## Manual Partners

- Children's Hospital of Richmond
- Coulson Graphics
- Linhart Foundation
- Members of The Bereavement Coalition of Central Virginia
- Virginia Commonwealth University School of Allied Health Professionals
- Woody Funeral Home, Honored Provider of "Dignity Memorial"



## **Purpose of Manual**

This manual is designed to serve as an educational resource guide to grieving families, and provide you with a comprehensive list of national and local bereavement support services available to assist you on your journey.

It should be kept in mind that these are just guidelines, and everyone's grief journey is unique. Everyone experiences grief in their own way. There are no "rights" and "wrongs" in grieving, and grief may show up in varying ways at different times throughout your life. You will grieve in your own way, and so will your children and other family members.

Grief is not neat and tidy. Therefore, this manual offers some commonalities and basic information with the hope that this manual will be helpful to you and your family.

# Full Circle Grief Center

---

*"Memory is a way of holding onto the things you love, the things you are, the things you never want to lose." ~ From the television show The Wonder Years*

## Mission and Vision

Full Circle was established in September 2008 as a comprehensive grief resource center for families. Our mission is to provide children and their families with creative ways to express their grief and remember their loved one. We present a variety of ways to use creative expression in healing, such as art, writing, play, crafting, photography, and music.

At Full Circle, families will find:

- Trained, nurturing grief counselors
- A unique group model
- Support for the entire family
- Creative outlets
- Acceptance of experiences and feelings
- Opportunity to play
- A chance to remember and commemorate a loved one

Our vision is to meet the unique emotional, social, and physical needs of grieving children and the adults who support them.



## Philosophy

The philosophy of the organization is to provide grief support services to children and their families in a personal and safe manner. The grief support services are led by licensed professionals who have specific training and experience in working with children as well as the bereavement process. As an organization, we commit to getting to know each family and their experiences, conducting a complete assessment of their needs, and placing the child in the program that best meets his/her needs. We work to create a program that works for the child, and do not attempt to place him/her in a predetermined set of services.

The professionals at Full Circle have worked to create a circle of support where children and families can find hope and start healing in a safe, trusting environment. Families and young adults seek support from our professional staff throughout all the stages of the grief journey - some seeking assistance before the death occurs and others looking for support after the loss of a loved one. Individuals are able to come full circle by supporting others who are experiencing similar feelings or circumstances. In other words, anyone is welcome inside the circle, regardless of where they are on their grief journey.

We believe in:

1. The power of the group process
2. Providing services at no cost for the families
3. The value of using creative expression with children who are grieving – i.e. art, writing, play, crafts, music, movement, etc.
4. A family approach to grief support services

## Services Offered

The professionals at Full Circle create opportunities where children can use their hands to actively participate in their own personal healing process. Healing comes from a variety of vehicles, and we created an organization to provide a wide range of options. We use creative expression as a medium for healing – children, teens and adults can choose art, writing, movement, music, crafts, play, or discussion to enhance communication, express feelings that may be overwhelming, and release stress and anxiety.

**Hands On Healing Counseling groups** offer play, peer support, feelings identification, teaching of positive coping skills and stress management techniques, remembrance activities, and creative expression to enable grieving children to discover ways to cope with their loss. Families are able to meet others in similar circumstances and realize they are not alone in their experiences, thoughts, and feelings. In addition, our Community Outreach program enables grief counselors to visit a school or community organization to hold group meetings with children who may not otherwise have access to grief support services.

**The Creative Connections Remembrance Program** allows individuals to use art and other creative activities to express their feelings and create a keepsake to remember or honor their loved ones. This program may help a child feel more connected to their loved one, see the value in their loved one's life, create a tangible item to help document their memories, and express his/her feelings through a creative mechanism. Full Circle offers once a month Creative Connections workshops as well as partners with area schools that are facing the death of a classmate or teacher.

Education is an important aspect of Full Circle. Our **“Conversations About Grief” Educational Series** enables adults to learn how to talk with children about grief and loss, ways to support children through death, and common myths about children and grief. Families can learn what should be considered “normal” symptoms of grief as well as those that perhaps require more intensive intervention. In addition, our **Grief Resource Library** enables grieving children and their families to find resources and reference materials to assist them during the grieving process.

## The Power of the Group

Group counseling is an especially powerful way of dealing with grief and loss, as people find comfort and solace in knowing that they are not alone. Though each person is a unique individual and their loss a personal experience, the feelings they experience are often felt by others going through similar experiences.

Children and adults alike benefit from feeling connected and understood when going through a loss, which can be a very isolating and confusing experience. A peer group provides this bond and, when facilitated effectively by professional counselors, can help group members discuss their feelings, learn effective coping skills, find ways to remember loved ones, and begin to heal.

## Current Programs

Please visit our website at [www.fullcirclegriefcenter.org](http://www.fullcirclegriefcenter.org) to learn more about our current program offerings or contact our Family Services Coordinator at (804) 241-9662. All services are offered at no cost to the families.

## Contact Information

Allyson Drake, M.Ed.  
Founder, Executive Director  
(804) 357-5924  
[allyson@fullcirclegriefcenter.org](mailto:allyson@fullcirclegriefcenter.org)

Located at:  
10611 Patterson Avenue  
Building 201  
Richmond, VA 23238  
(804)912-2947

Stephen Drake  
Founder, Business Director  
(804)357-5923  
[stephen@fullcirclegriefcenter.org](mailto:stephen@fullcirclegriefcenter.org)

Susie Nash  
Family Services Coordinator  
(804) 241-9662  
[susie@fullcirclegriefcenter.org](mailto:susie@fullcirclegriefcenter.org)

Jennifer Radgowski  
Community Outreach Manager  
[jennifer@fullcirclegriefcenter.org](mailto:jennifer@fullcirclegriefcenter.org)

Delaney Mescall  
Community Relationship Coordinator  
[delaney@fullcirclegriefcenter.org](mailto:delaney@fullcirclegriefcenter.org)





# Grief and Loss

---

## The Grief Experience

Grief is a normal and natural reaction to the death of a loved one. It is a process which can bring about a variety of emotions, which may remain constant for a period of time or change from day-to-day. Grief may bring about shock, sadness, fear, anger, and a variety of other emotional and physical changes.

There are stages or tasks of grief that many people go through before, during and after the loss of a loved one. While not every person experiences all stages and some experience additional manifestations of their grief, this model does explain what grief may look like, sound like, and how it may feel. Though these stages help to explain what may happen during the grieving process, there is no "proper" or "improper" way to grieve.

### **SHOCK & DENIAL**

You will probably react to learning of the loss with numbed disbelief. You may deny the reality of the loss at some level, in order to avoid the pain. Shock provides emotional protection from being overwhelmed all at once. This may last for weeks. Example: "I feel fine."; "This can't be happening, not to me."

### **PAIN & GUILT**

As the shock wears off, it is replaced with the suffering of unbelievable pain. Although excruciating and almost unbearable, it is important that you experience the pain fully, and not hide it, avoid it or escape from it, with substances such as alcohol or drugs.

You may have guilty feelings or remorse over things you did or didn't do with your loved one. Life feels chaotic and scary during this phase. Example: "If I hadn't asked him to go to the store, he would never have been in the car at all that night." "I promised my son that we would go to the circus, and I was always 'too busy.' I can't ever get that back." "The last time my mom and I spoke, we argued about something stupid. How could I not have just said I love you?"

### **ANGER & BARGAINING**

Frustration gives way to anger, and you may lash out and lay unwarranted blame for the death on someone else. This is a time for the release of bottled up emotion.

You may rail against fate, questioning "Why me?" You may also try to bargain in vain with the powers that be for a way out of your despair. Examples: "Why me? It's not fair!"; "How can he/she leave me alone like this?"; "Who is to blame?"; "I'll do anything for a few more years."; "I will give my life savings if..."

### **DEPRESSION, REFLECTION, LONELINESS**

Just when your friends may think you "should be" getting on with your life, a long period of sad reflection will likely overtake you. This is a normal stage of grief, so do not be "talked out of it" by well-meaning outsiders. Encouragement from others is not helpful to you during this stage of grieving.

During this time, you finally realize the true magnitude of your loss, and it depresses you. You may isolate yourself on purpose, reflect on things you did with your lost one, and focus on memories of the past. You may sense feelings of emptiness or despair. Examples: "It's hard to even get out of bed in the morning. I'm so sad, why bother with anything?"; "I miss him/her so much so why go on?" "My stomach is constantly in knots. I have to force a little bit of food down each day."

### **THE UPWARD TURN**

As you start to adjust to life without your loved one, your life becomes a little calmer and more organized. Your physical symptoms lessen, and your extreme sadness begins to lift slightly.

Examples: appetite comes back or normalizes, you are able to concentrate on work/school again for varied periods of time, you begin to be able to talk about your loss.

### **RECONSTRUCTION & WORKING THROUGH**

As you become more functional, your mind starts working again, and you will find yourself seeking realistic solutions to problems posed by life without your loved one. You will start to work on practical and financial problems and reconstructing yourself and your life without him or her.

Examples: "I finally was able to go through his closet and decide which clothes could be donated."

"Due to all of the funeral costs and estate taxes, I realized we would have to sell my mother's house, so we put it on the market."

### **ACCEPTANCE & HOPE**

During this time, you learn to accept and deal with the reality of your situation. Acceptance does not necessarily mean instant happiness. Given the pain and turmoil you have experienced, you can never return to the carefree, untroubled YOU that existed before this tragedy. But you will find a way forward. Examples: "It's going to be okay." "I know I can't get him/her back but I can find ways to remember all of the good things and preserve wonderful memories." "Even though she is gone, I must go on."

You will start to look forward and actually plan things for the future. Eventually, you will be able to think about your lost loved one without such intense pain; sadness, yes, but the wrenching pain will be gone. You will once again anticipate some good times to come, and yes, even find joy again in the experience of living.

---

Though these stages help to explain what may happen during the grieving process, there is no "proper" or "improper" way to grieve. Everyone grieves at their own pace and in their own way. You may feel all of these things, or may only feel a few of them. We are not attempting to tell you how to grieve – only show you a glimpse of the grieving process to help you understand how you are feeling.

## Reactions to Grief

There are many different emotions and thoughts that you may have during the grieving process. There are no “normal” or “abnormal” emotions – no right or wrong way to feel, no timeline for when you should start feeling certain ways.

Everyone grieves at their own pace and in their own way. Grief can look very different for different people. Some people cry while others do not. Some remain shocked or numb for a long period of time. Some get angry at the person who died while others get extremely sad and immediately miss him/her. There is no timeframe for grief.

### Emotional

Emotional reactions to grief may include shock or numbness, disbelief, extreme sadness, hopelessness, anxiety, frustration, despair, anger, loneliness, guilt, tiredness, etc. Some of us may also feel emotions such as relief or freedom. This can be especially true if the one who died suffered from a long illness, mental or physical. All of these emotions are normal and absolutely ok to have.

