

Grief Matters



Fall 2020

Welcome to the first edition of the *Grief Matters* newsletter. You're receiving this newsletter because your family has experienced the loss of a loved one at one of our hospitals. We hope that this quarterly resource will be helpful as you grieve, meeting you right where you are during this time of social distancing. The challenges of not being able to gather in groups means that the support we offer will arrive in new ways, as described in this newsletter.

This first edition arrives as the holidays are just around the corner. Perhaps you're already noticing store holiday displays or TV commercials. If this feels challenging to you, you may relate to the reflection by our team member, Connie Bonner, in our "Seasons of Grief" column. In the "Matters of Grief" column, you'll find some tips for navigating the holidays. Gathering with others who have experienced loss can help the grieving process feel a little less lonely. To meet this need and to offer even more valuable resources, consider registering for our "A Survivor's Guide to the Holidays" program that's to be offered online.

I want to assure you of our Spiritual Care team's care for you, as we offer hope for healing. Your grief matters to us.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rebecca Bass".



Rebecca Bass
Bereavement Coordinator
Morton Plant Mease Hospitals



A Season of Grief

By Rev. Connie Bonner, MSN, MDiv, BCC,
ACPE Educator, CPE Manager, Morton Plant Hospital

My grieving ebbs and flows. The best metaphor for me is that of the ocean's waves. Some days the waves of grief smack me down hard; other days they are gentle, even tender, bringing to my heart and mind the one I miss. Healing does not follow a straight line either. Healing leaves wounds and scars; evidence of heartbreak and sorrow. I don't forget my loved ones; I remember them with a myriad of feelings and memories.

As the holidays approach, I could skip them as they are filled with a variety of painful and joyous memories. Yet, being numb to the pain makes me numb to new joy. A favorite Christmas cookie was my mom's pecan crescents—I can remember their taste and smell. Times sitting at the table with hot chocolate, tea or coffee, talking, laughing, and nibbling on them.

My sister has taken to baking them; this year I won't be up north to celebrate with her and her kids and grandkids due to the pandemic.

The pandemic is making the isolation and grief more bitter and the grief waves stronger. It also means I am to be more intentional about reaching out, calling on Zoom, texting, sending cards and sitting with the memories, letting the tears fall. My grief is evidence of love. And that love can foster abundance, extending care and spending time with people in my life here. Perhaps this year it's my turn to bake the pecan crescents.

Poem About Grief and Healing

By Michele Meleen

Like the tides of the ocean,
Ebbing and flowing,
Growing stronger and weaker,
Grief moves forward and back in my life.

Like the moon in the sky,
Waxing and waning,
Growing thicker and thinner,
Healing moves forward and back in my life.

Grief Resources Corner

Find valuable support on these respected websites:

Grief.com
CenterForLoss.com
GriefHaven.com

Area hospice agencies offer bereavement support through individual counseling and small groups. These include:

Pinellas County

Suncoast Hospice
SuncoastHospice.org
(727) 549-7133

Seasons Hospice
Seasons.org
(866) 824-9699

Pasco County

HPH Hospice
ChaptersHealth.org
(727) 816-3647

Gulfside Hospice
Gulfside.org
(727) 845-5707



Matters of Grief: Getting through the holidays

Holidays are often the most emotionally difficult times for people who are grieving. Expectations abound as the season typically has been a time of joy, family togetherness, gift giving and gratitude. Grief may be especially painful during this time, leading to a sense of sadness, loneliness, emptiness and disappointment.

It can be important to:

- Give yourself permission to hit the pause button on holiday traditions. It's ok to say, "not this year" or "I need time to think about that" or "I just don't know right now."
- Share memories of your loved one with trusted family and friends as you decide which traditions to hold onto and which ones to let go for now.
- Allow yourself to decide right before an event whether you wish to attend. And, if you do go, consider driving yourself so that you can leave when you wish.
- Consider what has been helpful to you during other seasons of loss. Recall what you find calming or comforting.



Grief Matters Program – A Survivor's Guide to the Holidays



Join us for an online program filled with helpful tips for those grieving during the holidays. When you register, a link will be sent to you for the program, along with instructions for signing in.

The same program will be offered at four different times:

Tuesday, November 10 | 2-3:30pm

Wednesday, November 11 | 6:30-8pm

Tuesday, November 17 | 6:30-8pm

Thursday, November 19 | 2-3:30pm

Program highlights include:

- Explore ways to navigate the holidays following your loss.
- Learn about the grieving process and how to care for yourself
- Find support among people who care and understand

To register: email mpmbereavement@baycare.org or call (727) 462-7995

Registration deadline: Friday, November 6

“Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.”

~Desmond Tutu

To receive this newsletter digitally and to connect with us for online programs, simply email: mpmbereavement@baycare.org

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Morton Plant Hospital
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Association, Inc.
300 Pinellas St.
Clearwater 33756

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TO:

Speaking of Grief

Words can help us name our feelings and experiences.



Perhaps a word from this list speaks to you or perhaps you have different words. Words can help us process our feelings and find ways to move forward. Consider journaling or talking with a trusted companion about the words which most match your experience. May you find solace as you work through your grief. Each day is a new beginning.

I wish you deep peace and abundant blessings.

~ Michelle Mehan,
Palliative Care Chaplain
Morton Plant
North Bay Hospital

grief

 **BayCare**
Spiritual Care