

Bereavement news for people living with grief



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henryford.com

Dear Bereaved,

When one is grieving everything is turned upside down and inside out. Nothing makes sense. One needs to find their footing and find their "new normal". The holiday season will have a different appearance than previous years; because someone you loved is no longer physically present to share the treasures and memories of the holiday. Do your best to take each day as it comes. Sometimes, that means living in the present moment. Remember, tears are thank-you notes of love. Humor brings joy and heals the heart. Please know your Henry Ford Hospice Bereavement family is a phone call away. There are benefits to speaking to someone who can offer you support and a different perspective. We would love to speak with you and share memories about your loved one. You will continue to be in our thoughts as you and your family move through this holiday season and enter 2025.

Thinking of you.

Sincerely,
Kathleen, Erica & Laura

A poem of remembrance for the Holidays

The following poem by Sylvan Kamens and Rabbi Jack Riemer is a beautiful meditation on how we remember our loved ones in all seasons.

At the rising of the sun and at its going down
We remember them.

At the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter
We remember them.

At the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring
We remember them.

At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer
We remember them.

At the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn
We remember them.

At the beginning of the year and when it ends
We remember them.

As long as we live, they too will live;
for they are now a part of us.



12 ways to remember a loved one during the holiday season

1. Whether on your computer or using a pen and paper, journal about your favorite Christmas holidays memories with your loved one, continue adding entries each year thereafter.
2. Create a "memory chain" by writing your favorite holiday memories, your present feelings, or adjectives that reflected your deceased loved one's special qualities onto long, narrow strips of colored paper (about 8" long by 1" high). Form interlinking loops with each piece to form a chain you can hang on your Christmas tree or use the frame a doorway.
3. Make a Memorial wreath either real or artificial for your front door or above the hearth by adding ornaments, decorations, and /or photographs of your beloved to real/ artificial holiday wreath.
4. During a holiday meal with family members and friends, make a special toast in your loved one's memory and/or ask everyone at the table to share their favorite memory of the deceased.
5. Consider attending a Memorial service in the community offered by churches, funeral homes, and cemeteries which may include music, inspirational and/or religious readings, and a special memorial Christmas tree.
6. Sing along/out loud to your loved one's favorite Christmas carols/songs. You can do this by yourself or with family members and friends.
7. Make a financial contribution to a cause your beloved would champion, whether in his or her name or anonymously, or bake cookies and take to a shelter, nursing home, or hospice nearby.
8. Take a road trip and spend the holiday in your beloved's favorite location, attend his or her favorite sporting or recreational event, or do anything the two of you loved doing together.
9. Participate in a local walk/run that raises funds to support a cause your loved one would champion, or to help find a cure for the illness/disease from which he or she died.
10. Clean out your closet or dresser and donate your gently used clothing in your loved one's memory (particularly jackets, coats, gloves, hats, etc.)
11. Purchase a gift with your beloved in mind, wrap it, and give it to someone less fortunate in memory of your loved one.
12. Donate food or a meal to those who might otherwise go hungry during the Christmas season.

Someone is missing for Christmas

By GG, 1992

Let this be a loving reminder that someone is missing today. Someone our hearts still hold on to, as we travel along life's way. Someone who made life so special, for all those who gather here. Someone who won't be forgotten but cherished year to year. And now as we pause to remember, let us all fondly recall, how dearly each of us loved, "... and oh how "... loved us all!

Grieving during the holidays

Adapted from writings of Jim Miller, What Will Help Me: 12 Things to Remember When You've Suffered a Loss, and How Can I Help?

Grieving during the holidays is difficult. Regardless of age, creed, culture or cause of death, holidays lived in the absence of your loved one are difficult, especially the first holiday season. Traditions are never celebrated in quite the same way. Laughter that came naturally at holidays past may become awkward or even missing altogether. Anticipation of exchanging gifts may feel like a hollow gesture, and evoke sadness. Favorite songs that brought peace in the past may catch in your throat or bring tears to your eyes.