If the death is accidental or sudden, the shock/denial stage may last longer, as may the anger stage. Because the ones left behind have not had time to prepare, believing and accepting that the person is truly gone may be more difficult. As with all grieving, there is no right or wrong way to react. For example, your reaction (anger) might be different from that of your child’s (sadness) or your spouse’s (shock).

### Intellectual

Intellectual reactions, or thoughts, you or your child may have during a time of grief may include difficulty remembering things, disorganization, inability to concentrate or retain information, becoming easily frustrated or impatient, daymares (disturbing memories and dream-like fantasies during the day that may be related to the death), lack of interest or motivation in things that they or you used to love, or rational and irrational fears or worries. It might take you much longer to do what previously took you only a few minutes. This is because your body and mind are working so hard to cope with your loss, the completion of seemingly easy tasks takes a lot more effort. You and your children are under a lot of stress. Be patient with yourself and with your kids if this occurs.

Here are some things that may HELP:

- Allow ample time to complete tasks
- Write down important things
- Establish routines and schedules
- Be patient and gently refocus yourself or your child
- Break directions down into smaller segments when giving them to your children (Don’t tell them several things to go do at once. Give them one at a time)
- Read things out loud
- Work on a task for 10-20 minute segments with 5 minute breaks (this is particularly helpful with homework for kids).
- Remind yourself and your children not to take your grief out on other people.
- Practice how to ask for help and understanding
- Give yourself moments alone to relax, meditate, or just cry

## **Spiritual**

Spiritually, you or members of your family may be mad at religious deities or God.

Questions such as...

Why did (God) let him die?

Why have I been left alone?

What did I do to deserve this?

Why is (God) punishing me?

All of these questions are normal reactions to loss and may be part of your grieving process. There are no easy answers, but if prayer or meditation is part of your beliefs, using them during this difficult time may help you in sifting through these types of questions and feelings you have while you come to terms with the death.

## **Physical**

Our minds and bodies are inevitably connected. Grief affects not only emotions and thoughts but our physical bodies as well. You or your family members may experience changes in your bodies that seem odd or unexplainable.

Some people may become overtired and sleep for hours and hours, whereas others may have trouble sleeping at all. Some may have a loss of appetite, and others may cover up emotions by over-eating. You or your children may experience headaches, stomachaches, dry mouth and skin, extreme fatigue, increased sensitivity to noise, soreness or aches and pains in the body. Your body's symptoms may relate to the areas of pain for the person who died (i.e. stomach cancer – stomachaches for you or your child). You may cry a lot or you may feel incapable of crying. Your energy levels may dip way down and you may feel like you can't get in enough air when you are breathing. All of these are symptoms of grief.

Children may regress, or display behavior characteristic of children younger than they are (bed-wetting, clinginess, whining, crying, etc.) Also, children, particularly teenagers, may display risk-taking or impulsive behaviors that are out of character. It is important to know that while some of this is normal, it is important to be open and discuss this behavior when it first begins to avoid dangerous situations and consequences.

In fact, it may be difficult to drag yourself or other family members out of bed at all. However, the more you can interact with the world in a positive, pro-social way, while still taking time for the rest you need, the better it will help you cope. But, don't forget to give yourself permission to take a day when you need it.

You can also practice muscle relaxation and deep breathing to combat some of these physical symptoms. Try the following exercise yourself or with friends/family. It's good for kids too!

*Citation: Children and Grief 101 and Karla Helbert, MS, LPC*

### **Deep Breathing Activity** *(Prepared by Karla Helbert, MS, LPC)*

Sit in a comfortable position with your hands relaxed, either in your lap or on your knees.

Relax your shoulders by pulling them up toward your ears and then allow them to drop, creating space between your ears and your shoulders.

Breathe normally in and out for a few breaths. Notice how your belly rises and falls easily as you breathe naturally. Your chest should not rise a great deal as you breathe in and out. Place your hand on your belly to notice the movement as you breathe in and out.

When you are ready, breathe in – and on the next exhalation, breathe out slowly through your nose, counting to five. During this exhalation, tighten your abdominal muscles, and pull your diaphragm inward, to help squeeze all the excess air out of your lungs. When all the air is squeezed out, pause for two counts, and inhale slowly again, to the count of five, allowing your belly to expand as you breathe in.

If you are comfortable doing so, close your eyes and repeat this easy deep breath 5-10 times.

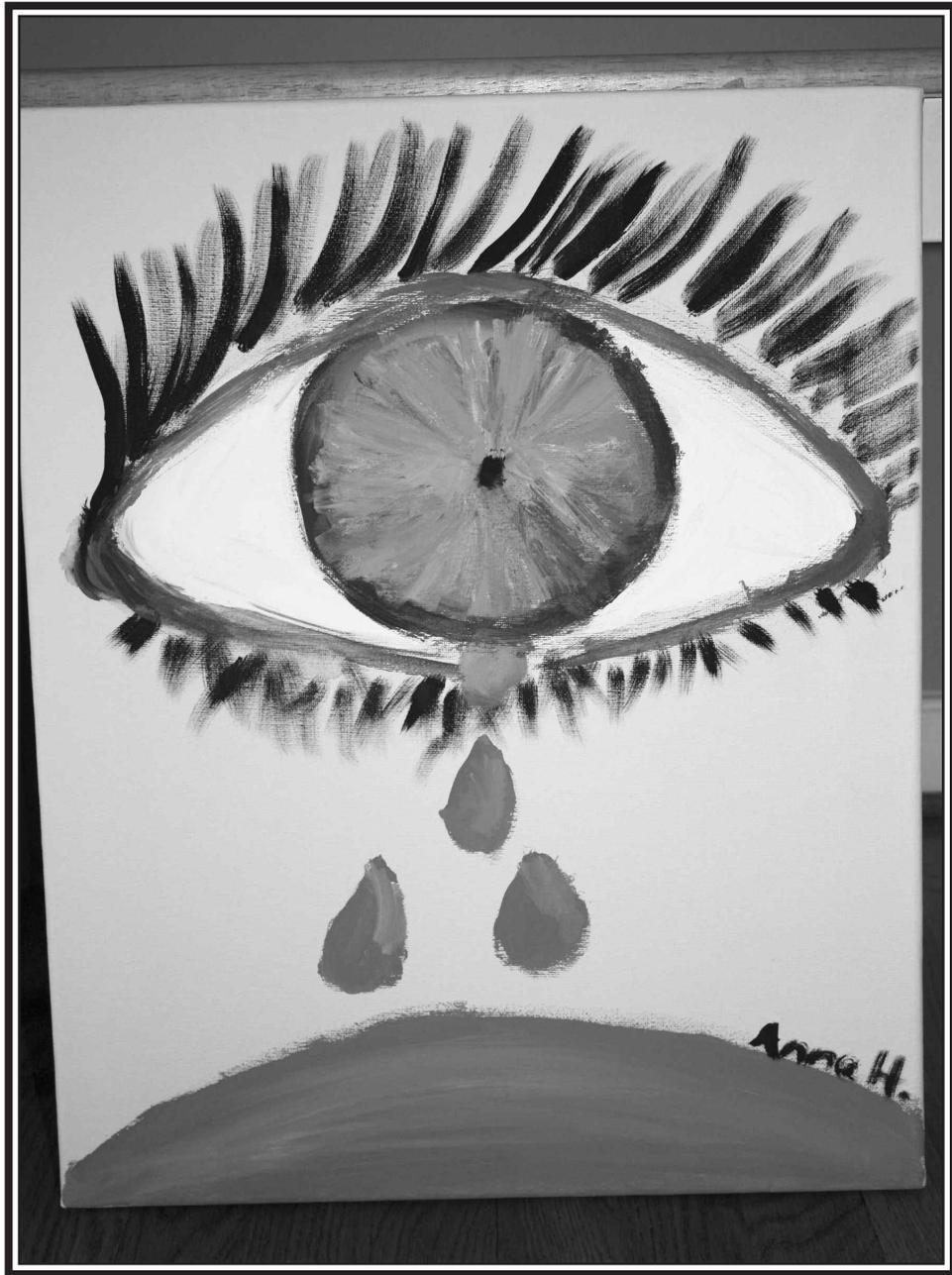
If you find that your mind wanders during this exercise, don't worry. Simply bring your focus back to your breathing and begin your counts to five again.

You may find it helpful to think of a happy color or a calming color as you breathe in and a dreary or sad color as you breathe out.

### **Muscle Relaxation Activity**

Once you get the hang of the breathing, if you would like, you can add muscle relaxation to your breathing. Focus on a particular muscle or area of the body. On your inhale, squeeze tight a particular muscle that feels tight or hurts. Release the muscle on your exhale – release and relax the muscle deeper and deeper as you let all of the air out of your lungs on each exhale. Repeat this until you feel the muscle relax or improve.





# Children, Adolescents & Grief

---

Children often grieve very differently than adults. It has been said that children grieve in “spurts,” often playing, suddenly crying for a lost loved one, and then returning to happy, normal behavior. Because they do not “show” their grief like adults, we often assume that they are not grieving and do not need support or that they simply do not understand. Most children can only endure these intense feelings of grief for a short period of time.

It is not uncommon for children to seem to be coping very well with a death and then experience behavioral changes a few months after the loss. It is possible that it takes a child longer to realize the meaning and impact of what has occurred, or the child waits to express their grief until their environment seems more stable and safe.

It is important for children to be given the opportunity to experience and express their feelings of grief, such as sadness, anger, relief, confusion, etc. They need support in understanding what happened, identifying their feelings, and embracing their loved one’s memory.

Below, we have outlined the developmental stages of grief, which should be used as a reference tool only. Obviously, each child is different; therefore, his/her experience with a significant loss will be unique.

## **Developmental stages of children and “normal” signs of grief**

*Citation: The stages and descriptions have been provided by Pam Reese Comer, LPC. Shenandoah Valley Grief Center in Harrisonburg, VA.*

### **Children ages 0-3**

Children of this age will notice what is different in the family or home. They may regress in behavior (act younger than they are) or become more demanding. Comfort, consistency and attention to their sensitivity are important. Just because verbal expression is limited does not mean the child is not grieving.

### **Children ages 3-5**

Children of this age do not see death as permanent. Cartoons are real. People leaving is scary for children and they often blame themselves due to “magical thinking.” They assume that if you die, you can come back to life, so they may not react to a death with the same sadness and grief that older children or adults might. Reassurance, calm support and efforts to normalize life with their everyday routines are what these children need. Explaining what happened in short, clear ways can be helpful.

### **Children ages 6-9**

Children of this age may have begun to develop an understanding of the irreversible nature of death. Curiosity about details might be stronger at this age level. As they process the loss, fears may arise; so clear conversations and support are still helpful. Watch for a continued tendency to blame themselves because they still believe thoughts make things happen.

## **Children ages 9-12**

Children of this age definitely see the permanence of death, but may feel removed from the experience. Interest in the vivid details may be stronger as they reach to understand what has happened. Children at this age may express more concern over practical issues and what will change. A good listening ear is very important as verbal skills are developing. Listen carefully and respond appropriately. These children are ready for more information, but remember that this is a crucial time of development. One foot in childhood and one in adolescence is an exciting and scary place to be for some children!

