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Grief Services Online

For information on upcoming grief support meetings and events, visit us online at: hospiceoflansing.org or ioniaareahospice.org.

Mailing List

Please call (517) 882-4500 or e-mail kperry@hospiceoflansing.org if you wish to be removed from this mailing list.

To view Grief Matters online please visit hospiceoflansing.org or ioniaareahospice.org. Click on "Grief Support" at the top left of the page. Scroll down and you will find the links to the most recent issues.

If you would like to receive a physical copy, please fill out the form on the same page, next to the links. Please be assured we do not sell or share our list with other organizations or businesses.

Online Donations

Donating to Hospice of Lansing, Stoneleigh Residence, and Ionia Area Hospice is even easier now! Visit us at hospiceoflansing.org or ioniaareahospice.org to make a donation and save yourself the time to mail in a check!

*Grief Matters is
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Grief MATTERS

MAY/JUNE 2025

“When someone you love becomes a memory, that memory becomes a treasure.” –Unknown



The Legend of the Lotus

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.

The Healing Power of Music

There are many ways of coping with grief. Grieving the loss of a loved one is a profound and deeply personal journey that varies for each individual. While grief is often characterized by sadness, despair, and loss, music can be an essential companion through this emotional landscape. The benefits of using music during the grieving process are diverse, providing solace, empathy, connection, and even a means of expression that may be difficult to articulate in other ways.

Benefits of Music in Grieving

- **Emotional Release:** Music has the unique ability to evoke emotions. It can facilitate a cathartic experience, allowing individuals to express feelings they may struggle to communicate. Listening to or playing music can trigger memories and emotions associated with the deceased, providing a safe space for sorrow.
- **Connection to Memories:** Specific songs can remind us of our loved ones, evoking fond memories and closeness. This connection can bring comfort and help keep the memory of the deceased alive.
- **Stress Reduction:** Research shows that music can lower cortisol levels, the stress hormone. This can be particularly beneficial during the grieving process, where anxiety and stress often accompany feelings of loss.
- **Facilitates Reflection:** Music often provides a backdrop for contemplation and introspection. Many people find that music can help them process their thoughts and feelings about their loss, enabling deeper reflection.
- **Sense of Community:** Sharing music—attending concerts, joining a choir, or simply listening with others—can foster a sense of community. This shared experience can be comforting, reminding individuals they are not alone in their grief.
- **Holistic Healing:** Music therapy can encourage healing on multiple levels—emotional, psychological, and even physical. As a Music therapist, I use songs to foster communication, facilitate emotional expression, and help individuals move through their grief terrain with support. Sometimes the support of music looks like pressing the cry button to release pent-up feelings or retrieving old memories connected to a song from childhood.

The Healing Power of Music

(Continued from cover)

General Benefits of Listening to Music on Emotions

In addition to aiding grief, listening to music has broader benefits on emotional well-being:

Mood Regulation: Music can effectively alter mood, enhancing feelings of happiness or calmness. Upbeat songs can uplift spirits, while slower, more somber tunes can provide comfort during sad moments.

Emotional Validation: Music often reflects our feelings and experiences, providing validation and understanding. Hearing a song that articulates what we're going through can be reassuring, making us feel less isolated in our emotions.

Cognitive Engagement: Engaging with music can stimulate the brain, fostering cognitive connections that enhance memory and emotional recall. This engagement can also improve overall mental health and resilience.

Distraction from Pain: Music can serve as a powerful distraction from emotional and physical pain. Focusing on music can shift attention away from distressing thoughts and feelings, providing temporary relief.

Promotes Relaxation: Many people use music as a tool for relaxation and stress relief. Calming music can lower heart rates and promote a state of tranquility, making it an effective way to manage anxiety and tension.

Increased Self-Awareness: Listening to music can encourage introspection and self-discovery by prompting thoughts and feelings that may have been suppressed. It can lead to greater self-awareness and understanding of one's emotional state.

Virginia Caldwell MM MT-BC

Neurologic Music Therapist

Finding meaning in our grief can be something so powerful. Recognize the world around you and take time to take advantage of the signs that are provided to us by those that we have loved and lost.

