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Journeys

A newsletter to help with grief



Kansas City Hospice & Palliative Care

How Can I Go On?

by **Jacque Amweg** LMSW, Grief Support Specialist

It seems impossible, unthinkable, that life goes on now. But it does. I drove over the bridge at sunset and saw the beauty of the swirling pink sunset on the flowing surface of the river. I saw a car with “Just Married” painted on the back window. The stocker at the grocery store keeps refilling the shelves.

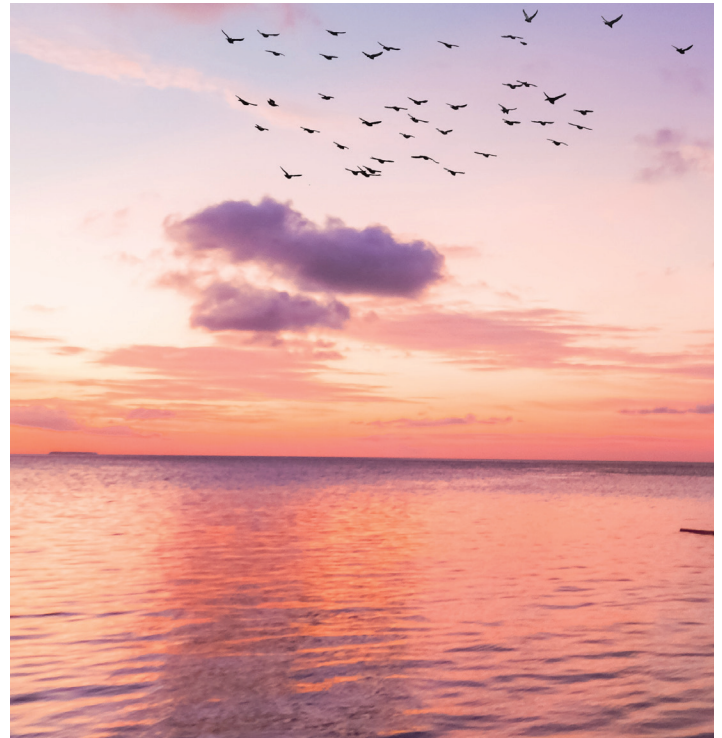
Yes, life goes on, but how can it, when I am in this empty place and I have no wish to go along with it? I used to see the pink sunset on the river with deep appreciation for the wonder of nature. Now I feel numb to this beauty and sometimes even resentful. How dare you, nature? Mourn with me!

I know I have my own body with its own blood type and its own scars and its own creaky joints. I know that I am my own person who has lived a life that is wholly definable by my own story, my own beliefs, my own personality.

Still, without my loved one, somehow I’m having trouble figuring out where I fit now. Life has been enriched and in some ways, defined by my connection with this person. Every decision I’ve made for the last many years has been filtered through the needs and wishes of this person. It has been “we” for at least that long. We are going on vacation. We need a new dishwasher. We had a fight. What does it mean now, to think of life without him or her?

William Worden, in his book, ***Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy***, writes about “accepting the reality of the loss” as one of the four tasks of grief. He writes that belief and disbelief are “intermittent” as we work through this task. It’s understandable that I would occasionally deny the truth of the death. I pay a price for believing it is true. The reality is gut-wrenching. So it’s natural to be in a state of protective denial at times.

It’s also natural to consider what it would be like to still be with them. Some people ask the question,



“What if I were to die? Could I be with the one I love then?” The pull toward our loved one is still strong.

No matter what spiritual belief is present, it is our aliveness that makes death so painful, and life so meaningful. It’s so unfair that I live to see pink sunsets on the river and she has died. Yet, there are pink sunsets and weddings and there is cereal on the shelves at the grocery store.

How to go on? It seems that the answer to aliveness is in the telling of the stories and sharing the depth of the grief. Songs and stories have been written about it. Photo albums and scrapbooks are beautiful memorials that keep us connected in a healthy way.

There is meaning in grief to be shared and meaning in the life that is mourned. There are listeners who want to know about it. Grief support groups are amazing places to be in touch with others who “get it.”

Kansas City Hospice Grief Support Specialists are available to support and listen. 816.363.2600.

Remember a Loved One at the Circle of Lights



The death of a loved one is the most difficult thing many of us will ever endure, yet there is hope in our grief that those we love will continue to live on in our hearts.

Each year at Kansas City Hospice, we join together to honor the lives of those who are no longer with us at a dedicated remembrance ceremony, *Circle of Lights*. This cherished tradition offers time to reflect, to remember, and to celebrate our loved ones in a meaningful way.

Last year nearly 1,000 luminaries lit the park, each one

a glowing symbol of the life and spirit of someone loved and remembered. Volunteers assist people who desire to light their own luminaries and to light the ones for families who could not attend in person. A short remembrance service brings us together as a community.

Seating is provided and you are welcome to take your luminary home with you. This is an outdoor event, so please check social media or call us if there's a chance of inclement weather! Although luminaries may be requested up to and including the night of the event, to ensure inclusion of your loved one's name in the printed program your request must be received by May 8th.