## **Teenagers**

Adolescents do not like to be considered children, and do not want to be viewed by peers as different. Often, he/she does not want to associate with adults as much as they did. So adolescents can enter into a death or loss experience with many complex dynamics already in play. A loss makes all of us feel like a child again – teenagers will feel uncomfortable with this and find it difficult to handle. If the teen loses a parent, they may have a tendency to take on duties or roles that are not age appropriate. In other words, a teen needs to be allowed to be a teen. This child needs a parent/guardian to be a parent/guardian first and a friend second. She needs a good listening ear, non-judgmental approach, open door policy and encouragement to express her grief in whatever way works (and that may not be with all of the adults in her life!)

Often, teens lean on their friends more than family as they grieve. But, don't be discouraged. Still let your child know that you are there to listen, when they would like to talk.

Helping children is not hard. It means remembering what you needed as a child and – whether you got it or not – giving it to children. The goal of grief work as children or adults is to make the loss a part of you and to grow from it. You are forever changed. Life becomes about creating a living and a new normal.

## **Talking to Children about Death**

It is important to talk to children about death in simple but matter of fact terms. Normalize death (it happens to everyone and every living thing but usually when we are very old) and be clear about what it means. If death is not discussed at all, it becomes scarier when it affects a child's life. There are many wonderful books, some of which are listed in this manual, that help families explain death and dying to children. Here are some helpful suggestions about how to talk to children about death:

### **Strategies for Talking to Children Ages 2-6**

**1. Start Early:** Talk about death starting at an early age by using everyday examples from TV or the death of animals. This will help them view death as part of the natural life cycle.

**2. Tell It How It Is:** Use simple, truthful words like "dead," "dying," "died," "buried," or "cremated." Dead means not moving, not breathing, not seeing, and not feeling. The person's or animal's body does not work anymore. Though it may sound nicer to you to use phrases that make death sound less final, it can be very confusing to the child.

*Examples of confusing explanations:*

"We lost him."

Child's response: Let's go look for him! Can't the police help? If I'm lost, will they look for me?

"He passed away."

Child's response: Where is away? Can we go there?

"She went for a long trip."

Child's response: Where did she go? When will she get back? What do you mean she's not coming back if it's just a trip?

"We had to put Fluffy to sleep."

Child's response: Why isn't he waking up like I do? Will I be able to wake up? (Sleeping means dead, so I'd better not go to sleep.)

"God took her from us."

Child's response: Why would God do that? You're not supposed to take things from other people. I want to take her back!

"God wanted Dad in heaven with him."

Child's response: God takes people from us. How could God love us?

**3. Tell The Truth:** Do not "protect" a child from someone who is dying. Be honest about what is happening (in age appropriate terms) and let them see you express your emotions. Define new words they may be hearing.

**4. Encourage Questions:** Ask for questions the child may have but do not volunteer complex information the child has not asked. Tell them the main facts and do answer all of their questions simply and promptly. If you don't know, it's ok to say that you don't know. Ask the child what he or she thinks the answer might be.

**5. Allow All Feelings:** Encourage the child to express feelings openly. Crying is normal and helpful. Many children express anger towards the person for dying and leaving them. It is important to allow them to express these feelings and let them know it is ok to have them. (Anger is one of the stages of grief.)

**6. Express Yourself:** Share your feelings with the child. Seeing you upset will not make the child worse. It lets him/her know you are hurting too. Allow the child to comfort you – this makes him/her feel helpful and needed. It's ok for children to see you cry.

**7. Be Patient:** Know that children need to hear "the story" and to ask the same questions again and again. This is how they are processing it. You may also see it in their play.

**8. What If's:** "Are you going to die too?" "What will happen to me if you die?" If the child is worried about the surviving parent or siblings dying, tell the child who will take care of him or her in that case but offer reassurance that they are not likely to die anytime soon. Point out elderly people the child knows or sees and discuss how many people live to old age.

**9. Exposure:** Limit the amount of exposure to television if the death is being publicized. This can increase nightmares, worry, and expose children to knowledge of unnecessary details.

**10. Reassurance:** Reassure the child of his/her safety at home and at school.

**11. Outlets:** Maintain daily routines as much as possible, as this signifies safety to a child. But, allow your gut to guide you about when you need to be flexible. Give the child a chance to play and spend time with you, as this is how the child will express what is going on inside. More specific suggestions for constructive outlets for grief are discussed in the section of this manual entitled "self care".

### **Strategies for Talking to Children Ages 7-12**

- Use all of the information from "talking to children ages 2-6" but be prepared to go into more detail and answer more questions.
- When children ask "morbid" or "distasteful" questions about the body and death, it is best to answer them promptly, simply and to the point.
- In order to determine how much information a child can handle, notice how he or she reacts to the simplest information before going into the details. Do not be too graphic (particularly in the case of accidents and violent deaths) as this will only create difficult mental images for the child.
- If the child is experiencing unrealistic feelings of guilt because he or she thinks they somehow caused the death, discuss these feelings with the child and help him or her to clear up this misconception.
- Many children express anger towards the person for dying and leaving them. It is important to allow them to express these feelings and let them know it is ok to have them. (Anger is one of the strong feelings of grief.)
- If the child is worried about the surviving parent or siblings dying, tell the child who will take care of him or her in that case but offer reassurance that they are not likely to die anytime soon. Point out elderly people the child knows or sees and discuss how many people live to old age.
- Don't be afraid to share your own feelings of grief and sorrow with the child. By allowing the child to see your tears, you teach the child that it is acceptable to express his/her emotions too. By watching you move through the stages of your grief and begin to heal, the child learns that life goes on and that people can recover to rebuild their lives while still keeping the deceased in their hearts.

## Strategies for Talking to Adolescents

Adolescents or teenagers are a bit different because of the desire to fit in with their peers and “deal” with things. They are at a stage in their lives where they are breaking away from the family and bonding with peers. A death in the family challenges this role. Adolescents may feel different from their peers due to the death so they may suppress many of their feelings of grief in an attempt to fit in. Naturally changing hormones and mood swings may increase the intensity of the grief at times, making it even more difficult to cope. The following may help in talking to adolescents during this time:

1. Educate them about normal reactions to grief so they know they are not going crazy and can trust the way their minds, bodies, and emotions are reacting. If this is difficult, provide movies or books (many of which are listed in this manual) they can look at on their own.
2. Encourage them to express what the grief experience is like for them. Recognize and affirm that the experience is likely to be different from others’ in the family. Model appropriate expressions of emotion yourself so that they can follow your example. If they prefer not to talk, suggest using other outlets: a journal to write, art, photography, sports, music, etc.
3. Tell stories about the person who died. Keep photos of them up and around the house. Discuss going to the grave site. Listen to what your teen says will be helpful to him/her. This may take time.
4. Talk about how you do not expect your teen to take on an adult role now that someone important has died. Encourage normal teenage activities once he or she is ready to re-engage in them. They may be ready right away and use them as a coping mechanism or it may take time, as grieving takes a lot of energy. Be encouraging and let them know you love them and will support them always.



## The Parent or Guardian's Role

The "Grief at School" program from Hospice of Virginia succinctly describes a number of things that parents can do (some of which have already been discussed in previous sections) to help children through the grieving process:

- Focus on your children. Watch for unusual behavior or physical symptoms.
- Reassure them of your love and their safety.
- Make time to talk to monitor what they are thinking and feeling.
- Be a good listener, without judging. Allow all feelings to be expressed and accepted.
- Stay physically close to your children. This will reassure them and allow you time to observe their behavior. Extra hugs and cuddling may help! Remember, it is common for children's behavior to regress (for children to act younger than they are) during grieving.
- Limit the amount of television exposure if the event is publicized. If the event is not publicized, also limit television programs that may be scary or traumatic. They have enough to deal with in their own lives right now.
- Maintain daily routines but be flexible.
- Spend extra time with your children – reading, playing, games.
- Protect their health – make sure children are getting the appropriate amount of sleep, exercise, and nutrition. If any or all of these remain difficult after a few weeks, consider consulting professional help.
- Provide a positive outlet of expression of grief: creative projects, family time, or religious rituals depending on your personal beliefs.
- Involve the school. Find out what resources your child's school has available. Call your child's school counselor for ideas and advice, as well as resources and referrals. The more the school knows about the tragedy and how your child is coping, the more the staff can help.

## Supporting Your Child Through the Death of Parent or Immediate Family Member

Follow guidelines in "The Parent's Role" but also keep these issues in mind:

- **Manage your own grief:** Many children do not begin to truly grieve until their parent(s) are further along in their own process. By managing your own grief and taking care of yourself, you model good coping skills for your children and help them grieve themselves.
- **Talk if they need to talk and even if they don't:** If you are open and honest about the feelings you feel, your children will feel safe in sharing their feeling with you. It is ok to cry together, tell them when you are feeling sad, and share age-appropriate thoughts with them. Again, you are modeling positive coping skills.
- **Realize importance of rituals and remembrance:** Even if it is painful to remember the loved one who died, it is especially important to do so on anniversaries and special events so that your child knows that death does not mean forgetting. Try to make these remembrance activities fun: make the loved one's favorite meal together or do something as a family that the loved one liked to do. The more positive memories that the child can associate with remembering the one who died, the better able they will be to cope.

- **Recognize resurfacing:** Grief is a tricky thing. There will be developmental milestones in your child’s life when grief will resurface, particularly during times of change (anniversary of the death, holidays, new school, moving, puberty, graduation, college, etc.) Be ready for these times and show your support through them.

### Supporting Your Child Through the Death of Friend/Classmate/Peer

Follow guidelines in “The Parent’s Role” but also keep these issues in mind:

- **Limit Details.** As previously advised, discuss the main events of the death with your child and answer any questions they may have, but do not go into unnecessary detail. Younger children may not have as difficult a time with a peer’s death (unless they were very close to the child or witnessed the death) as an older child or teenager might. Meet them where they are emotionally.
- **Talk it out.** Listen to and accept the feelings your child expresses regarding the death of the peer. Know that this death may bring up memories or feelings associated with other losses your child has experienced in the past.
- **Allow for expression of feelings.** Allow your child to take part in ritual activities if they are organized by the school or religious organization. If not, call the school counselor or Full Circle and see if you can help in holding a ritual for the peer group. Look at section in this manual entitled “Rituals and Remembrance Activities” for ideas.



## QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS...

When your children ask questions about death, burial, the afterlife, etc. Be honest, limit details, and use your own spiritual beliefs to guide you. Here are a few possibilities of how you might answer some of these questions, though you may choose to alter your response:

**Question:** What is dead?

**Answer:** Dead means not alive anymore. Things like people, animals, and trees and plants are alive. When they die, they stop breathing because their bodies don't need air. Their hearts stop beating and their bodies don't work anymore. They don't eat or drink or sleep when they die. (Based on your spiritual beliefs, you may discuss where their soul is, etc.)