There may be significant questions you may be asking yourself: "What is happening to me?" "Can I possibly survive this?" "Do I want to?" "Is what I'm feeling normal?" "Am I losing touch with my sanity?" Additionally, holiday questions may enter your mind like: "How can I make it through all the events of the holidays while missing my loved one?" "Would it be better to ignore the holiday this year?" "Should I act as if everything is normal?" "Should I make major changes in my holiday rituals?"

These questions are all a natural part of the grieving process. However, there are specific details to reflect on when you are asking yourself these questions: "Who am I as a person?" "What is important to my family?" "What was my relationship to the person who died?" "Did my loved one play a significant role in the holidays?" You will learn by living the questions and discovering the answers. Sometimes, it requires doing the holiday a different way.

There can still be beautiful meaning in this holiday season and those to come as you redefine them in the midst of your personal loss. Joy can be experienced while hope and hurt companion you through this season. Here are a few guidelines which may facilitate:

1. Accept the likelihood of your pain.

Begin with awareness; it will be a painful time, but it is a sign that you have been blessed to draw close to another soul. Your hurt is an indication of your humanness, your sensitivity, and your openness to love. It is impossible to avoid the impact of the season, the energy you use should be directed toward creatively adjusting expectations you hold, i.e. writing 10 cards versus your address book.

2. Feel whatever you feel.

Claim your own feelings. Do not own the thoughts or momentum of others for the season. Honor yourself by acknowledging that you have endured a significant loss in your life and you are not tuned into one emotion. You may be wrapped in Sadness, Depression, Despair, Exhaustion, Listlessness, and Aloneness. Anxiety, Fear, Anger, Provocation and perhaps Apathy may exist against with the whole world and yourself. There are other emotions too: Relief, Respect, Pride and Joy, as well as, Compassion and LOVE. Whatever you feel today may be completely different tomorrow!

3. Take charge where you can.

What holiday traditions are meaningful to ME? Which ones have I outgrown? Which ones are a must for me to perform regardless of how I am feeling? What new tradition may I like to try? Small changes are good. Eat healthfully and drink wisely, begin your day with a brisk walk and maintain good sleep hygiene. Engage with people and be present in activities which give you energy. Remember the little strides you make are important.



2025 Bereavement support groups

January – June support groups

2nd Wednesday of the month

10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Location:

Henry Ford Macomb Hospital
Medical Pavilion – 4th Floor Meeting Room #6
16151 19 Mile Road
Clinton Township, MI 48038

Monthly: 1/8, 2/12, 3/12, 4/9, 5/14, 6/11

3rd Tuesday of the month

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Location:

Virtual via WebEx

Monthly: 1/21, 2/18, 3/18, 4/15, 5/20, 6/17

4th Friday of the month

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Location:

17333 Federal Drive, Suite 260
Allen Park, MI 48101

Monthly: 1/24, 2/28, 3/28, 4/25, 5/23, 6/27

SandCastles children's grief support program

SandCastles offers services in Oakland, Macomb and Wayne counties, as well as virtually. Call **313-771-7005** or email sandcastles@hfhs.org for more information.



Henry Ford Hospice bereavement services

Offers bereavement support to hospice family members, caregivers and anyone in the community 18 years or older who has experienced the loss of a loved one.

Program offerings include:

- Periodic phone calls
- Monthly newsletters
- Support groups
- Grief education
- One/one support is determined on an individual basis.
- Memorial services
- Community resources/referrals

In general, services last for 13 months, but support can be extended or discontinued. These services are free, with no cost to you.

To learn more about these services please call **586.276.9570** or go to henryford.com/services/at-home/hospice/support.

Henry Ford provides qualified interpreters and other aids and services for the deaf and hard of hearing at no cost.

To request assistance, call Henry Ford bereavement services at 586.276.9570.

A three-day notice is required when requesting an interpreter.