

Bereavement news for people living with grief



September 2026

Editor:
Megan Bannon

henryford.com

September again

by Darcie Sims, who is a bereaved mother, a Blue Springs, Missouri based psychotherapist, and a well traveled speaker whose sense of humor has been an inspiration to many. From Bereavement Magazine.

I've never understood why the calendar makers don't realize that September, not January, marks the beginning of every new year. Everyone remembers the smell of new crayons, the stiffness of new shoes, and the pride of the new LUNCHBOX.

Each September, we started over, inspired by our father's lecture on the hardships of when he was a boy, and how far he had to walk to school through blinding blizzards and gale-force winds. Then came the lecture from Mom about how precious and wonderful and necessary an education is so you can grow up and become something ("better than your father," which was always said under her breath). We knew what they were really trying to say was, "Grow up, leave home, and send money home to your beloved and aging parents!"

Each September, we received new pencils, a plastic ruler and advice. Most of that advice has long faded from memory, but perhaps now, as we mark the passing of another year's beginning, a few survival tactics wouldn't hurt. September - new beginnings marked by painful passages from the light summer to the finality of fall. It isn't the beginning of the end of anything - only the beginning of a new beginning. Begin to become the person you already are! Look both ways before crossing the street, and hold hands. Carry an umbrella, wear clean underwear and hang on tight...Forever is just beginning.

1. Be yourself. It's too hard to be somebody else and you probably can't remember who you said you were anyway.
2. Find enough compassionate listeners. You can talk more than one person can listen.
3. Pick your worries. Give up worrying about worrying.
4. Wear a sign. Don't assume others know what is going on. "I'm Bereaved" is a good excuse for just about everything, and it will get you excused to use the bathroom without question!
5. Exercise. Walk, jog, jump rope, fly a kite or a paper airplane. Watch someone else exercise. At least...jog your memory.
6. Buy something. Treat yourself.
7. DO NOT eat anything that could be labeled "mystery meat" in the cafeteria line (ice cream, chocolate and OREOS are always safe - they cannot be disguised into something healthy).
8. Always follow the person in front of the line - if he gets lost, it's HIS fault. And a group of lost people gathered together aren't lost - they are where they are.
9. Follow the rules or you get your name on the board and everyone knows you aren't doing IT right, or you are taking too long to get over IT, and who knows how long IT should take, any way? Grief takes far longer than anyone imagines.
10. Insist on JOY every day. Create your own magic, your own sandwich, your own rules and survival tactics. Walk in your own shoes and carry your own pencil box and never, never loan your lunchbox, or your grief, to anyone else...they won't take care of it as well as you can.

Suicide Prevention Month

From the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) website
and rainbowcommunitycare.org

September is Suicide Prevention Month, a time to raise awareness, spread hope, and spark meaningful action around one of the most urgent mental health issues of our time.

Our collective goal is to ensure that individuals, friends, and families have access to the tools, resources, and support they need to talk openly about suicide prevention, recognize warning signs, and seek help.

This month: Start a Conversation. Be the Difference.

With one conversation, asking someone how they're really doing — and being ready to truly listen — can save lives. Because here's what we know: No one has to face this alone. Help exists. Healing is possible. And all it can take is for one person to start a conversation.

If you are considering suicide, stop and reflect. Who are the people or pets in your life who need you and love you? For them, you are not a black hole. You are light. Please reach out for help by calling 988 or talking to a friend or helper who you can trust with your pain. If you know someone you think is considering suicide, ask them if they are having thoughts of suicide. Ask if they have a plan. Invite them to find reasons for hope in their life. Explore with them a plan to find resources and support to keep them alive and begin the first steps toward healing.

Grieving a loved one who died by suicide is a unique grief. The bereaved may feel guilt for not recognizing their person's pain or preventing their death. The bereaved also feel the weight of knowing that their loved one was in a place of deep despair. For those grieving a suicide loss, you may feel isolated in your grief as others may not know how to support you and choose to move away from you, both physically and emotionally.

While you may be helped in a general grief support group, most likely you would receive a greater benefit from a survivors of suicide loss support group. To find a group, we recommend two resources. First, go to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, <https://afsp.org/>, for resources and support in your state. Trudy Ender is the Area Director in Michigan. Her contact information is TEnder@afsp.org or (810) 701-7790. Second, go to David Kessler's website, Grief.com, to watch a free three-week Suicide Loss Support Series, <https://grief.com/suicide> for those who have lost a loved one to suicide.



