

Grief *Matters*

NEWSLETTER



Fall 2023

Just as seasons change, so do the seasons of grief. Initially, grief can result in shock and disbelief with feelings of numbness and confusion. This early experience of grief lasts as long as it lasts, varying from person to person. As time passes, most find that the intensity of grief lessens, although grief can again spike when least expected, especially during the fall season, as navigating the upcoming holidays may pose challenges.

In this issue, we invite you to consider joining the *Grief Matters* team for upcoming programs designed to support you in your grief. "Conversations About Grief" will include two new topics: "Types of Grief" and "Grief in Children." In October, we'll again offer our four-part *Grief Matters* Forum series. We'll host a special program in November and December to help you and your loved ones as the holidays approach. In our "Seasons of Grief" column, chaplain Amy Santamaria shares her experience of grief at the holidays.

This season our hope is twofold: To provide a place for you to acknowledge your grief experience in a supportive community **and** to learn more about the very human and messy experience of grief. Sometimes it's hard to find a place where grief can show up and be heard, and where we can all become more grief aware. Our team is committed to living our motto: "Grief matters." Your grief *matters* to us.

Most sincerely,

Rebecca Bass

Rebecca Bass
Bereavement Coordinator
Morton Plant Mease Hospitals



*"I know that the only thing that
really lasts forever is love."*

~ David Kessler,
Grief.com

Conversation About Grief

Join the *Grief Matters* team for free monthly conversations about special topics related to grief. These new programs are an extension of the four-part introductory forums that are also featured in this issue. These supportive one-hour educational conversations are offered online using Microsoft Teams.

Types of Grief: Anticipatory, Acute, Complicated, Disenfranchised and More

A panel will lead a conversation exploring how different types of losses result in different types of grief.

Thursday, September 21, 12–1pm

Grief in Children: How Children Process and How to Help

Licensed counselor Cindy Davis will lead a conversation on how best to understand and support children who are grieving.

Thursday, October 19, 12–1pm

To register, see the Registration Information section.

Grief Matters Forum Series

Our team of chaplains and counselors welcomes you to this online series that will address topics central to the experience of grief. You can attend single events or the entire series.



Understanding Grief: An Introduction

This forum will focus on types of grief, the grief timeline and the uniquely personal ways individuals experience grief.

Tuesday, October 3, 6:30–7:30pm
Wednesday, October 4, 12–1pm

Love and Loss: Sorting Through the Feelings

Grief is a whole range of emotions that have physical, emotional and spiritual consequences. Explore helpful strategies to cope with your grief.

Tuesday, October 10 6:30–7:30pm
Wednesday, October 11, 12–1pm

What Helps? Finding and Providing Support

From those who have experienced grief, explore what might be helpful and what might not be.

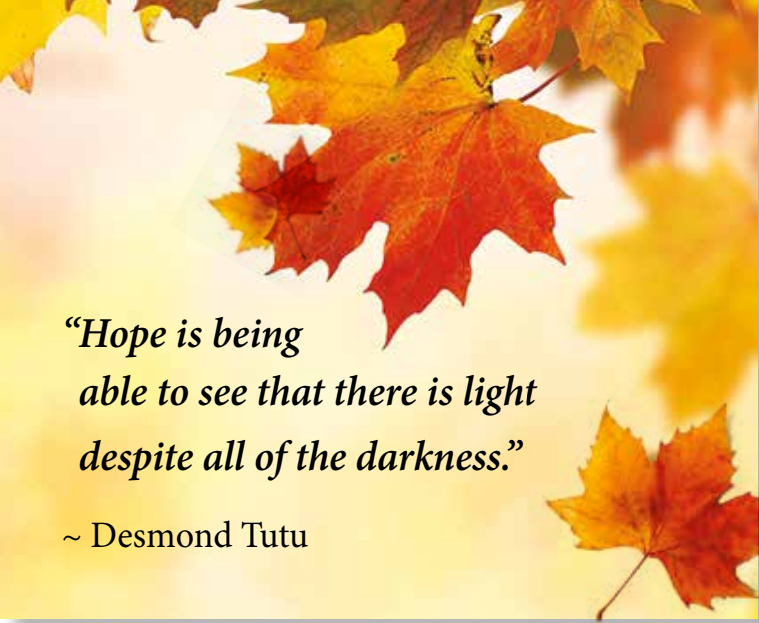
Tuesday, October 17, 6:30–7:30pm
Wednesday, October 18, 12–1pm

The Ripple Effect: Exploring Secondary Losses

Recognizing that many losses can follow a death, including the loss of hopes, dreams, relationships, finances and more, is an important part of the grieving process.

Tuesday, October 24, 6:30–7:30pm
Wednesday, October 25, 12–1pm

To register, see the Registration Information section.



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

~ Desmond Tutu

Registration Information for Grief Matters Programs

All programs are free and open to all, thanks to a generous grant from Morton Plant Mease Health Care Foundation. Program presenters are chaplains and counselors from BayCare’s spiritual and palliative care teams. All programs are offered online using Microsoft Teams. Technical support and orientation are offered.