Kelly Perry
Social Services Supervisor

Ways to Use Music for Connection

Here are several ways to incorporate music into your grieving process to feel more connected to your loved one:

- **Create a Playlist:** Compile songs that remind you of your loved one or that they enjoyed. This playlist can be a comforting tool during moments of sadness or reflection. Incorporate listening to the playlist at certain times of the day in your routine. E.g. During your morning cup of coffee or before bed to feel connected to your loved one.
- **Write a Song:** If you feel inspired, try writing a song or poem in memory of your loved one. This creative outlet can help articulate feelings of love, loss, and remembrance.
- **Listen Together:** If you have family or friends who are also grieving, create a ritual where you gather to listen to music together. Discuss the memories each song evokes, sharing your feelings and stories.
- **Attend a Concert:** Attend local concerts or music events featuring artists your loved one appreciated, attending together can create a meaningful experience that honors their memory.
- **Incorporate Music into Memorials:** Play meaningful songs during a memorial service or celebration of life. This can help create an emotional atmosphere that resonates with attendees.
- **Engage in Music Therapy:** Consider seeking out a music therapist who can guide you through your grief

Grief is a journey that requires time and self-compassion. Incorporating music into this process can be a powerful healing method, connecting you to your emotions and memories associated with your loved one. Whether through personal reflection, shared experiences, or therapeutic practices, music offers a unique pathway to navigate the complexities of loss.

As you embark on or continue this journey, remember that it's okay to seek support if needed. Surround yourself with people who understand your feelings, and let music be a soothing companion through your grieving process. Consider contacting your local Hospice provider for additional grief groups that foster support and connection from community members who are experiencing a loss as well.

using music as a therapeutic tool. They can provide techniques and support tailored to your emotional needs.

- **Meditate with Music:** Use calming music during meditation or quiet reflection times. This can help center your thoughts and facilitate a deeper connection with your memories.
- **Dance it Out:** Engage in movement or dance to music that resonates with you. This can be a liberating way to express grief physically while celebrating the joy your loved one brought into your life.
- **Join a Drum Circle:** Participating in a community drumming circle will allow you to express your feelings without words. Sometimes, there are no adequate words to express our true feelings. Drumming is a fantastic way to find release without explanation.
- **Find a Sound Bath:** Sound baths are gaining popularity! They are an experience like no other. Sound baths have been shown to decrease stress and move the body out of a sympathetic fight-or-flight state, helping with sleep and feelings of well-being.

Volunteers and Grief

It is true that most people hope to avoid the reality of this setting, whether they are the caregiver or the patient. But, if hospice care becomes a necessity for your loved one, most people are very relieved to find our caring, compassionate volunteers ready to meet their non-medical needs.

Why does a person want to volunteer in a hospice setting? What does a hospice volunteer do?

There are many reasons why someone would become a hospice volunteer. Often times, our volunteers have walked through the grieving process already, either personally or as an experienced volunteer. They know how comforting it is to have someone close by who understands and who can provide a sense of peace and practical support. You will find that our volunteers consider it a privilege to walk with someone on this road.

Hospice volunteers must complete a training program with a background check/fingerprinting prior to meeting with a hospice patient/family. Volunteers provide companionship to the patient and respite care for family members.

Hospice volunteers are part of our TEAM. If you are interested in learning more about joining our TEAM please call [\(517\) 882-4500](tel:5178824500) or go to our website hospiceoflansing.org/volunteers to complete an application. I would be more than happy to answer

any question and help you experience the privilege of helping others in need.

Casey Darnell

Volunteer Coordinator

Thoughts from a Grief Volunteer

As part of the bereavement support team of Hospice of Lansing, Stoneleigh Residence and Ionia Area Hospice I have heard many people express thoughts of sadness, worries and regrets.

We all have a basic capacity to endure stress and loss. However when we are grieving, it feels like our vulnerabilities have increased and our reserves have decreased. We are under stress due to intense loss. We may become overwhelmed and exhausted; we may feel like we are weak and crazy because we no longer can concentrate or remember those things that need doing.

Guilt is often part of grief. We question the care we gave our loved one, wondering if we did enough or should have done something differently. When we do this, we often take on responsibility for something that is beyond our control. With time, as we process and work through these thoughts they often get resolved.

Grieving is hard work at any time. What helps is being open to whatever emotions we are experiencing. You are strong enough to do this. You have already shown how many challenges you can live through. Thinking about them does not create them, the challenges, the feelings, the fears are already there. They are part of being a living, breathing human being. Emotions like guilt, fear, misery...don't feel good, but you won't break. It is also important to remember to embrace the good feelings and emotions, like joy and gratitude. They might be missing now, but they will show up at their own pace.

We are filled with resilience and courage, even if we do not recognize it. Mary Ann Radmacher (workshop leader for a balanced life) says, "Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, "I will try again tomorrow."

Joey L.

Bereavement Support Volunteer