**Question:** Why do things have to die?

**Answer:** Birth and death is the cycle of life. Every living thing goes through it because that is the way the world works. (Use a leaf/flower as an example - bud in the Spring, blooms, turns brown in the Fall, dies. Then new life is reborn next Spring. It is not the exact same leaf/flower, but it is new life.) But, just because someone's body dies does not mean they are gone from our hearts. We remember them when we do their favorite things, eat their favorite foods, and make the best parts of them part of ourselves.

**Question:** Will I die? or Will you die?

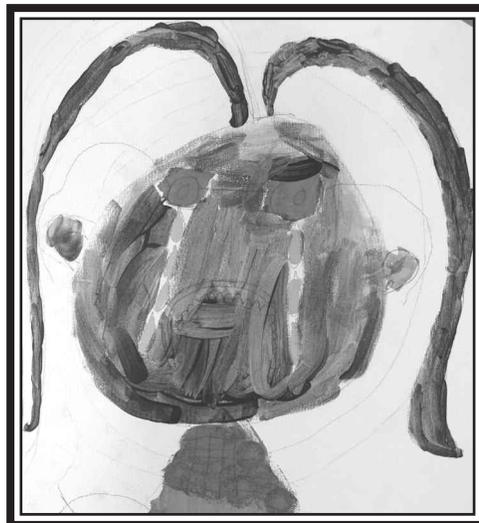
**Answer:** Someday you/I will. All living things are born and all living things die. But, most people die when they are very old. Do you notice very old people in our world? Yes, there are many so you know many people live for a long time. (Reassure the child that it is not likely that you will die soon but if you do, tell them who will take care of them.)

**Question:** What happens when someone is buried?

**Answer:** (Person's name) won't feel anything because she died. It is just her body. You don't have feelings when you are dead.

**Question:** What happens after you die?

**Answer:** No one really knows for sure what happens – what do you think might happen? *Use your own spiritual beliefs to guide you in answering this question.*



# When Additional Support is Needed

---

Though many of us are resilient, grief can test us in extreme ways. Grief support can help families and individuals to develop positive ways to cope with emotions and thoughts and help people develop outlets to express their grief and begin to heal. Grief support is not about helping people to “get over it.” People will never and should never get over the loss of those they love. However, they can learn to work through the grief, heal broken hearts, and make those who have died loving parts of themselves who will always be remembered.

Friends, family, clergy, or mental health professionals may be helpful in supporting individuals and family through the bereavement process. In this section, we have outlined times when specific support may be needed for you or your children. If you have further questions or concerns, please contact the professionals at Full Circle.

## Signs/Symptoms of Complicated Grief

*Citation: Adapted from Mayo Clinic. 2009. Complicated Grief: Symptoms.  
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/complicated-grief/DS01023/DSECTION=symptoms>*

There are times when grief can become overwhelming and regular coping strategies are not enough. Watch for signs and symptoms in your children, other family members, and yourself and be honest about what you see. There is no shame in needing help during such a difficult time.

While some of these symptoms are normal following the death of a loved one, continued presence of two or more of these may call for professional intervention.

The following are signs and symptoms that demonstrate the need for additional help in coping with grief:

- Extreme sadness that prohibits the person from continuing with everyday necessary life activities (a month or more)
- Unwillingness to drink/eat for more than a few days
- Suicidal thoughts or a suicidal attempt
- Continual nightmares and/or night terrors for a prolonged period of time (a month or more)
- Sleeping far too little or way too much
- Intense anxiety
- Avoidance of feelings for a prolonged period of time
- Being overwhelmed with emotion – feeling out of control
- Preoccupation with the events of the death so that these thoughts interfere in and disrupt daily living
- Outbursts of irritability or anger at school and/or home
- Difficulty concentrating on things usually enjoyed
- Significant decrease in normal activities at home and school
- Detachment or withdrawal from friends or family

### When to get additional help for self or child...

If you see two or more of the signs or symptoms of complicated grief in yourself or in your children or other family members, additional help and support may be needed to cope with this grief. Please refer to the list of resources in this manual for guidance in how to seek this help.

# Depression/Anxiety Disorders/Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Citation: Crisislink.org. 2009. Arlington, VA. [http://www.crisislink.org/resources/mental\\_health/index.html](http://www.crisislink.org/resources/mental_health/index.html)

Depression and anxiety symptoms are common with grief, especially in the early stages. However, if the feelings and behaviors are displayed for weeks into months at severe levels, and interfere with the person's ability to cope effectively with everyday life, more help is needed.

**Signs of Major Depression** – when displayed for 3 months or more at a time.

- Sadness
- Irritability
- Loss of interest in usual activities
- Low energy and/or restlessness
- Poor concentration
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Dramatic weight gain or loss
- Otherwise unexplained/chronic physical ailments
- Feeling hopeless and helpless
- Feeling worthless and guilty
- Thoughts of death or suicide

**Anxiety Disorders** – characterized by excessive and persistent fears and worries that interfere with an individual's ability to cope effectively with everyday life.

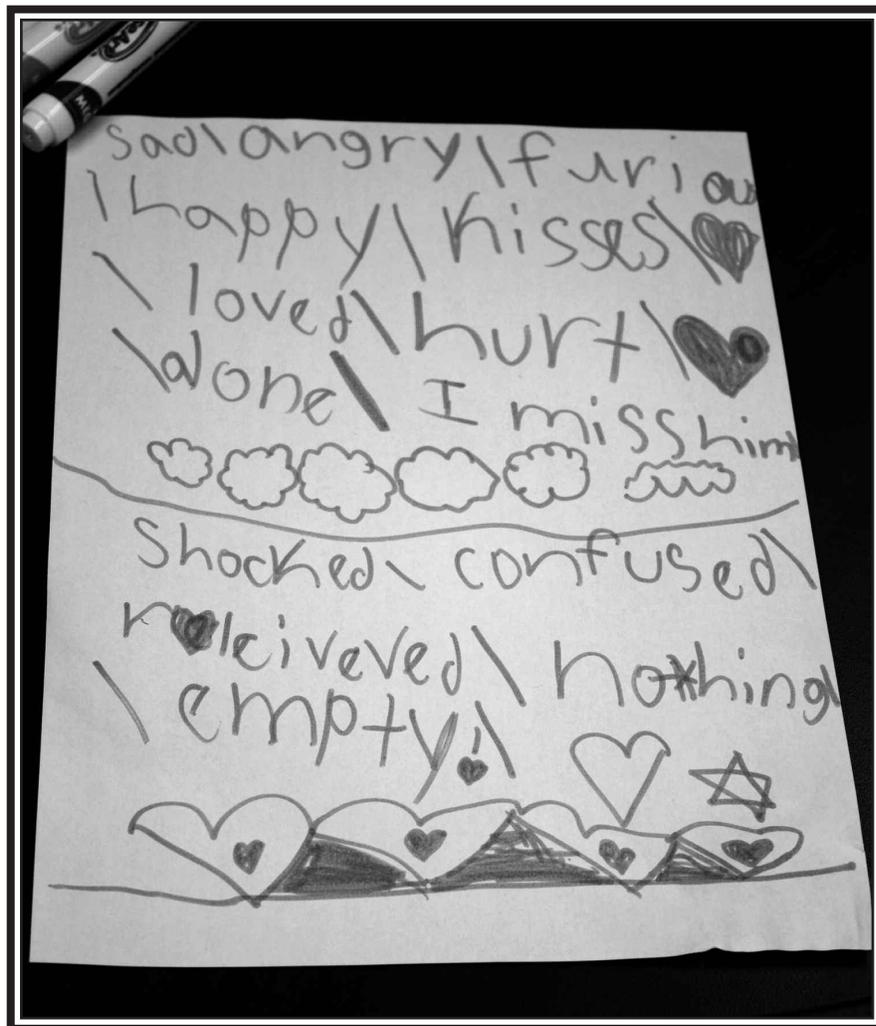
**Generalized Anxiety Disorder** is excessive, uncontrollable worry about everyday things. This constant worry affects daily functioning and can cause physical symptoms. The focus of GAD worry can shift, usually focusing on issues like job, finances, health of both self and family; but it can also include more mundane issues such as chores, car repairs and being late for appointments. The intensity, duration and frequency of the worry are disproportionate to the issue and interfere with the sufferer's performance of tasks and ability to concentrate.

**Panic attacks**, which are defined by the abrupt onset of episodes of intense fear or discomfort, include at least four of the following symptoms:

- A feeling of imminent danger or doom
- The need to escape
- Palpitations
- Sweating
- Trembling
- Shortness of breath or a smothering feeling
- A feeling of choking
- Chest pain or discomfort
- Nausea or abdominal discomfort
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- A sense of things being unreal, depersonalization
- A fear of losing control or "going crazy"
- A fear of dying
- Tingling sensations
- Chills or hot flushes

**Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)** is not a disorder to be associated solely with military personnel, as it has been in the past. It has been shown that exposure to traumas such as a serious accident, a natural disaster, or criminal assault can result in PTSD. When the aftermath of a traumatic experience interferes with normal functioning, the person may be suffering from PTSD. PTSD can occur at any age, from childhood to old age and traumatic stress can be cumulative over a lifetime. Responses to trauma include feelings of intense fear, helplessness, and/or horror.

If these symptoms of depression and/or anxiety are being displayed by those you love or if you are experiencing them for prolonged periods of time and you feel unable to cope with everyday life, please seek the help of a professional.



# Suicide Information

*Citation: Crisislink.org. 2009. Arlington, VA  
[http://www.crisislink.org/resources/mental\\_health/index.html](http://www.crisislink.org/resources/mental_health/index.html)*

Extreme grief or the death of a loved one by suicide can increase the risk of suicide in those who have survived the loss and now must cope with it. Below are signs of suicidal behavior. Grief can make emotions run in extremes – highs and lows. If the lows are bad, life can seem hopeless and suicide may be perceived as a possible way out. If you see these in a loved one or are experiencing them yourself, seek help immediately.

## Signs of Suicidal Behavior

### Things People Might Say...

- "I'm tired of life. I can't go on."
- "My family would be better off without me."
- "Who cares if I'm dead anyway?"
- "I just want out."
- "I won't be around much longer."
- "Soon you won't have to worry about me."
- "I wish I were dead."
- "I'm going to end it all."
- "I just want to die."
- "I'm going to kill myself."
- "If....doesn't happen, I'm going to kill myself."

### Things People Might Do...

- Get a gun or stockpile pills
- Give away prized possessions
- Take more impulsive risks
- Cut themselves or other gestures of self-harm
- Neglect their appearance
- Abuse alcohol and/or drugs
- Isolate themselves/run away/drop out of school
- Show a dramatic change of mood

# *How to Help & Support Grieving Families*

---

*Daniel Bagby, B TSR outlines helpful and unhelpful things to say to someone who is grieving.*

## **DO NOT SAY OR DO:**

- Don't say "it's for the best." How do you know?
- Don't give unsolicited advice – especially on what to feel or how to feel
- Don't remind the survivor of the deceased's faults
- Don't say "it's all in God's plan." How do you know what God wanted or why?
- Don't avoid the survivors because you don't know what to say. If nothing else, LISTEN.
- Don't say "I'm glad she's no longer suffering" first. Let them say it first.
- Don't interrupt a survivor when they start talking about death/loss. Let them talk.
- Don't say "I know how you feel" – unless you've had the same loss.
- Don't criticize or judge.
- Don't say "it's time to get on with your life. Move on," or "get over it." Grief takes time – it's a lifelong journey.

