



Bereaved Families of Ontario—York Region

Vision: To ensure that every individual grieving a death has access to caring and compassionate support.



WINTER 2012 NEWSLETTER

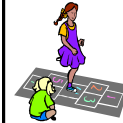
HOW TO HELP GRIEVING PEOPLE

Relatives, friends and neighbours are supportive at the time of a death, and during the wake and funeral. Food, flowers and their presence are among the many thoughtful expressions. After the funeral, many grieving people wondered what happened to their friends. They need support even more when the reality begins to hit and the long process of griefwork begins. Help from supportive friends is essential since immediate family members are grieving as well and may find it difficult to give support to one another, or may not live nearby. Your help and understanding can make a significant difference in the healing of your friend's grief. Unresolved grief manifests itself in many ways, both physically and emotionally. A grieving person needs friends who are willing to LISTEN, cry with them, sit with them, reminisce, care, have creative ideas for coping, be honest, help them feel loved & needed, and believe that they will make it through their grief. Ways of helping grieving people are as limitless as your imagination:

- All that may be necessary is a squeeze of the hand, a kiss, a hug, your presence. If you want to say something, say "I'm sorry" or "I care."
 - Offer to help with practical matters such as errands, fixing a meal, or caring for children. Say, "I'm going to the store, do you need milk or bread? I'll get them." It isn't helpful to say, "Call me if there's anything I can do." It is hard for the bereaved to reach out and ask for support.
 - Don't be afraid to cry openly if you were close to the deceased. This makes them feel less alone in their grief.
 - It is not necessary to ask questions about how the death happened. Let the bereaved tell you as much as they want when they are ready. A helpful question might be: "Would you like to talk? I'll listen."
 - Don't say: "I know just how you feel." Everyone's grief is unique.
 - Use the deceased's name, and recall pleasant memories. It may make the bereaved person cry – but they will be comforted to know that you care, and that the deceased is not forgotten.
 - The bereaved may ask "WHY?". It is not necessary to answer, but if you do, you might simply reply, "I don't know why?"
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- Don't use platitudes like "Life is for the living" or "It's God's will". Explanations rarely console. It's better to say nothing.
 - Recognize the bereaved person may be angry. They may be angry with God, the person who died, the clergy, doctors, response teams, other family members, etc. Encourage them to acknowledge their anger and to find healthy ways of handling it.



What's Inside



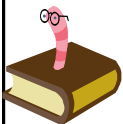
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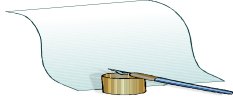
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How to Help Grieving People (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

- Be available to listen frequently. Most bereaved want to talk about the person who has died. Encourage them to talk. Do not change the conversation or avoid mentioning the person's name.
- Read about the process of grief so you can understand and help the bereaved person to understand.
- Be PATIENT. Don't say: "You'll get over it in time." Mourning takes a long time. The bereaved need you to stand by them for as long as necessary. Encourage them to be patient with themselves as there is no timetable for grief.
- Accept whatever feelings are expressed. Don't say: "You shouldn't feel like that." This response only puts pressure on a bereaved person to deny their feelings. Encourage them to express themselves – cry, hit a pillow, scream, write, talk, paint etc.
- Be aware that a bereaved person's self esteem may be very low.
- When someone feels guilty, it's not helpful to say, "Don't feel guilty." This only adds to their negative view of themselves. They are trying to understand many confusing emotions. One response might be "I don't think you're guilty. You did the best you could at the time, but don't push away your feelings. Talk about and explore those feelings until you are ready to let them go."
- Depression can be a part of grief. It's a scary feeling. To be able to talk things over with an understanding friend or loved one is one factor that may prevent a person from becoming severely depressed.
- Give special attention to the children in the family. DO NOT tell them not to cry, or not to upset the adults.
- Suggest that the bereaved person keep a journal – of their thoughts and feelings and/or of memories of the person who has died.
- Over a period of time, the bereaved person may appear to be getting worse. Be aware that this may be due to shock wearing off or triggers at any time and/or griefbursts during special occasions or holidays.
- Be aware of physical reactions to the death (lack of appetite, sleeplessness, headaches, inability to concentrate, lethargy). These can all affect the person's coping ability and energy levels.
- Be aware of the use of drugs or alcohol. Medication should only be taken under the supervision of a doctor . Although alcohol or drugs may ease symptoms temporarily, overuse can delay natural grief responses and can cause more problems for you.
- Sometimes the pain of grief is so intense that thoughts of suicide or not caring if one lives may occur. Always seek professional help to be on the safe side.
- Don't say, "It's been 4 months, ..6 months.. a year, you must be over it by now." Life will never be the same.
- Encourage counselling if grief responses seem to be excessive.
- Suggest a support group. Sharing similar experiences often helps. Offer to attend an initial meeting with them. Meetings are not morbid; they offer understanding, friendship, suggestions for coping and HOPE.
- Suggest that the bereaved individual or family postpone major family decisions such as moving, giving away possessions, etc. Later they may regret hasty decisions. If possible, these types of major life decisions should wait for up to a year.
- Suggest exercise to help work out feelings of tension and anger, to help relax and to aid in sleep. Offer to join them for yoga, a walk, or sports they have previously participated in.
- Encourage healthy eating habits. Weight gain or loss are common, and regular, healthy meals or snacks can help stabilize vulnerable immune systems.
- Practice unconditional love. Feelings of rage, anger and frustration are not comfortable ones to observe or listen to, but it is important for a bereaved person to recognize, express, and accept these feelings in order to work through the grief, rather than to deny them and get "stuck".
- Help the bereaved to avoid unrealistic expectations as to how they should feel, and when they will feel better. Everyone grieves differently, and there is no timetable for grief.
- Don't avoid the bereaved. This only adds to their loss.
- Be aware that weekends, evenings, holidays and anniversaries can all be difficult.
- Consider sending a note at the time of a loved one's birthday, anniversary, death, or other special day. Practice continued acts of kindness – a note, visit, plant, helpful book on grief, plate of cookies, phone call, invitation for lunch, dinner or just a coffee. Take the initiative in calling the bereaved.

