Sometimes we don’t want to grow. It is just too hard! Mr. Rogers speaks to the truth of our lives; there is pain and suffering, but there also can be new life and growth. Yet we must be willing to do the work; sometimes 24/7, other times allowing ourselves to step back a bit to catch our breath and gather our strength. It can be a delicate balance – to keep moving ahead in grief work and claiming time to just “be.”

One thing that may help us when we mourn is being part of a grief group. Meeting with others who have experienced loss provides safe places to share feelings. Often it feels as if we are all alone in our grief and we don’t know what to do. When we realize that others also experience confusion, lack of concentration, and physical and emotional exhaustion, we don’t feel so isolated and alone.

Hospice of Lansing/Ionia Area Hospice/Stoneleigh Residence provides time each month for drop-in grief support. You are invited to call or drop in during these times. You may also call and schedule an appointment during these times or a time more convenient to you.

**HOSPICE OF LANSING/STONELEIGH RESIDENCE**  
3186 Pine Tree Road, Lansing • 1:30-3:00pm  
517.882.4500  
June 27, July 25, August 22, September 19, October 17, November 28, December 12

**IONIA AREA HOSPICE**  
601 East Washington, Ionia • 1:30-3:00pm  
877.882.4500  
June 28, July 26, August 23, September 20, October 18, November 29, December 13

Blessings on your journey,

Rev. Kris Abbey  
Chaplain
The Challenges of Grief

Often it can be difficult to find permission to grieve, both from ourselves and the outside world. You may encounter responses such as “he/she lived a good life”. Many people mean well and want you to feel better by reminding you of the positive things in your life or the life of your loved one. These responses may make you feel as if you should not cry, or hurt, or be angry. However, you had a relationship with your loved one that deserves to be grieved and fully experienced. Sometimes this may mean staying in bed for extra time in the morning because you don’t feel like getting up to face the day. Or it may mean when someone asks you “how are you?” that you answer honestly and say “not very good”, even if it means making that person uncomfortable.

As simple as it may sound, try to allow yourself to feel what you feel and think what you think. The thoughts and feelings are there whether you want them to be or not, and the best way to work through them is to allow them to be thought and felt. Physiologically, emotions are like waves. They build and come to a crest, but as they are experienced and come to shore the emotions naturally ebb, sometimes returning later as smaller waves. As our emotions build, it can be tempting to try and stop them from cresting and being fully experienced because they seem so overwhelming. But when we try to stop these waves of emotion in the middle, they can become “stuck”. Allow whatever thoughts or feelings you have to be fully acknowledged. This, and being gentle with yourself, will allow you to move through your grief.

Grief may also be helped by reviewing memories you have of your loved one. Pictures are a wonderful way to remember. If it feels right to you, review pictures of your loved one that remind you of your favorite times with them. You may even choose to make a memory book if you have some other items like tickets, postcards, or playbills from past trips. Allow yourself to feel the emotions they evoke. You may feel a multitude of emotions: happiness, sadness, loneliness, or even anger. These are all normal emotions when mourning the loss of someone close to you. Even though you have lost someone important to you, you have not lost the memories that you have of that person. The emotions that they evoke are still with you. Reflecting back on the experiences you had together can help you heal your loss while still retaining the experiences you shared.

As you are mourning your loss, be mindful if your grief makes it difficult to provide for your basic needs, such as bathing, getting three meals a day, or other activities of daily living. This is the time when your grief needs special attention, and you need to seek out extra help in the form of a support group or bereavement counselor. Contact your local hospital, hospice, funeral home, or community mental health organization for resources. As always, the staff at Hospice of Lansing, Ionia Area Hospice, and Stoneleigh Residence is available to help connect you with resources or provide a listening ear.

~Heather Kalso
Hospice of Lansing Social Worker

Legacy of Love

The staff at Hospice of Lansing & Stoneleigh Residence invites you and your family to join us and learn more about hospice care in a relaxed, comfortable setting.