## **WHEN A CHILD DIES – DO NOT SAY OR DO:**

- Don't say "At least you have other children."
- Don't say "At least you're young; you can try again."
- Don't say "God must have needed a little angel up there."
- Don't say "Let's not question God's wisdom..."
- Don't say "At least you never knew/were never attached to the baby" (stillbirth/miscarriage)
- Don't say "Maybe the baby had something wrong with him so it's for the best"
- Don't say "please don't cry." Just sit with them or hug them while they cry. Crying is nothing more than a release of emotion.

## **DO SAY AND DO:**

- Say "I'm sorry," "I care," "I love you," (if you do)
- Say "I'm here to listen if you want to talk."
- Tell the survivor positive things about their care, love, and the deceased.
- Share happy memories – as appropriate.
- Say "I know this must be a very difficult time for you. Is there anything you need that I can help with?"
- Say "You've been so strong and helpful for your family; if you ever need someone to be strong for you to lean on, I'm here and would be honored to try." "It's ok to let your feelings out anytime with me."
- Share your feelings of pain and loss for the deceased. This will not make the survivors feel worse. It will let them know you share their grief and that is comforting.
- Say "It's okay to be angry and frustrated – it's part of loving and totally normal."
- When they cry, say "it's okay to cry; I may cry with you."

# Self Care

---

*Adapted from Karla Helbert, LPC.*

## Importance of self-care while grieving

It is important to take care of yourself and nurture your own grieving process so you will be able to help the ones you love to the best of your abilities. Studies show that when you model appropriate, healthy ways to grieve (talking about your grief, showing emotion, continuing to do activities that you enjoy, eating healthy, exercising, etc.), your children are far more likely to follow suit.

But grieving is hard work. It takes time. It takes energy. It is easy for us to provide you of a list of things to do for self-care. It is hard to accomplish them while you are grieving. Most parents are so concerned about their children's grief, that they tend to "set" theirs aside to care for their children. The single most important thing you can do for your family is to take time for yourself, be kind to yourself and your loved ones, and remember you are important too. Remember your (and your family's) grief will soften, in time.

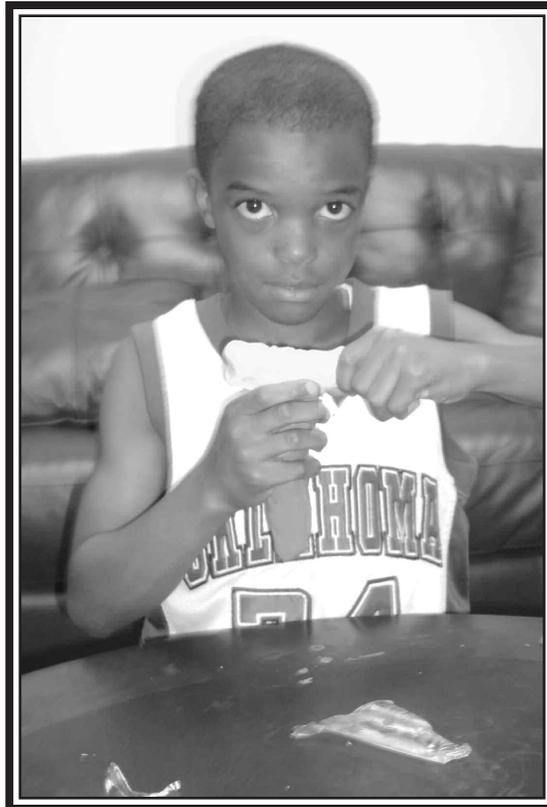
Even the most difficult of days only have 24 hours in them.

## Outlets for Adults

- **Me time.** Carving out some time for yourself to sit with your feelings and do some processing of your own is extremely important. If your children have difficulty with this, explain why you need this time and tell them where you will be and when you will be back. Take time to go to an exercise/yoga class, write in a journal for 20-30 minutes, go to a support group, meet a friend for lunch, etc. If you need to be by yourself to yell, scream, or cry, that's ok. Keep pillows nearby that you can hit, paper to tear or rip, and objects to stomp on. Time for yourself to release your grief makes you more accessible to your family because you are staying mentally healthy.
- **Exercise.** It is important to keep active even if you would rather stay in bed. The endorphins produced by exercise help you to cope with the other stressors during this difficult time. If you can't get away alone, take daily walks with others. This can also be a great time to talk.
- **Eating Healthy.** While it is tempting to turn to comfort foods during sad times, the best thing you can do for your body is to drink lots of water, eat a balanced diet, plenty of fruits and vegetables, and cut down on snacking. This will also help with your energy level and ability to cope with grief.

## Outlets for Children

- **Me time.** Exercise, and eating healthy are also important for children!
- **Encourage time to play.** Children often communicate best through their play, so be sure to take time to watch them in imaginative play as well as play with them. You might gain far more insight into what it going on internally than you would through talking alone.
- **Continue with routine.** Routine is very important in establishing normalcy and a sense of control. As soon as possible, return to bedtime routines, music lessons or sports teams. You might ask if the child wants to continue routines they did with the deceased, and give them an option of whom to include.
- **Encourage children and teens to express their feelings through creative arts:** music, art (drawing, painting, clay, etc.), writing in a journal, collage, dance, photography, sports, etc.
- **Transitional objects:** children and teens may want to keep stuffed animals or objects belonging to the deceased close to them for a while. If possible, offer a shirt, picture, special coin, or other object that holds special meaning to help the child keep the one he/she loved close.



# Rituals & Remembrance Activities

---

Actively remembering the ones we have loved that have died is what keeps them with us always. Children and adults will never "get over" the death of someone they love. However, they can learn to grow through the grief and discover that that love never goes away. (Sims, 1983) While it may be painful to bring up these feelings of grief, especially on birthdays and anniversaries, acknowledging the death and the deceased individual in a positive way truly helps work through those feelings.

Below are a handful of activities and rituals designed by Karla Helbert, MS, LPC to help commemorate and remember those who have died.

- Make a memory book- may include pictures, mementos, favorite quotes or sayings, collage, stories from friends of the deceased, etc. that remind the survivors of the loved one who is deceased. It is a resource that allowed the deceased to live on in the memories of those he/she left behind.
- Light a special candle on holidays, anniversaries, in church, etc. in honor of the person who died
- Make a toast to your loved one at dinner nightly, once a week, or on special occasions.
- Create a special CD of music that reminds you of your loved one.
- Plant a tree or flowers in your loved one's memory.
- Make a donation to a charity that your loved one supported.
- Visit your loved one's burial site.
- Carry something special that reminds you of your loved one with you. Take it out and hold it when you need to.
- Do a favorite activity of the person who died on their birthday and/or on the anniversary of their death (watch his/her favorite movie, go to a favorite place, or listen to a favorite song).
- Make and eat the favorite meal of the person who died.
- Create a family painting or collage about the loved one who died where each surviving family member contributes a piece. Hang the creation in the house where everyone can see it.
- Create a shrine or a special area – a shelf, a room, a corner, table top, etc. in your home, garden, office, etc. that reminds you of your loved one. It may be public for all to see or a private space you for alone.



- Create your own grief ritual. You may want to hold your ritual only one time or on a regular basis – daily, weekly, monthly, on special days. You can conduct your ritual alone or with others. To create your ritual you might do things like light a candle, light some incense, read or say aloud an inspirational verse, poem or prayer, chant, sing a song, ring or chime a bell, or play a particular selection of music. Clearly marking the beginning and end of a ritual will help you transition from daily life to the ritual and back again more smoothly. You may want to communicate with your loved one during this ritual either by speaking aloud, writing a letter, or meditating or praying.
- For anniversaries, holidays and special events – make a plan. This will help ease your worry and the worries of those around you. You might plan a special outing or visit to the cemetery; or you might plan to get together with friends or family and celebrate the life of your loved one. If the plan changes, that's fine. However, worrying about what might or might not happen is often far worse than what actually happens. For holidays, know your limitations and be accepting of yourself in what you feel you can and cannot do. Let others help you and don't be afraid to make changes – a different time for dinner, different place of worship, or different tradition. You might consider giving a charitable gift in memory of your loved one during a gift-giving holiday to honor their memory and help others in their name.

# *Additional Community Support Services*

---

*Below is a list of some of the available mental health resources in the Greater Richmond Area. Full Circle Grief Center does not necessarily recommend or endorse any of the following providers.*

## **Private Therapists and Counseling Centers**

### **FOR ADULTS**

#### **GRIEF RESOURCE CENTER, JILL FITZGERALD, LCSW**

3932 Springfield Road  
Glen Allen, VA 23060  
(directly next to Costco on W. Broad/Springfield Rd)

The Grief Resource Center is a private practice that provides information and referral sources for children, adolescents and adults in need of direction and support in dealing with terminal illness or personal loss. The Grief Resource Center also offers individual & family counseling to those in need guidance during the grieving process. The practice specializes in working with parents who have experienced a loss of a child (including perinatal loss), suicide survivors, sibling loss, infertility, and life-threatening illnesses. In addition educational workshops and outreach services for crisis-debriefings in the community are available upon request.

Fee for services. Appointments only. Many insurances accepted.  
Contact: Jill FitzGerald, LCSW (804)257-9348

#### **DOMINION BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE, LOWELL THOMAS, LPC, LMFT**

2305 North Parham Road, Suite 3, Richmond, VA 23229.  
Phone (804) 270-1124. Fax (804) 270-2090.  
[www.dbhhelp.com](http://www.dbhhelp.com)

A multidisciplinary behavioral health group dedicated to providing quality compassionate and professional care throughout the Greater Richmond area. We provide Individual, Family and Grief Therapy/Support Group for adults, children, and families as well as referrals to grief resources in the Richmond area. All individuals interested in joining a group will be contacted by therapist to help ensure their readiness. DBH also has psychiatrists who specialize in working with all ages providing medication evaluations and ongoing follow-up.

Initial Evaluation- \$125, Individual and/or Family Therapy- \$100/hr. Group Therapy - \$25-\$40.  
Most Insurances Accepted (Call for verification).

#### **PATTI COX**

Certified in Bereavement Counseling. Specializing in Grief Support for Adults, Teens and Children.  
(804) 840-6454  
[psheltoncox@aol.com](mailto:psheltoncox@aol.com)

**LEE R. CARTER, LCSW**  
4101 Cox Road, Suite 340  
Glen Allen, VA 23060

Private counseling and psychotherapy services in the Innsbrook area for those ages 16 and older who are struggling with grief or other issues such as divorce, anxiety, and depression. Ms. Carter has previous experience working for a hospice program, the Grief Resource center, and Dr. Linda Bugbee and Associates. Accepts most major insurance plans and many EAP's. Client is responsible for co-pay.

