

Grief Matters

Soon the holidays will be upon us and families will begin to plan how to be together. The reality is that some loved ones will be missing from our tables. You're receiving this newsletter from BayCare as a resource to support you in your grief. Our hope is that the programs we'll offer you this fall, and the reflections and resources found here, will be sources of support to you.

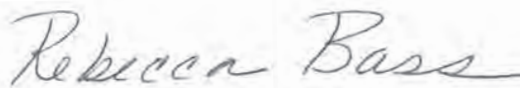
In our *Seasons of Grief* column, chaplain Dave Nyland speaks of meaningful ways his extended family has woven memories of a loved one into their holidays. Our *Speaking of Grief* column will help you explore some ways for you to reimagine the holiday season. Consider what might be uniquely fitting for you and your family.

In our *Grief Matters* programming, you'll see that we're offering virtual programs in a series of community forums focusing on the grief journey. Learn about the physical, emotional and spiritual dimensions of grief. Explore ways to find support and how to provide it. Acknowledge and navigate the secondary losses that come about following the death of a loved one.

Also, join us for our *Holiday Help: Navigating the Holidays* series as we offer strategies for reimagining the holidays in a meaningful way. Sometimes learning about the grief process helps us make sense of what we're experiencing.

Grief is a normal and natural response to loss. Each person's grief is unique. Know that your grief matters to us, and that hope is found here.

Most sincerely,



Rebecca Bass
Bereavement Coordinator
Morton Plant Mease Hospitals



grief

Resources Corner

Find valuable support on these respected websites:

Grief.com
CenterForLoss.com
GriefHaven.com
SpeakingGrief.org

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

*"Each person's
grief is as
unique as a
fingerprint or
a snowflake."
~Earl Grollman*

A Season of Grief

By David Nyland, MA EDMIN, BCC

Spiritual Care Coordinator – Morton Plant Hospital

A few years ago, my brother and sister-in-law were expecting a little girl. As they shared the news with family and friends, their excitement soon turned to sadness. At 20 weeks, an ultrasound revealed that she had an aggressive brain tumor. While preparing for the worst, yet hoping for a miracle, they struggled with the advice of terminating the pregnancy. The brain tumor continued to grow, and their baby girl, whom they named Cara, was born four months early. Cara lived for a short time after entering the world, dying while being held by her parents.

The first Thanksgiving and Christmas were very painful and heart-wrenching. They visited Cara's grave and remembered together as a family. And they began to creatively reimagine how to remember Cara in all their family holidays:

- They placed an empty chair at the table for her birthday.
- They held a flower in family pictures.
- They lit candles at holiday meals.
- They placed an ornament on the tree at Christmas.
- They sponsored a child with her same birthday.
- They floated lanterns with letters released on her birthday.
- They displayed her photo and made a remembrance box that they set out at home.

Cara is forever a part of our family. By acknowledging the grief and finding meaningful ways to remember her, Cara lives on our hearts.

How might you choose to remember your loved one during the upcoming holidays? How might your traditions need to be reimaged? Whatever you choose, give yourself permission to acknowledge your loss, trusting that love is eternal.

Grief Matters Virtual Program Offerings from BayCare

Free and open to all with the generous support of Morton Plant Mease Health Care Foundation

Grief Matters Community Forums

Join us for an online educational series addressing topics central to the experience of grief. The same program is offered with day and evening options.



Love and Loss: Sorting Through the Feelings

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

Tuesday, October 12, 6:30–7:30pm

Wednesday, October 13, 12–1pm

What Helps? Finding and Providing Support

Learn from those who have experienced grief about what might be helpful and what might not be helpful.

Tuesday, October 26, 6:30–7:30pm

Wednesday, October 27, 12–1pm

The Ripple Effect:

Exploring Secondary Losses

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

Tuesday, November 9, 6:30–7:30pm

Wednesday, November 10, 12–1pm

Holiday Help: Navigating the Holidays

With the holiday season approaching, having strategies in place can be helpful while grieving. Join Morton Plant Mease chaplains for an online educational program to:

- 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

The same program is offered on the following dates and times:

Tuesday, November 16, 6:30–7:30pm

Wednesday, November 17, 12–1pm

Wednesday, December 8, 6:30–7:30pm

Thursday, December 9, 12–1pm

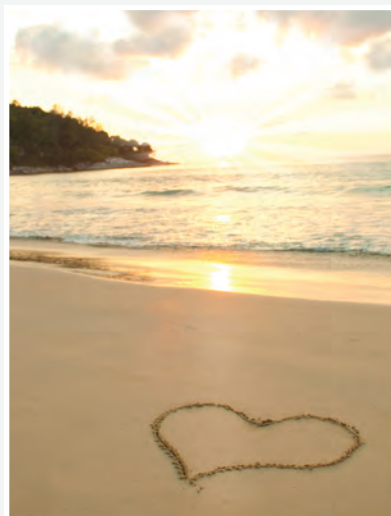
Register in advance by emailing to mpmbereavement@baycare.org, or calling (727) 462-7995. You may attend single events or the full series.



Morton Plant Hospital
A Division of Morton Plant Hospital
Association, Inc.
300 Pinellas St.
Clearwater, FL 33756

TO:

To receive this newsletter digitally and to connect with us for online programs, email mpmbereavement@baycare.org. This *Grief Matters* newsletter is published quarterly by the Spiritual Care Department at Morton Plant Mease Hospitals and is made possible with the generous support of Morton Plant Mease Health Care Foundation.



Speaking of Grief

By Michelle Mehan, MAPT, BCC, Morton Plant North Bay Hospital

Holidays can be complicated in the best of times. Add grief and a pandemic and surely it seems almost impossible. Here are a few thoughts on how to manage and cope during the holiday season:

- Acknowledge your expectations and feelings.
- Be flexible. Give yourself permission to hit the pause button on holiday traditions.
- Make “real time” decisions. It’s okay to change your mind about something you’re committed to.
- Consider driving yourself to an event so you can stay or go as you’re comfortable.
- Remember to remember. Sit with your memories, share with others the most special thoughts.
- Use your support system. You don’t have to grieve alone. Let people know what you want and need.
- Consider what you want to keep doing that was a tradition, what can be modified and what can be let go of altogether.
- Above all be gentle with yourself, you never know what will trigger a wave of grief. Give yourself the gift of grace during this tender time.