Adapted and used with permission from "Hope for the Bereaved."



MESSAGE FROM A NEW MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The privilege of being asked to join BFOYR and its dedicated team of volunteers and support affiliates is an honour to which I will commit my professional and personal experiences. As a Funeral Director for the past 15 years, I have consoled and counseled families on a day to day basis, who have experienced the anguish of a death under many circumstances. As a funeral director we are most often the first resource of support in assisting families to resume some normalcy in their lives. In my career I have been vested with every circumstance of a death, such as a stillbirth, child, youth, adult, mother, father, sister, brother and grandparent. Tragic or otherwise, assisting with the first step is paramount to those trying to recapture a life that allows them the healthy channels for recovery and acceptance. Through my career in funeral services, I have always had an interest in the Bereaved Families organization. When families require further counseling or support following the days of the funeral, I would often refer them to Bereaved Families, not fully understanding the capacity to which these individuals would be assisted. My joining the board of BFOYR, now allows me to better understand the support groups which are in place to assist these families when required. I know I will be capable of providing a level of professional support and guidance and I look forward to being a valuable part of such an important provincial organization as BFOYR.

By Joanne Jonovich
Bereaved Families of York Region
Member of Board of Directors

**Although it is difficult today to see beyond the sorrow
May looking back in memory help comfort you tomorrow.**

Author Unknown



Book Review by: Elise Odoardi

“Chances”: A Teen Reshapes His Life After the Death of a Parent.

Author: Jerome Biroo

In the book Chances, Jerome Biroo takes the reader through a tragedy he faced as a child. Chances, is about a boy who lost his mother, to metastatic ovarian cancer, and how it devastated him, and brought him to dealing with his grief, in his own way. The book is about managing your grief, understanding your bereavement, and answering questions, which may arise during grief. For youth to have gone through a tragedy such as Jerome’s, this book is a systematic “manual” on what one may feel, and how they react, during their grieving process. It also explains how to deal with a passing of another loved one, while working through your past loss. This book is a very good read for those who have questions, do not know what to expect or think what they are feeling is not normal. It is a book that will bring a sense of ease to those who are seeking answers, especially those who are not yet ready to speak to someone else.



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

Cheers for our volunteers: 1:1 initial meetings: Gwen Broadmore, Diana Horrex, Donna Stephens, Maria Cansino, Peter Wong, Carr McLeod, Mary Pataki **Co-Facilitators:** Peter Wong, Carr McLeod, Sara Cameron, Gwen Broadmore, Susan Gerard, Maria Cansino, Annette Foux, Elise Ooardi, Farida Oosman, Samantha McGrath, Teresa Fraser, John Wild, **Office Help:** Diane Head **PAC Members:** Sally Philippson, Bev Ogus **Board Members:** Cathy Chouinard, Mimi McEvenue, Jodi Munroe, Shirley Haeefe, Wendy Treacy, Brenda Weeks, Jason Reynolds and Joanne Jonovich
Bingo: Kathleen, Arvella, Jennifer, Carlene, Karen, Ma Carine, Donald, Darren, Karen, Phyllis, Diana, Gord **Newsletter:** Elise Ooardi

Please welcome the following new volunteers: John Wild, Terrilyn Grisby, Teresa Fraser, Samantha McGrath, Natalie Mann and Lurissa Kelland