Contact: Beth Pitt, office manager, at (804) 346-2087

**CAROLYN SHARFF, LCSW**  
5931 Harbour Park Drive  
Midlothian, VA 23112  
(804) 639-1136

Private counseling and psychotherapy sessions for ages 14 and older. Specialties are grief and loss, addictions, co-dependency, compulsive behaviors, depression, and anxiety disorders.

**PATRICIA FRANCO, PhD, LPC**  
7268 Hanover Green Drive, Suite B  
Mechanicsville, VA 23111  
(804) 559-1427

## **FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS**

**Dr. Tom Terraciano, PhD**  
West End Family Counseling  
3932 Springfield Road, Glen Allen, VA 23060  
(804) 747-8300

**Ms. Kathleen O'Keefe, LCSW**  
4920 Millridge Parkway East, SUITE 206. Midlothian, VA 23112  
(804) 928-4623

**Ms. Tiffany Barribeau, LPC**  
Patterson Counseling Center  
6722 Patterson Avenue, Richmond, VA 23226  
(804) 282-4000

**Ed Whitacre, MSW**  
Rock Landing Psychological Group  
11825 Rock Landing Drive  
Newport News, VA  
(757) 873-1736

**Dr. Tony Vitiello, PhD, Psychologist**  
8401 Patterson Ave. Ste 102. Richmond, VA 23229  
(804) 741-1177

**Ms. Helen Henrich, LCSW**

Mechanicsville, VA. (Tuesday and Saturday appointments only)  
(804) 335-6233

\*Also trained in EMDR for those dealing with traumatic death

**Ms. Bruce Hammond, LCSW**

Westhampton Family Psychologists  
1503 Santa Rosa Road, Suite 105. Richmond, VA 23229  
(804) 673-0100  
www.wfphelp.com

**OTHER COUNSELING AGENCIES/PRACTICES**

**ChildSavers**

Guidance Clinic (outpatient therapy services) and Trauma Response  
200 N. 22nd Street, Richmond, VA 23223  
(804) 644-9590  
www.childsavers.org

**The Richmond Area Center for Psychotherapy and Counseling**

Individual and Family Counseling.  
5315 Cutshaw Ave, Richmond, VA 23226  
(804)282-1331

**YWCA Marriage and Family Counseling**

Full range of outpatient mental health and psychological services, including Individual, Family, and Group Psychotherapy  
6 N 5th St, Richmond, VA 23219  
(804) 643-6761.

**Commonwealth Counseling**

Individual counseling, evaluation  
Hickory Park Office Complex. 5213 Hickory Park Drive, STE A, Glen Allen, VA 23059  
(804) 237-8030  
www.commonwealthcounseling.com

**Patterson Counseling Center**

Individual and family counseling  
6722 Patterson Ave Ste A, Richmond, VA 23226  
(804) 282-4000

**Glen Forest Associates, LTD**

Counseling for behavioral and emotional difficulties in children, anger control, attention, depression, stress management, parenting skills  
7301 Forest Ave. Ste. 201, Richmond, VA 23226  
(804)285-4121  
www.commonwealthassessment.com

## **PET LOSS COUNSELING**

### **The Center for Human-Animal Interaction**

VCU School of Medicine  
Contact: Dr. Sandra Baker  
(804)827-PAWS(7297)

### **IAMS Pet Loss Support Resource Center**

1-800-332-7738

## **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES OR SOCIAL SERVICES**

Contact your local government funded services (usually fees based on sliding scale):

Henrico: (804) 727-8500  
Hanover: (804) 365-4200  
Chesterfield: (804) 768-7203  
Goochland/Powhatan: (804) 403-5922  
Richmond: (804) 819-4000  
Central Virginia:(434) 948-4831

If not listed above, find contact information for your local Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services at <http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/SVC-CSBs.asp#cs> or dial 2-1-1 in Virginia for referrals.

## **CRISIS HOTLINES**

(24 hours a day)

Lifeline- National .....	1-800-273-TALK
Youth Crisis Hotline .....	1-800-448-4663
First Candle/National SIDS Hotline .....	1-800-221-7437
Charles City/New Kent .....	804-966-5959
Chesterfield .....	804-748-6356
Goochland .....	804-556-3716
Hanover .....	804-365-4200
Henrico.....	804-261-8484
Powhatan .....	804-598-2697
Richmond .....	804-819-4000
Family Life Teen Crisis Line .....	804-329-0079



# *Grief Support Organizations*

---

## **Hospices**

### **Hospice of Virginia**

Provides compassionate, comprehensive palliative care to persons with life-limiting illnesses who reside within our service area at no charge. Our focus is to give physical, emotional, and spiritual support to our patients and their families. We strive to maximize their comfort and autonomy, while conserving resources. We believe in the dignity of the individual, the sanctity of the family and the beauty of the human spirit. [www.hospiceva.com](http://www.hospiceva.com)

Hospice of Virginia offers:

- Bereavement education and support groups for adults
- Creative connections for families (partner with Full Circle)
- Limited one-on-one counseling as appropriate and available

Contact: Bereavement Coordinator  
(804)281-0451 or 1-800-501-0451  
Email [info@americanhospice.com](mailto:info@americanhospice.com)

### **Bon Secours Hospice and Palliative Care**

Bon Secours Hospice offers support groups, individual therapy, and family therapy both north and south of the river. There is no fee for services for hospice families, and non-hospice families receive three free visits.

Contact: Gwen Reed, LCSW at (804) 627-5360 or Trish Kush at (804) 627-5372

### **Noah's Children Pediatric Palliative and Hospice Care**

Noah's Children's purpose is to ensure quality of life and dignity of death for children with life-threatening illnesses, providing compassionate support to their families as they navigate this journey. Services are available in the home beginning with diagnosis through bereavement, from prenatal through newborn, infancy, childhood and adolescence.

Contact: Please call (804) 287-7686 for further information

### **Odyssey Hospice**

Big Hearts. Better Care.

Our mission is to serve all people at the end of life's journey.

Odyssey Hospice offers monthly support groups open to adults, free of charge. Support groups take place the last Thursday of each month from 3-4 PM. In addition, Odyssey Hospice offers spring and fall memorial services.

Contact: John Ayres, MA at (804)290-4300 or [www.odshealth.com](http://www.odshealth.com)

### **Crater Community Hospice**

Six-week grief support groups are offered on Thursday nights, from 6:30-8:00 PM at 3916 South Crater Road in Petersburg.

Contact: Karla Helbert, LPC at [karlamarie@verizon.net](mailto:karlamarie@verizon.net) or (804) 892-2782

Six-week grief support groups are offered on Wednesday nights, from 6:45-8:00 PM at Bethia United Methodist Church on Winterpock Road.

Contact: Patti Shelton Cox at [PSheltonCox@aol.com](mailto:PSheltonCox@aol.com) or (804) 840-6454

## **Other Support Services**

### **Bryan's Oasis**

*A Place of Rest and Refreshment on the Journey*

Located in Nelson County, VA just off the Blue Ridge Parkway

Bryan's Oasis is a mountain retreat, in bed and breakfast style, hosted by Hank and Peggy Graeser, for bereaved parents and families who are otherwise emotionally healthy, not in crisis, and not physically handicapped. We offer a quiet setting with private guest quarters, simple meals, and proximity to the Blue Ridge Parkway, Appalachian Trail, Crabtree Falls, Wintergreen, and Sherando Lake. Although we are not professional counselors, we have experienced the loss of our son, Bryan, and offer compassionate, confidential listening at your discretion. We offer Bryan's Oasis free of charge in response to the healing presence of God in our lives.

To insure that the visit is beneficial, we work through referrals from a professional, a brief application and an informal meeting with us before the visit. You or the professional working with you (e.g. counselor, pastor, social worker, chaplain) may contact us to begin the referral process.

Hank and Peggy Graeser  
11540 Ivywood Rd.  
Chester, Va. 23831  
Home phone number: 804-796-2021  
email: [graeserh@comcast.net](mailto:graeserh@comcast.net)



### **Comfort Zone Camp**

A bereavement camp for kids age 7-17 to help them work through the loss of a parent, caregiver, or sibling in an accepting, fun environment with other kids who have been through similar experiences. Camp is free of cost and offered in Virginia, New Jersey, California, and Massachusetts.

Contact: Heather LaCasse, Virginia Intake Coordinator, at (804)377-3420 ext 206 or [heather@comfortzonecamp.org](mailto:heather@comfortzonecamp.org)

### **Fort Lee Survivor Outreach Services**

A part of Fort Lee Army Community Service, Survivor Outreach Services is a program demonstrating the Army's commitment to Survivors of Army Soldiers. Using a holistic and multi-agency approach to delivering services, SOS provides Survivors with benefits coordination, financial counseling, and the long-term support counseling that is specific to the individual and family grief process. SOS also conducts outreach necessary to determine the diverse needs of all who are touched by the loss of a Soldier.

For more information or to make a referral, call (804)734-6445 or email Robyn Fuller at [robyn.fuller@us.army.mil](mailto:robyn.fuller@us.army.mil).

### **211 VIRGINIA**

Dial "2-1-1" in Virginia or (804)275-2000 for free information and referral services for help with food, clothing, daycare, housing, parenting, finances, transportation, etc.

## **Hospitals**

### **Bon Secours Richmond Health System**

Bereavement Coordinator (804)627-5025

### **VCU Medical Center, Department of Pastoral Care**

Providing formal bereavement program for patients, families, and staff at no charge since 1991. Call the Department of Pastoral Care at (804) 828-4661.

- Support groups for all ages – developmentally appropriate activities designed in concert with grief theory, developmental theory, and family systems theory.
- Memory Making around the time of death for all family members
- "Because We Care" publication – designed and published by the department of pastoral care, and the hospital and pediatric bereavement committees. Additional resources provided as appropriate and needed. Books often provided for children and adults.
- Annual Memorial and Remembrance services
- Community Education – events including a regional Good Grief Conference every October
- Funeral and Burial Assistance as families have need

### **Southside Regional Medical Center, Petersburg**

This group provides twice a month bereavement support. Group is held 2nd and 4th Thursday's each month, from 7-8 PM at Southside Rehabilitation Services in Colonial Heights Medical Park. Facilitated by: Don Phelps, D. Min., Director of Spiritual Care Services  
(804) 765-5593

## **Religion-Based Organizations**

### **Derbyshire Baptist Church**

#### **Robert Scott Aronson Grief Ministry**

This ministry offers individual and family grief counseling, grief education seminars and workshops, grief support groups, and training for grief ministry throughout the year.