Our Legacy of Love information sharing sessions are held at Stoneleigh Residence and will last only one hour.

3411 Stoneleigh Drive • Lansing, MI 48910
First Wednesday of each month at 12:00 PM & Third Tuesday of each month at 8:30 AM

Please note that the Legacy of Love is not a fundraising event and attendees will not be asked for a donation. Please call 517.882.4500 to reserve your space or visit our website at www.hospiceoflansing.org
Children, Youth and Grief

Adults in the family unit who are dealing with feelings of grief and loss may find it difficult to help the children and teenagers who are also experiencing the same loss.

Grief causes us to feel overwhelmed and exhausted, and so it can be a challenge to find the inner energy needed to help others. It is important as parents, grandparents, or any significant adult not to shut down because the pain is too difficult. Withdrawing or stuffing your emotions down does not help you or your children. As the article, Family Grief (found in this newsletter) states, talking about your grief, feelings, and needs is very important, especially since children and teenagers look to the adults in their lives for guidance. In this way they find a model on how to mourn.

Sharing your own grief allows young people to know it is okay to respond to the death of a loved one by tears, sadness and loss of energy. They then begin to understand that these are all valid aspects of mourning.

You may have to help children to talk about their experiences. Sharing their thoughts, reactions, and feelings allows them to give voice to their experience and it helps them to normalize and accept their feelings. Finding ways for children to be involved in the activities that surround the death of a loved one is helpful. Helping to put together a collection of family pictures, writing a letter to their family member that can be placed in the casket, making a scrapbook, or planting a special garden in memory of their loved one are some ideas on helping children grieve and to help them feel included at this difficult time.

Children understand death differently than adults. The following is a brief description on how children and teens understand death. This is only a generalized description, but it may help you to understand what your children and teens are feeling.

Very young children understand death as a temporary condition. Just as in the games we play with children, such as peek-a-boo, they expect people to reappear. They do not understand the permanence of death.

Children to the age of six still do not understand that death is final. They may also believe that they can “wish” another person to die or to return to life.

As children grow and reach the age of about ten years they begin to understand that death is final. Therefore they may begin to fear that they will die. Children of this age begin to think about the meaning of life and what happens after death.

Between the ages of ten to twelve children become interested in learning the facts surrounding the death and can understand most of the information. They may also worry about who will take care of the surviving family member/s.

Teens feel threatened by death because they realize that things will never be the same again. Some teens reject funeral customs in an attempt to avoid death, and they may also want to mourn in private or with their friends.

When talking with your young family members think about their level of understanding and their coping patterns. Answer their questions truthfully and simply, but only answer what is being asked. Encourage their expression of feelings and accept them. Avoid using terms like “gone away”, “sleeping”, or “passed on.” Share your feelings and beliefs with them, always offering your love and support.

Out of the depths and shadows from the bottom of a pond, the lotus emerges, untouched and unstained. Representing the purity of the mind and soul, the lotus flower is a powerful symbol of peace, hope, transcendence and rebirth. The lotus reminds us to strive through difficulties and that beauty and light can rise from the murky darkness.

A Legacy of Memories
A special evening of music and remembrance for family members

Sunday, November 6th, 2016
5:00 PM
Okemos Community Church
4734 Okemos Road
Okemos, MI
Online Donations

We have made donating to Hospice of Lansing, Stoneleigh Residence and Ionia Area Hospice even easier!

Save yourself the time it takes to write a check and attach a stamp by visiting us at www.hospiceofLANSING.org or www.IONIAareahospice.org to make a donation. Please visit our website and make a secured donation today!

Grief Services Online

For information on upcoming grief support meetings and events, visit us online at www.hospiceofLANSING.org or www.IONIAareahospice.org.

Mailing List

Please call 877/882-4500 or e-mail kabbey@hospiceoflansing.org if you wish to be removed from this mailing list or if you want to receive this newsletter electronically. Please be assured we do not sell or share our list with other organizations or businesses.