



June 2020 Bereavement Newsletter

SUMMER TIME !!!!

June 2020

*Lake Superior Life Care
& Hospice*
914 W. Baraga Ave.
Marquette, MI 49855
906.225.7760

June Calendar of Events:

Open ZOOM Grief Support Group:

Due to the COVID-19
restrictions, we are
hosting an interactive
video meeting on

Wednesday
June 17th @ 5:30-
7:00pm

Please join us on
ZOOM

at

Meeting ID
943 6492 6021
Password
510148

Please call our office if
you would like a link to
the meeting emailed to
you. 225-7760

Individual Grief Counseling:

Please call for telephone
Appointment

Contact Information:

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June finds us with some of the COVID-19 restrictions being lifted and/or modified. YEAH! June also finds us enjoying warmer weather and opportunities for outside activities. DOUBLE YEAH! However, the prolonged isolation and our continued grief may be leaving us with a pervasive feeling of loneliness; the lingering and long lasting side effect of loss.

Loneliness can be felt as acute and tangible, such as the loneliness experienced by coming home to an empty house. Or, it can be the feeling when the sadness is well worn, the tears have run dry and the emptiness and ache become chronic.

Loneliness can be compounded by the fact that the COVID pandemic and loss have changed us. How we use to “fit in” with friends and remaining loved ones is altered or completely changed. We don’t know quite who we are anymore or what really matters to us now. We may feel disinterested, disconnected or even resentful. Our solution for this may be to isolate. Additionally, we may also start to think, “I’m on my own, so I have to take care of myself “ and begin to guard ourselves from vulnerability/neediness and push people away. And as expected, these factors can perpetuate our feelings of loneliness.

What makes loneliness more ambiguous and difficult to pin down, is that it is VERY subjective. One definition in the Encyclopedia of Mental Health, defines loneliness as “the subjective psychological discomfort people experience when their network of social relationships don’t meet their needs or desires.” By this definition, loneliness is VERY personal and varies drastically from one person to the next. Our individual loneliness is defined by what we want, in contrast to what we have. So - we can have 100 great, supportive friends and family, but if we long for the person who has passed—we will feel lonely. And this is NORMAL and this is grief.

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT THIS?

Filling this empty space called loneliness is a great challenge and varies with each person. As a start, and it is only a start, we can assess. When is the loneliness the greatest? When and where it is most intense? By observing and befriending (I know—BIG stretch here) our loneliness we may be able to see a pattern and plan for the worst times. If we find Sunday’s are especially lonely, we can plan an activity with friends. If meal times are difficult, we can eat out, order in or volunteer to eat with the elderly.

Volunteering is also a great way to combat loneliness. Additionally, it is beneficial because it fills other needs. It strengthens feelings of self-esteem and self-competence, it benefits others, and it puts us in contact with people who have similar interests. Volunteering can foster new and fulfilling relationships.



It is difficult to know what to do to curb loneliness. Sometimes when we don't know what *to do*, we can start with what **NOT to do**. Thinking things through can keep us from making rash or poor decisions that may be difficult to undo afterwards.

1. Don't confuse companionship with completeness.

If we frantically search for someone to fill our emptiness, we can make some unsound decisions. First, remember, there will never be an exact "fit" for the hole in our heart. A relationship following loss can be a very healthy and positive step, as long as we recognize that a new person can never replace or stand in for someone who is gone. Spending time with the "right" person (the person who is right for who you are now and what you need now) can be a wonderful thing. This person may be entirely different from the person you lost, and remember spending time with someone new doesn't have to be romantic. Companionship may or may not progress further than friendship.

2. Don't overdo being busy.

Busy is good—up to a point. "I'm doing okay and I'm keeping busy", doesn't absolutely and always go hand-in-hand. Like everything else, moderation is usually the key. Busy is good when it means getting up and out and dressed. It can mean exercise, fulfilling hobbies and healthy distraction. However, when it is being used primarily as an escape, then it can begin to hinder healing. "Busy" can be a good way to pass the time, when it includes time for rest, reflection and learning about what it feels like to be without your loved one. Processing our emotions can be painful, but healing.

3. Don't spend time with those who will bring you down.

At times, in loneliness there can be such an urgency to fill the empty time that we find ourselves clinging to "any port in a storm". Too often, this type of person is not good for us. There's a reason for the saying "misery loves company". These unbalanced relationships can be with people who are avoiding their feelings and using us as balm for their pain. They may not be able to nurture us, may be negative or bitter and/or may just want to bring us down with them. *It is better to be alone than to be with the wrong people*. In grief, as in all of life, we would be wise to avoid anyone who does not further our growth and fulfil us. Remember, even at our loneliest we have choices. Choose who deserves to be in your life and nurtures your spirit.

4. Don't be afraid to try something new.

It can be especially difficult to have the energy to put ourselves out there after loss. So, this isn't in the early days, weeks, months or maybe even the first few years. But, eventually if you feel you're not moving forward, it may be time to try and break through. **Start small**. Think of something that will have a positive impact on you—find a cause and volunteer, take a class, join a club, learn a hobby. You deserve to enjoy your life again and your lost loved one is most likely cheering you on.

The loneliness of grief is not easily solved. It takes time and effort. You will never let go of your loved one, but WHEN READY, reach out and accept the new.

Your friends and support at

LAKE SUPERIOR LIFE CARE AND HOSPICE

PS: If your loved one was a patient of LSLCH, you will receive a phone call from "Arbor Survey" asking for your feedback on our services. Your participation and input would be greatly appreciated, so we can continue to improve our care, support and services.