Contact Beth Smith by phone at (804) 740-7238, ext 21 or by e-mail at [griefministry@dbcrichmond.org](mailto:griefministry@dbcrichmond.org)

### **Jewish Family Services**

282-5644

### **United Methodist Family Services**

353-4461

### **VA Institute for Pastoral Care**

282-8332

### **Counseling Center at Catholic Charities**

Individual counseling

1512 Willow Lawn Dr, Richmond, VA 23230

(804) 285-5900

# Suicide Support

## Healing After Suicide

Local suicide support group, sponsored by John Randolph Medical Center in Hopewell

Meets 2 times a month (1st and 3rd Wednesday)

Contact/facilitator: Mary Douglas Krout, CGC

(804)541-1600

marykrout@mindspring.com

## The Tara Sirmans Survivor HOPE (Help and Outreach for Prevention and Education) Program

Provides both immediate and ongoing support and resources to individuals throughout the Washington metropolitan area who are impacted by suicide and other forms of sudden and traumatic loss. The HOPE Program comprises a variety of programs and services that are available to those in need of support.

[www.crisislink.org](http://www.crisislink.org)

## CrisisLink (DC metro area)

Offers two Survivors Support Groups for individuals who have lost someone to suicide. One is a group for adults and the other is a similar support group for teens and young adults. These ongoing, monthly groups are designed to help survivors support each other through their complicated grieving process, and are co-led by mental health clinicians and peer facilitators.

For more information about the HOPE Program Support Groups, please contact Mary Azoy, LPC, by email or by phone at (703) 516-6771.

## **Additional Support Groups**

### **GriefShare**

A peer led group facilitated by two sets of parents, both of whom have lost children. The group meets on the 2nd Sunday of every month at 5:00pm at Cool Spring Baptist Church on Atlee Station Road. GriefShare is open to new members anytime and welcomes those suffering from all types of losses. The program consists of 13 sessions spread over 13 consecutive months. There is no charge for services and you do not have to be a member of the church to join the group.

For more information, contact Jerry and Patsi Deans at [jerry.deans@comcast.net](mailto:jerry.deans@comcast.net) or (804) 402-2032

### **Dignity Memorial L.I.F.T (Living Information for Today)**

A social support group out of Woody Funeral Home that gives widowed individuals (adults) the opportunity to socialize with others who share similar feelings and experiences.

By hosting organized monthly events such as luncheons, educational seminars and day trips, members have the chance to invest emotional energy in fellowship. There are no fees or dues to participate and membership is not restricted to those who have been served by Dignity Memorial Providers.

\*L.I.F.T. is for individuals who have moved beyond their initial grief and are ready to look for new beginnings at this stage of their lives.

For more information, contact Kathleen Stull at (804) 545-7255 or visit [www.dignitymemorial.com](http://www.dignitymemorial.com)

### **Mothers In Sympathy and Support (MISS)**

Our programs will serve to strengthen families and communities when a child has died, and that through education and research, we will help to reduce the number of child deaths. No family should have to endure the pain of a child's death alone. The MISS foundation is committed to building interdisciplinary communities that provide long-term support to families after a child's death. We support families who have experienced the death of a child from any cause.

The Richmond Chapter of MISS meets the third Monday of every month from 7:00-8:30 pm at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church on the corners of Forest Ave. and Patterson Ave. Face to face support and education to parents experiencing perinatal or infant loss.

In addition, MISS offers online support group forums for parents, siblings, family members and friends grieving the death of a child at any age, from any cause.

Call (804)741-6562 ext.15. Leave your name and contact information and a facilitator will return your call or visit [www.missfoundation.org](http://www.missfoundation.org)

### **LifeNET Donor Family Services**

Provides support services to grieving donor families (adults and children) to help them on their journey of healing. Families often find meaning in the midst of a tragedy when a loved one's organs and tissues are used to save or enhance the lives of others. LifeNet Health helps to honor the lives of loved ones with friends and family.

Find LifeNET activities designed to help donor families in their journey from intense grief to healing and, finally, peace in their lives.

Call 1-800-847-7831 for more information or visit [www.HealingTheSpirit.org](http://www.HealingTheSpirit.org)

### **Helping You Through Your Loss: Support Group for Baby Loss**

This support group is intended for parents and adult family members who are grieving the loss of a baby. This loss includes miscarriage, stillbirth, and an infant death younger than a year old. The group is free of charge and open to the community.

Bereavement group is facilitated by a licensed clinical social worker and members will provide peer support. The social worker can assist you in deciding if this group is right for you by calling ahead of time. Participation in all sessions is encouraged, but this is a drop in group (i.e. you are not required to commit to attending every session).

First Thursday of every month, 6:45-7:45 PM  
Facilitator: Sybil Robertson, LCSW (804)281-5549

## **Other Local Support**

### **Mothers Supporting Mothers Through Grief**

Contact: Barbara Taylor (804)828-5543 or Evangeline Snyder (804)828-7700.

### **AARP/Widowed Person Support Group**

1771 Parham Rd. Richmond, VA (804)288-3013  
Hotline: (804)288-4474.

### **Fan Free Clinic**

Support groups and counseling services for friends and relatives dealing with HIV/AIDS (804)358-6343.

### **Family and Community Support Systems, LLC**

Family & Community Support Systems, LLC, provides therapeutic and supportive services to individuals and families in the following localities: Chesterfield, Colonial Heights, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, Hopewell, Powhatan, and Richmond City. Our services include: Mental Health Support Services (for adults - accesses Medicaid funding); Intensive In-home Counseling (for children - accesses Medicaid funding); Supervised Visitation; Parenting Education Classes; CPR Classes and Parent Coaching.

For more information please call us at (804) 762-8716 or visit us online at [www.wesupportfamilies.com](http://www.wesupportfamilies.com)

## **Personal Support for Adults**

### **Ingrid Schweickert, LC, RN, MS (Life Coach)**

Life coaching services that provide support and motivation needed to keep you focused and moving forward, especially during difficult times. You will gain the support and tools to foster change, transforming what is not working to creating a life full of joy and peace.

Coaching sessions are held via telephone. Evenings/weekends available.

Contact Ingrid at [ingrid@coachingrid.com](mailto:ingrid@coachingrid.com) for more details about coaching details, packages and rates.

### **Thinner Wisdom: The Body-Mind-Spirit Nutrition Center**

Paula C. Schnurman, R.D. is a registered dietitian/nutrition therapist in private practice, Thinner Wisdom. Her work involves nutrition therapy and spiritual direction for individuals age 12 and older (mostly women) with disordered eating behaviors towards developing positive self-care practices and recovery. Eating is often a challenge during and after the loss of a loved one, though nutrition is extremely important.

Location: 8010 Ridge Road, Suite E2. Richmond, Virginia 23229.  
Phone: (804) 304-8061 or email: [contact@thinnerwisdom.com](mailto:contact@thinnerwisdom.com)  
[www.thinnerwisdom.com](http://www.thinnerwisdom.com)

### **The Springboard Group, Inc.**

Springboard™ is an innovative and interactive approach to better managing life transitions. We all experience “dips” or low points in our journey, it is simply part of life. Even when expected, losses can make it hard to cope and heal. But like a springboard, this downward phase eventually unwinds, releasing the potential to reach even higher than before. You can capture the energy of change and use it to create you new life.

We offer tools and resources, products, services and internet links to help individuals deal with personal loss, such as the death of a loved one. Many decisions that follow such a loss experience have to be made while grieving. This complicates the process of making informed decisions, and highlights the need for emotional and informational support.

Charges vary from a single year membership and self-directed motivational study for \$97.00 to a full-service team approach wherein fees vary by provider, service required, and length of time the participant needs to realize the transition. Insurance not accepted.

Call: (804) 381-4008 or 1-877-717-3590  
Email: [margaret@launchingnewlives.com](mailto:margaret@launchingnewlives.com)  
[www.launchingnewlives.com/affiliates/MargaretRush](http://www.launchingnewlives.com/affiliates/MargaretRush)

**Jean Gonzalez, Owner and Designer**

Ms. Gonzalez repairs old quilts, family textiles, and vintage linens, finishes works in progress, and makes commemorative accessories to honor a loved one – using your materials or hers.

Contact: Jean Gonzalez at (804)304-3345 or richmondseamstress@yahoo.com. She is a regular vendor at the Monument Market every Saturday from 8AM-noon.

**Online Grief & Bereavement Resources**

*Compiled by The Bereavement Coalition of Central Virginia*

**CHILD LOSS****Compassionate Friends**

Supports individuals who experience child loss of all kinds.

Online support is limited to siblings 18 years and older.

[compassionatefriends.org/Resources/Online\\_Support.aspx](http://compassionatefriends.org/Resources/Online_Support.aspx)

**MISS Foundation**

Provides chats and forums for bereaved parents, siblings, grandparents and other family members. Go to [www.missfoundation.org](http://www.missfoundation.org) and click 'forums.' Browse as guests anonymously or join with an identifying screen name, sharing as much or as little as you like.

**Bereaved Parents of USA**

[www.bereavedparentsusa.org/index.htm](http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org/index.htm)

**Healing Hearts for Bereaved Parents**

Holding Out the Light of Hope And the Hand of Friendship to Grieving Parents & Their Family

[www.healingheart.net](http://www.healingheart.net)

**In Loving Memory**

1416 Green Run Lane, Reston, Va 22090

Dedicated to helping parents cope with the death of their only child or all their children. Offers national conference and telephone support.

[www.inlovingmemoryonline.org](http://www.inlovingmemoryonline.org)

**Parents of Murdered Children**

1-800-818-7662

Only national self-help organization dedicated solely to the aftermath and prevention of murder. POMC makes the difference through ongoing emotional support, education, prevention, advocacy, and awareness.

[www.pomp.com](http://www.pomp.com)

## **GENERAL GRIEF SUPPORT**

### **Hello Grief**

Provides information and resources about grief, in order to break through the current of avoidance that surrounds death. Hello Grief addresses bereavement head-on for those who are helping others cope, as well as those who need support on their own personal journey with grief.

[www.hellogrief.org](http://www.hellogrief.org)

### **Share: Pregnancy & Infant Loss Support, Inc.**

Perinatal or neonatal loss

[www.nationalshare.org](http://www.nationalshare.org)

### **GriefShare**

GriefShare seminars and support groups are led by people who understand what you are going through and want to help. You'll gain access to valuable GriefShare resources to help you recover from your loss and look forward to rebuilding your life.

[www.griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org)

### **Grief Watch**

Provides bereavement resources, memorial products, education, and links that can help you through your personal loss.

[www.griefwatch.com](http://www.griefwatch.com)

### **Children's Memorial at the Edgartown Lighthouse**

Provides numerous resources for bereaved parents.

[www.childrenslighthousememorial.org](http://www.childrenslighthousememorial.org)

### **The Loss of a Parent**

A resource for teens that have lost one or both of their parents.

[www.thelossofaparent.com](http://www.thelossofaparent.com)

### **Grieving Center**

A web-based television channel for those who have lost loved ones.

[www.grievingcenter.org](http://www.grievingcenter.org)

### **Healing the Spirit**

Resources for coping with the death of a loved one.