Organization Highlight:

The Little Heart Project, founded and created by Kathleen Jensen, seeks to spread hope and light in the darkness of people's despair. Volunteers crochet or knit small hearts, attach a message of hope, and most importantly, include the 988 number to call or text for immediate support. Volunteers leave the Little Hearts in many places, from bathroom stalls to grocery shelves to coffee shops. Wherever people go, a Little Heart can be left. For more information, visit the Little Heart website at thelittleheartproject.org.

Being brave

Megan Devine, *It's OK That You're Not OK: Meeting Grief and Loss in a Culture That Doesn't Understand*.

"Being brave is about waking to face each day when you would rather just stop waking up. Being brave is staying present to your own heart when that heart is shattered into a million different pieces and can never be made right. Being brave is standing at the edge of the abyss that just opened in someone's life and not turning away from it, not covering your discomfort with a pithy "think positive" emoticon. Being brave is letting pain unfurl and take up all the space it needs. Being brave is telling that story. It's terrifying. And it's beautiful."



When grief is complicated: Healing after a difficult relationship

Excerpts from Article by Barbara Karnes

Grief doesn't erase the difficult parts of a relationship. If there were hurts, regrets, or things left unsaid, those feelings may remain after death. Healing begins when we allow ourselves to acknowledge all of our feelings—the positive and the negative.

Grief can be very complicated- as complicated as our relationship with the person who died. In fact, when we are having challenges with our grieving, with figuring out how to go on living now that our special person is no longer with us, I always suggest we look at what the relationship was like in the years before the death. Most often the more complicated and challenging the relationship, the more difficult it is for us to figure out how to move forward.

It is as if all that was unsaid, or maybe loudly said and can't be taken back, and remains between us and living our life in a healthy way. Often after a person dies we forget that there is no perfect relationship, that there are easy times and difficult times. Somehow once a person dies we elevate them to sainthood. By doing that we lock in the hurts, the guilt that is part of any relationship. It is healthy if we can acknowledge all of our feelings for the person that is gone, positive and negative.

To Try: write your person a letter. In the letter write everything you have to say and perhaps often didn't say—the good times and the difficult times. Let the tears come, let the anger, the loneliness, the confusion all come forth through your pen onto the paper.

When you are finished, reread it then burn it. Let the ashes, along with all the held-in feelings go into the air.

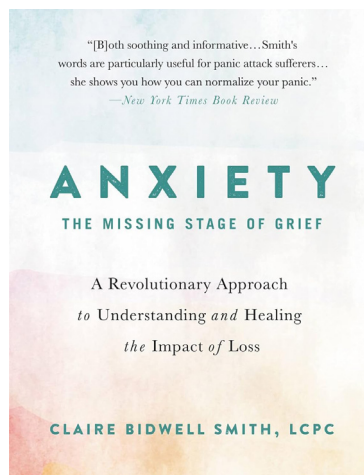
Staff picks

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

This month's pick

Anxiety: The Missing Stage of Grief

By Claire Bidwell Smith, LCPC



"This groundbreaking book explores the little-known yet critical connections between anxiety and grief, with practical strategies for healing, following the renowned Kübler-Ross stages model"

Recommended by

Kathleen B

Why I loved it

It offered practical ideas and tools when dealing anxiety concerning grief and loss. It normalizes the grief experience, letting you know it will be okay.

You might enjoy if

You want to understand the process and from other personal experiences.

Humor and healing for your families

Humor helps us cope. For families dealing with loss, it's that little laugh that can help them go a long way to healing.

It's important to remember that humor isn't the answer for everybody because grief will be a different experience for everyone.

1. Share your funniest stories about a loved one with others. It's a way to relive memories and celebrate the life of a person.
2. Keep a box of funny memories. Write down a list of your funniest memories on cards or in a journal as they come to you. On days when you're feeling down, take a look at the memories you've written-especially around important anniversaries and holidays.
3. Join a Laughter Yoga class. Apparently, it's a real thing, and it works. Those who have signed up for classes have expressed an overall improved mood, positive attitude, decreased stress, and feelings of sadness.
4. Rewatch favorite movies. Have a movie night when you're feeling blue and rewatch old comedies that you and your loved one enjoyed. It's a simple way to spark memories and smiles.

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 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.