To register, email bereavement@baycare.org
or scan this code:



For more information:
(727) 462-7995

Navigating the Holidays After a Loss

Holidays can be difficult. We can help. With the holidays approaching, having strategies in place can be beneficial when grieving. This free online educational program will:

- Explore ways to navigate the holidays after a loss
- Help you learn about the grieving process and how to care for yourself
- Provide support among people who care and understand

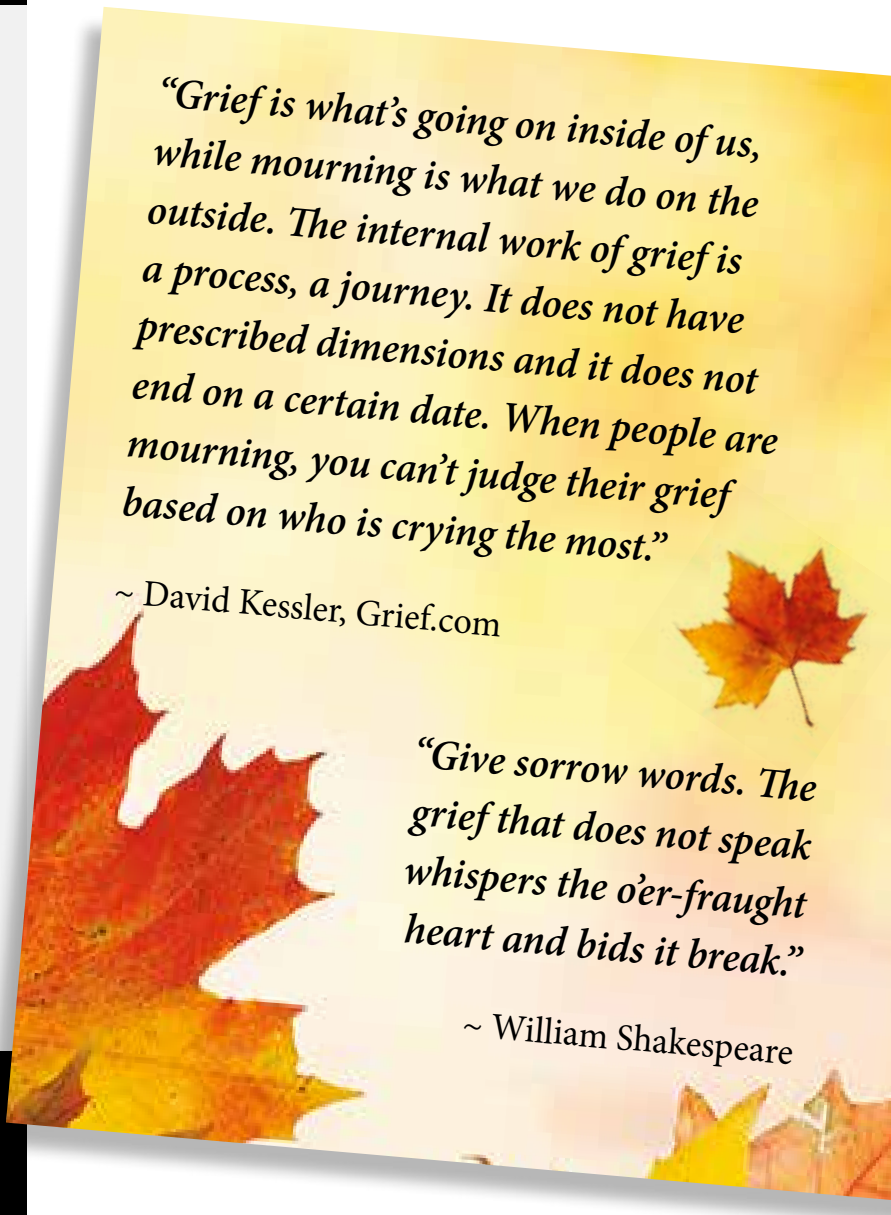
Choose the date that’s best for you:

Tuesday, November 14, 6:30–7:30pm

Thursday, November 16, 12–1pm

Wednesday, December 6, 12–1pm

To register, see the Registration
Information section.



*“Grief is what’s going on inside of us,
while mourning is what we do on the
outside. The internal work of grief is
a process, a journey. It does not have
prescribed dimensions and it does not
end on a certain date. When people are
mourning, you can’t judge their grief
based on who is crying the most.”*

~ David Kessler, Grief.com

*“Give sorrow words. The
grief that does not speak
whispers the o’er-fraught
heart and bids it break.”*

~ William Shakespeare

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To receive this newsletter digitally and to connect with us for online programs, email bereavement@baycare.org.
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A Season of Grief

By Amy Santamaria, MDiv, BCC-PCHAC
Palliative Care Chaplain, Mease Countryside Hospital

Since my father's death eight years ago, the Christmas season has been a bittersweet time. I find myself warmed by memories of my dad and simultaneously filled with longing for his presence. My dad LOVED Christmas. Every year, he enthusiastically brought the boxes of decorations down from the attic and proceeded to festoon the house with fresh greenery and the tallest, fullest Christmas tree he could find. Many of the decorations were handmade or handed down through generations. I still have small boxes that cradle ornaments from the turn of the 20th century, labeled with my dad's handwriting.

The first Christmas, not long after his death, was immensely painful. I desperately wanted to have a freshly cut tree to honor my dad. But I couldn't bring myself to decorate it. Instead, I hung one glass teardrop ornament, a gift from a friend, a symbol of the deep grief that hung over the season. During those days of acute grief, I felt profoundly disoriented as I confronted how my father's absence altered my experience of myself and the world around me.

Each subsequent Christmas has been different and, as the years pass, the memories become more sweet than bitter. My family and

I have cultivated a practice of remembering and honoring my dad – not just on the “important” days, but every day. We remember the way he used to snap the kitchen towel while he dried the dishes, we repeat his jokes and imitate the sound effects with which he animated his stories. This year, we'll make his favorite German Christmas cookies and festoon our tree with heirloom ornaments, continuing and cherishing his legacy.

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