Henry Ford Hospice

Bereavement news for people living with grief



November 2026

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henryford.com

The bereavement process

With the winter holidays approaching, we'll soon be hearing festive music, seeing colorful light displays and sensing commotion all around us. The whole world seems consumed with the holiday spirit, but those who are grieving are only aware of the terrible hole in their lives. Grieving persons do not function within the norm.

Priorities must be reevaluated and decisions made about what is really meaningful for you and your family. Here are some ideas other bereaved persons have shared. Remember there is no right or wrong way to grieve, nor a prescribed timetable.

Decide what is in your emotional and physical budget to handle. Make decisions about planning that will be meaningful for you, as well as, for your family. Be mindful that family gatherings may be difficult. Adjust your expectation of self, family and what you are capable of. Be careful of "shoulds", as holidays can be physically and emotionally draining. You need every bit of fuel for the journey so take time to rest. What you do this year does not have to become tradition. You can do it completely different next year. Make efforts to engage in activities that hold the most meaning for you.

What is needed during times of grieving:

Caring: Try to allow yourself to accept the expression of caring from others even though they may be uneasy and awkward. Helping a friend or relative who is also suffering the same loss may bring a feeling of comfort.

Small pleasures: Do not underestimate the healing effects of small pleasures. Sunsets, crunching through the snow in the woods, blowing some bubbles, sampling your favorite food. These are all small steps toward regaining your pleasure in life itself.

Small goals: Make small goals as a means to have something to look forward to. Schedule dinner with a friend, plan a long weekend trip, volunteer at an animal shelter, go to the gym or take a class on Zoom. Living one day at a time is the rule of thumb. At first, do not be surprised if your level of enjoyment is not the same. This is normal. As time passes, you will ready yourself to make longer term goals which will provide structure and direction to your life.

Permission to have a "Griefburst": Often times, after a period of going along on a level plane a wave of emotion is triggered by an interaction with one of your five senses. You may experience sadness, despair or even anger all over again. This is the nature of grief, it's personal and often times it arises when you least expect it. It is likened to a rolling wave that comes and goes. The hope is that as you grow through your "griefbursts", they become less frequent or intense, and may eventually blossom into a "pop-up", where happy memories are reclaimed. It is important to pace yourself through pain of loss and find acceptance over time.



Grief at Thanksgiving: Gratitude with a grain of salt

Summary of article taken from What's Your Grief. Org

Acknowledge the giant turkey in the room. Thanksgiving can be a bad time for people who are grieving.

Many values, traditions, and messages associated with the day, like warmth, comfort, gratitude, and family togetherness, can feel like a direct conflict with the grieving person's actual reality. Although you may be hesitant to admit it in the face of all the festivities, the "30-days of "Thankfulness" challenge on Facebook and Charlie Brown and his dang pumpkin, may make you feel left out and less grateful than you have in years past.

After a death, it's common for grieving people to feel apathy towards the experiences and activities that use to bring them joy. This is not a deliberate choice anyone makes, grief just changes the way life looks and feels. Sadly, this loss of joy may seem like a secondary loss, especially if you fell out of touch with things you previously cherished, like holidays and special days. You long for the familiar enthusiasm for holiday cheer, but instead you feel like you are standing out in the cold, watching through a window while everyone else experiences the warmth and togetherness of the season.

Many people feel like the holidays are only for happy people and so the sad need to shape up or ship out.

Your invitation to the holidays isn't simply revoked because you don't embody holiday cheer. Some of you may be thinking about scrapping Thanksgiving altogether. You may be dreading sights, smells, and sounds that trigger your grief. Your loved one may have been central to the day and you may feel you cannot carry it off without him or her, or maybe you are just feeling anything but grateful. Rethink this mindset! Remember, holidays aren't just for happy people, neither is gratitude. You don't have to choose between grief and feeling grateful. You can experience two feelings at once. Grief is fertile ground for experiencing conflicting emotions. Try to have a balanced outlook toward gratitude this Thanksgiving.

People with negative outlook may be more likely to find depressing, cynical, and suspicious explanations for events. They may feel their lives are globally awful, they themselves are globally awful, and believe these realities will never change.

Gratitude has been shown to help. According to a study by McCullough and Emmons in 2003, taking time to journal five things you are grateful for one time a week for nine weeks will increase your well-being, strides for better health, (including exercise), and increase your optimism. Even though Thanksgiving will feel different this year, actively seeking gratitude can be empowering to reclaim a part of the holiday for yourself.

Finding gratitude is simple. Pay attention to your thoughts and when you catch yourself feeling negative and pessimistic, think to yourself, "Yes, AND I also have _____ to be grateful for." Be grateful for something: hot cup of coffee, a happy memory, a song you like, your dog or cat, or that green bean casserole—KIS (keep it simple!). If not every day at least make it through Thanksgiving dinner. You don't want to be caught off guard when the Thanksgiving yahoo suggests everyone share one thing they are grateful for at the Thanksgiving dinner table!