Please join Kansas City Hospice as we remember your loved one at

Circle of Lights A Ceremony of Remembrance

Tuesday, May 21, 2019

8:30 PM – Lighting Ceremony & Program
J.C. Nichols Fountain on the Country Club Plaza

To participate, please complete the form below or respond online at KCHospice.org/COL
Call 816.276.2617 with questions.

Mail to: KCH, 1500 Meadow Lake Parkway, Ste 200, KCMO 64114 or go online at KCHospice.org/COL

Enclosed is my gift of _____ in support of the good work of Kansas City Hospice.

I cannot make a gift at this time, but would like a luminary to honor my loved one.

I would like to place a luminary in honor of:

My Name _____

My Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Phone (____) _____

Sorting Through

By Christy Hansen MSW, LMSW, Grief Support Specialist

When you must sort through a loved one's belongings, it can be an overwhelming and emotional task. Whether it's a home that holds a lifetime of memories or a shared space where many objects are a painful reminder, approaching the process with a plan can help soften the difficulty and make it manageable.



The 4 P's of Sorting

People

Who is best suited to help you with this task? Is it one that would be better tackled alone?

Priorities

Are there time sensitive things that must be done right away? Are there things you can put off until you have more time or feel more ready? If you have a deadline for clearing out a home it can feel daunting, but look for tasks that can be saved for later. Perhaps you can box up pictures or mementos to sort through later when the pressure is off.

Plan

Break down your sorting into smaller tasks, starting with what feels easiest. Does cleaning out the linen closet, pantry or medicine cabinet feel like a smaller, more doable task? Maybe that will help you build confidence and momentum.

Pace Yourself

Work in chunks of time, no more than three or four hours. Plan meals so you don't find yourself hungry, tired and emotional. You might also plan a "buffer activity." Do something enjoyable, relaxing or soothing after a session.

Sometimes it's easier to part with belongings when you know they're going to good use. Give sentimental items to family members as a remembrance. Give items to charity to benefit others. Try to not feel guilty about discarding items past their usefulness.

In the midst of any overwhelming task, give yourself grace and gentleness. Remember, your goal is not to finish quickly, but to feel you've done well. Honor your loved one and yourself in the process.

What & where to donate?

[KCHospice.org/sorting-through](https://www.kchospice.org/sorting-through)

Here's one suggestion: Proceeds from *Top Drawer Resale Boutique* benefit families served by Kansas City Hospice. Staffed entirely by volunteers, they accept gently used clothing, accessories, home decor, and art. Plus, the Jewelry for Hospice program turns old (even broken) jewelry into unique new creations!

Top Drawer Resale Boutique

9433 Mission • 913.642.2292
10:00-5:30, Monday-Saturday.





Kansas City Hospice

& PALLIATIVE CARE

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Kansas City, MO 64114

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KCHospice.org

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Signup for Email

KCHospice.org/email-signup/
Choose areas of interest & receive Journeys by email.

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Support Group Schedule

Kansas City Hospice offers grief support groups and workshops. Groups are designed for adults at least two or three months past a loss.

There's no charge to attend most groups, but registration is required. Sessions may close when group is full, or cancel due to low registration.

For questions or to register, please call Grief Support Services **816.363.2600**.

Full calendar KCHospice.org

Parent Loss

Mondays, April 15, 22, 29, 2019, 6 - 7:30 pm, Solace House. (Call Melissa 913.894.8228 by April 8)

The Grief Journey: North

Thursdays, May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 from 10 - 11:30 am, Liberty Community Center, 1600 S Withers Rd, Liberty, MO 64068. (Call Susan 816.691.5119 by April 26)

The Grief Journey: South

Mondays, June 17, 24, July 1, 8, & 15, 6 - 7:30 pm, Kansas City Hospice House, Conference Room, 12000 Wornall. (Call Melissa 913.894.8228 by June 10)

Spouse/Partner Loss

Monthly Ongoing Group First Tuesday monthly, 3:00 – 4:30 pm, First Presbyterian Church 1625 NW O'Brien Road Lee's Summit, MO 64081 (Call Julie 816.363.2600)

Grief Education and Support Series:

Topic Varies Each Month

Join us if interested in writing and sharing your grief experience in a group setting. 6 – 7:30 pm, North Kansas City Hospital, North Oak Room, 2800 Clay Edwards Dr, NKC MO 64116 (For more information call Susan 816.691.5119)

Camp Erin

June 7-9, Heartland Center, Parkville. Weekend grief camp for children and teens. Acceptance is based on interview and available space. No fees to attend. (Call Solace House 913.341.0318 or visit KCHcamps.org)

Additional Grief Resources



SOLACE HOUSE
Kansas City Hospice
& PALLIATIVE CARE

913.341.0318
SolaceHouse.org

SkillBuilders - Education and Support for Widows, Widowers and Caregivers

913.383.2519

Grief Support Network
griefsupportnetwork.org

What's Your Grief?
whatsyourgrief.com

Visit Us Online
KCHospice.org/Grief/

Learn about our services, resources, previous issues of Journeys and more.