[www.HealingTheSpirit.org](http://www.HealingTheSpirit.org)

### **National Alliance for Grieving Children**

[www.nationalallianceforgrievingchildren.org](http://www.nationalallianceforgrievingchildren.org)

### **Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)**

National office will refer victims of drunk driving crashes to their nearest local chapter. If one is not available, telephone counselors will offer guidance and support. 1-800-GET-MADD (438-6233).

[www.madd.org](http://www.madd.org)

### **American Hospice Foundation**

[www.americanhospice.org/grief-center-mainmenu-45](http://www.americanhospice.org/grief-center-mainmenu-45)

## **LOSS FROM SUICIDE**

### **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention**

*www.afsp.org*

### **American Association of Suicidology**

*www.aas.org*

## **TWIN LOSS**

### **Twinless Twins**

Provides support for twins and other multiples who have lost their twin due to death or estrangement at any age. The unique aloneness felt can best be understood by another twinless twin.

*www.twinlesstwins.org*

## **FOR KIDS**

### **Creative Heartwork**

Organization that combines the grief process and creative expression

*www.creativeheartwork.org*

### **KidsAid**

A site for children to express their grief through art and writing

*www.kidsaid.com*

### **Children's Grief and Loss Issues**

Books and resources to help children cope with loss

*www.childrensgrief.net*

## **REMEMBRANCE**

### **1000 Memories**

A Place to record and share the story of a loved one's life.

*www.1000memories.com*

### **The Healing Garden**

The Healing Garden is a child grief web page with interactive activities to help children deal with their grief and loss through creative expression and companion interaction.

*www.healingthespirit.org/chilids-place.php*

# Resource List for Children, Teens & Adults

---

## **For children 4 - 8 years**

- When Dinosaurs Die: A Guide to Understanding Death* by Laurie and Marc Brown
- I Miss You: A First Look at Death* by Thomas and Harker
- Badger's Parting Gifts* by Susan Varley
- Where's Jess: For Children Who Have a Brother or Sister Die* by Marvin and Joy Johnson
- The Empty Place: A Child's Guide Through Grief* by Roberta Temes
- I Had A Friend Named Peter – Talking to Children about the Death of a Friend* by Janice Cohn
- What's Heaven?* by Maria Shriver
- Water Bugs and Dragonflies: Explaining Death to Young Children* by Doris Stickney
- Don't Despair on Thursdays!: The Children's Grief-Management Book (The Emotional Impact Series)*  
by Adolph Moser (Author) and David Melton (Illustrator)
- The Fall of Freddie the Leaf* by Leo Buscaglia
- Lifetimes: The Beautiful Way to Explain Death to Children* by Bryan Mellonie

## **For children 9 - 12 years**

- Tear Soup* by Pat Schweibert
- Gentle Willow: A Story for Children About Dying* by Joyce Mills
- The Dragonfly Secret: A Story of Boundless Love* by Clea Adams and Barbara Gibson
- The Snowman: A Book About Children and Grief* by Robin Vogel
- Good Grief: A Kids Guide for Dealing with Change and Loss* by Kim Frank
- Sad Isn't Bad* by Michaelene Murphy
- The Magic Moth* by Virginia Lee
- Healing Your Grieving Heart: For Kids* by Alan D. Wolfelt

## **For Teens**

- The Grieving Teen: A Guide for Teenagers and Their Friends* by Helen Fitzgerald
- Straight Talk about Death for Teenagers: How to Cope with Losing Someone You Love*  
by Earl Grollman
- You Are Not Alone: Teens Talk About Life After The Loss of a Parent* by Lynne Hughes
- Healing Your Grieving Heart for Teens: 100 Practical Ideas* by Alan Wolfelt
- When a Friend Dies – A Book for Teens About Grieving* by Marilyn Gootman
- Losing Someone You Love: When a Brother or Sister Dies* by E. Richter

## **For Adults**

*Guiding Your Child Through Grief* by James P. Emswiler and Mary Ann Emswiler

*Healing Your Grieving Heart* by Alan D. Wolfelt

*Healing a Child's Grieving Heart* by Alan D. Wolfelt

*Understanding Your Grief: Ten Essential Touchstones for Finding Hope and Healing Your Heart*  
by Alan D. Wolfelt

*Children and Grief: When a Parent Dies* by J. William Worden

*Help Me Say Goodbye: Activities for Helping Kids Cope When a Special Person Dies* by Janis Silverman

*Talking With Children About Loss* by Maria Trozzi

*The Mourning Handbook: The Most Comprehensive Resource Offering Practical and Compassionate Advice on Coping with All Aspects of Death and Dying* by Helen Fitzgerald

*Grief in Children: A Handbook for Adults* by Dyregrov and Yule

*I'm Grieving as Fast as I Can: How Young Widows and Widowers Can Cope and Heal* by Linda Feinberg

*The Grieving Child: A Parent's Guide* by Helen Fitzgerald and Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

*Healing the Bereaved Child: Grief Gardening, Growth Through Grief and Other Touchstones for Caregivers* by Alan Wolfelt

*Bereaved Children and Teens: A Support Guide for Parents and Professionals* by Earl Grollman

*The Grieving Garden: Living with the Death of a Child* by Suzanne Redfern

*Alec's Legacy* by Frank Robinson

## **Loss of a Child**

*The Worst Lost* by Barbara D. Rosof

*I Wasn't Ready To Say Goodbye* by Brook Noel & Pamela D. Blair, PH.D (sudden death)

*Help Your Marriage Survive The Death Of A Child* by Paul C. Rosenblatt

*Gone But Not Lost: Grieving the Death of a Child* by David W. Wiersbe

*Grieving: Our Path Back to Peace* by James R. White

*A Grace Disguised: How the Soul Grows Through Loss* by Jerry Sittser

## **For Serious Illness**

*How to Help Children Through a Parent's Serious Illness* by Kathleen McCue (adults)

*Gentle Willow: A Story for Children About Dying* by Joyce Mills (young children)

## **Art Journals/Workbooks**

*When Some Very Special Dies* by Marge Heedgaard (school-aged)

*When Someone Has a Very Serious Illness* by Marge Heegaard (school-aged)

*How I Feel: A Coloring Book for Grieving Children* by Alan Wolfelt (children)

*Fire In My Heart, Ice In My Veins* by Centering Corporation (teens)

*Good Grief for Kids* by Katherine Zotovich (school-aged and teens)

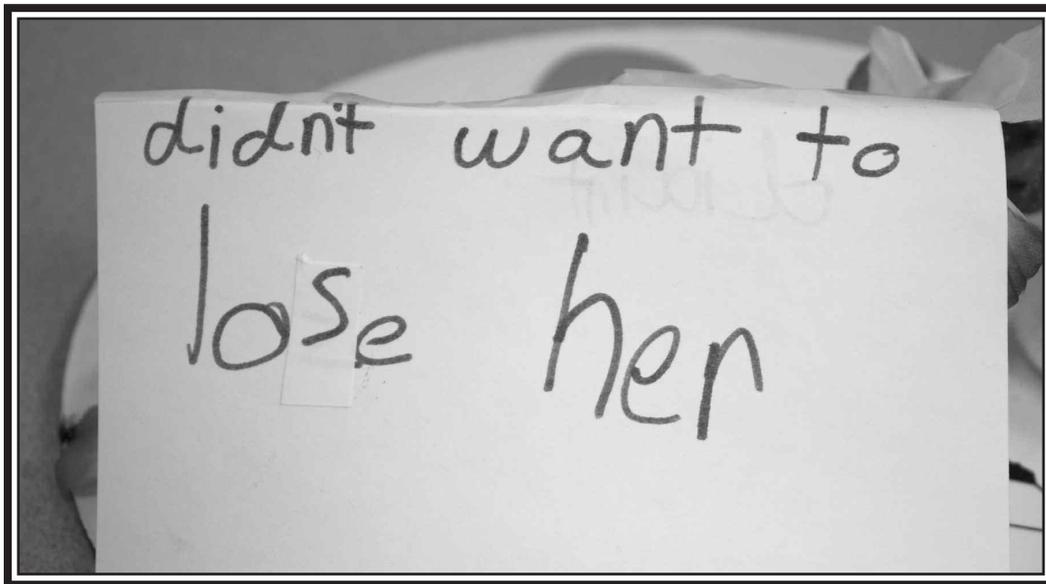
*Angel Catcher: A Journal of Loss and Remembrance* by Kathy and Amy Eldon (teens and adults)

## **Pet Loss**

*The Tenth Good Thing About Barney* by Judith Viorst

*The Forever Dog* by Bill Cochran

*When a Pet Dies* by Fred Rogers



# Affirmations & Inspirations

---

*Affirmation: A positive statement that is repeated or written to oneself until it has "taken root" or is established in the mind.*

## **Without Remorse**

And if I go, while you're still here...  
Know that I live on, vibrating to a different measure,  
Behind a veil you cannot see through.  
You will not see me, so you must have faith.  
I wait for the time when we can soar together again,  
Both aware of each other.  
Until then, live your life to the fullest  
And when you need me,  
Just whisper my name in your hear  
... I will be there.

*~ Tom Clancey*

## **Grieving**

- *I welcome healing into my life*
- *I give thanks for the wisdom gained from my experience.*
- *I am helping myself now by acknowledging my grief.*
- *I now allow myself to grieve fully.*
- *I let all the grief within me flow forth.*
- *Grieving fully is a natural part of my being human.*
- *I give myself permission to grieve fully.*
- *I recognize the importance of grieving fully.*
- *I am helping myself to heal by grieving.*
- *I bless all that has happened knowing I am divinely guided.*
- *I lovingly move forward with confidence and hope.*

*From "Affirmations For The Mind" Newsletter <http://www.affirmware.com.au/archive/188-9881.html>*

## **Hospice Affirmations**

I cherish each moment of my life.  
I am not hiding my love from people.  
I resolve to help my friends in need of support.  
I am strong. I can grow from pain.  
I intend to live my life to the fullest: my time is precious.  
I will become open to new pathways and new relationships.  
I am learning.

*From <http://www.hospicenet.org/html/affirmations.html>*

Tears have a wisdom all their own. They come when a person has relaxed enough to let go and to work through his sorrow. They are the natural bleeding of an emotional wound, carrying the poison out of the system. Here lies the road to recovery.

~ F. Alexander Magoun

You can shed tears that she is gone,  
or you can smile because she has lived.  
You can close your eyes and pray that she'll come back,  
or you can open your eyes and see all she's left.  
Your heart can be empty because you can't see her,  
or you can be full of the love you shared.  
You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday,  
or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.  
You can remember her only that she is gone,  
or you can cherish her memory and let it live on.  
You can cry and close your mind,  
be empty and turn your back.  
Or you can do what she'd want:  
smile, open your eyes, love and go on.

~ David Harkins

"It is when the world within us is destroyed,  
when it is dead and loveless,  
when our loved ones are in fragments,  
and we ourselves in helpless despair  
– it is then that we must re-create our world anew,  
re-assemble the pieces,  
infuse life into dead fragments,  
recreate life."

~ Pollock





[www.fullcirclegriefcenter.org](http://www.fullcirclegriefcenter.org)