Two Part Mindset:

Part One: Remember, it's okay to feel ungrateful

You're a person who has had a difficult year. It's okay to acknowledge this and to recognize your grief, apathy, and sadness. You don't need to stuff your feelings for the benefit of other people. You are not responsible for any other adult's happiness. There will be times when you put on a front, like at work or child-related celebrations, and that's okay. But the bottom-line: It's okay to acknowledge all the reasons why you are anything but grateful.

Part Two: For every gripe, find a gratitude

Acknowledging your gratitude doesn't minimize or erase the difficult thoughts, memories, and emotions you are experiencing. It may simply help balance your outlook a little. Balancing your outlook is important because grief can make people feel cheated, angry, self-focused, bitter, lonely, isolated, resentful, guilty, sad, anxious, worried, or depressed. Over time, negativity can have a large impact on their overall worldview.

November recognition: National Hospice and Palliative Care Month

Excerpts from article By Chris Haring

Since 1986, every November is National Hospice and Palliative Care Month – when we pay tribute to the dedicated professionals who work tirelessly to provide compassionate care to those in the final stages of life.

Hospice care is vital in helping individuals maintain their dignity, autonomy, and comfort as they approach their deaths, and caregivers are the unsung heroes who support patients and their families through the most challenging times.

This month, we want to honor and say thank you to all essential caregivers who dedicate their time to supporting patients at the end of life.

We also want to extend the invitation to be an integral part of Henry Ford Hospice during this giving season. If you have the time and emotional space, consider applying to become a hospice volunteer. For more information, please visit: https://www.henryford.com/visitors/volunteer/hospice

In addition, if you have the means, we accept one-time or monthly donations. Please visit our donation form online to contribute easily and securely. https://secure3.convio.net/hfordh/site/Donation2?df_id=3781&mfc_pref=T&3781.donation=form1

"These are not easy times to be alive, but these are amazing times to be of service."

-Maha Rose

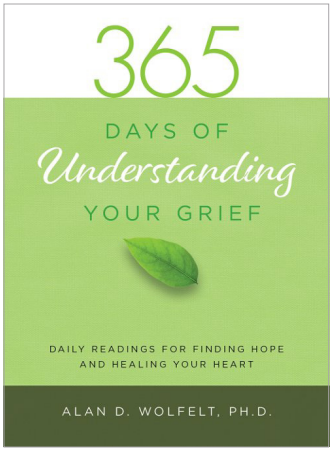
Staff picks

Each month one of our staff members shares a resource they find valuable in the grief space.

This month's pick

365 days of understanding your grief: Daily readings for finding hope and healing your heart

By Alan D. Wolfelt, PH.D



365 Days of Understanding Your Grief is a compassionate daily devotional designed to support individuals as they navigate day-to-day through the difficult journey of grief and loss. The book offers encouragement, comfort, understanding, and hope to those learning to live with the absence of someone they love. Each devotional meets you where you are in your grief and gently reminds you that even when your heart is hurting, hope is still possible.

Recommended by

Aireal T

Why I loved it

A daily read about grief reflects the reality of grief itself. It is a day-by-day movement towards healing. It is not something that we heal from overnight. That is why I love this book. It meets you where you are and normalizes the beauty in mourning. It reminds us that grief is not a sign that you are weak; it is a reflection of how deeply you have loved.

You might enjoy if

You are grieving the loss of a loved one, struggling to navigate difficult emotions, or searching for comfort and hope during a painful season of life.

We'll leave a chair

Surrounded by festive cheer,

I can't help but feel sorrow

because this holiday you won't be here.

At the table we'll leave a chair

because no one else could possibly fill the space that your absence has left there.

This year you may not be visiting,

but we'll still share all our stories

because I know that you're still listening.

I still feel you so close, though you're far above.

Missing you more than ever this season.

It's true what they say, that grief is the price we pay for love.

Henry Ford Hospice

2026 Bereavement support groups

July-December

2nd Tuesday of the month
1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Location:
Virtual via Teams

Monthly: 7/14, 8/11, 9/8, 10/13, 11/10, 12/8

3rd Wednesday of the month
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Location:
Henry Ford Macomb Hospital
Medical Pavilion – 4th Floor Meeting Room #6
16151 19 Mile Road
Clinton Township, MI 48038

Monthly: 7/15, 8/19, 9/16, 10/21, 11/18, 12/16

4th Tuesday of the month
10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Location:
Henry Ford West Bloomfield Hospital
Conference Room (LDRP2)
6777 West Maple Road
West Bloomfield, MI 48322

Monthly: 7/28, 8/25, 9/22, 10/27, 11/24, 12/22

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 HEALTH®

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-on-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.

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