Children: Stress Relievers Through Games & Activities

GAMES OR ACTIVITIES FOR 2 OR MORE PEOPLE TO PLAY

- jump-rope rhymes
(www.gameskidsplay.net)
- thumb wrestling
- Tic Tac Toe
- clapping games
(www.gameskidsplay.net)
- card games
- marbles (www.ehow.com/how_39999.play-marbles.htm)
- cats cradle (<http://alysion.org/figures/introduc.htm>)
- board games
- sports i.e. soccer, hockey, basketball
- scavenger hunt: indoor/outdoor
- science experiments
- baking
- I Spy
- ice skating/rollerblading
- for different activities try
www.funology.com
- be your “assistant” for the day
- building projects i.e. bird feeders
- gaze at stars and look for constellations
- watch clouds and look for shapes
- play Hide n’ Seek
- blow bubbles
- tell jokes and look up jokes online
- flashlight tag

GAMES OR ACTIVITIES FOR 1 PERSON TO PLAY

- yo-yo
- colouring
- build indoor fort
- solitaire
- crossword puzzles/maze books
- make a book on the computer
- imaginary play with dolls or action figures
- Lego
- make figures/animals out of plastercine
- complete a puzzle
- play a musical instrument
- play with cars
- crafts
- shovel snow/cut grass
- read
- listen to music
- dance “silly” to music
- play with Play Do
- shoot hoops
- kick a ball
- sing
- play Rubik’s cube
- computer games
(www.playkidsgames.com)
- paint
- silly putty



*I'm Gone now, but I'm still very near.
Death can never separate us.
Each time you feel a gentle breeze,
It's my hand caressing your face.
Each time the wind blows,
It carries my voice whispering your name.
When the wind blows your hair ever so slightly,
Think of it as me pushing a few stray hairs back in place.
When you feel a few raindrops fall on your face,
It's me placing soft kisses.
At night look up in the sky and see the stars shining so brightly.
I'm one of those stars and I'm winking at you and smiling with delight.
For never forget you're the apple of my eye.--- Mary M. Green*



*“I walked a mile with pleasure.
She chattered all the way,
But left me none the wiser
For all she had to say.
I walked a mile with Sorrow,
And ne'er a word said she;
But oh, the things
I learned from her
When Sorrow walked with me!”
~Robert Browning~*

WELCOME TO BEREAVED FAMILIES ~ BE INVOLVED



We want to WELCOME YOU TO THE BEREAVED FAMILIES TEAM! We would welcome you to join BFOYR by helping with any of the following:

ADVERTISING WITH POSTERS, MAILINGS, FACEBOOK, EMAIL	VOLUNTEER THE DAY OF OUR EVENTS
DATABASES: UPDATING/CREATING	AUCTION ITEMS/PRIZES: IDENTIFY & SECURE
CREATING FLYERS/POSTERS	SPONSORSHIP - IDENTIFY AND RECRUIT
PERINATAL LOSS SUPPORTER (loss of a baby or miscarriage)	SUPPORTER FOR THOSE WHO HAVE LOST A LOVED ONE THROUGH SUICIDE OR HOMICIDE
SPOUSAL LOSS SUPPORTER	SIBLING LOSS OR LOSS OF A FRIEND OR PARENT SUPPORTER

IF YOU HAVE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SKILLS WE CAN USE YOU

ORGANIZED	PEOPLE PERSON
CREATIVE SKILLS / CREATIVE THINKING OUT OF THE BOX	BEREAVED PERSON LOOKING TO GIVE BACK
CARING/EMPATHETIC	RESOURCEFUL
RESEARCH SKILLS	ENCOURAGER/HOPE FILLED
COMPUTER SKILLS	PASSIONATE ABOUT HOW BFOYR SUPPORTS THE BEREAVED

We can use you! Please call our office at 905-898-6265 for more information. Our Facilitator Training for direct support volunteers starts in the Spring of 2012.

Dates To Remember Calendar



BATTLING BANDS

Date: Saturday, February 4th, 2012

Time: 6p.m.

Where: Markham Theatre for Performing Arts

Call the office at 905-898-6265 or visit our website at www.bfoyr.com for info.

PLEASE CALL FOR SPRING BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUPS



New **WALKING GROUP COMING IN SPRING**

Please call the office for more details.



Journey Through Grief: Support Session Series

Tuesday, January 31: HOW DOES GRIEF IMPACT YOU?

Tuesday, February 7: SPECIAL OCCASIONS; HOW TO COPE?

Tuesday, February 21: HOW TO WORK THROUGH YOUR GRIEF

Tuesday, February 28: HONORING & REMEMBERING OUR LOVED ONES

Tuesday, March 6: RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Tuesday, March 13: GRIEF IN THE WORKPLACE

Tuesday, March 20: TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF WHILE MOURNING

Tuesday, March 27: HOW TO SUPPORT CHILDREN & YOUTH DURING GRIEF



RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS WEEK

FEBRUARY 15-21



Thank you to Memory Tree of Light Volunteers:

Memory Tree of Light Volunteers: Elizabeth Hempen and

Harvey, Carole Danard, Mimi McEvenue Pat McMillan and elves, Brenda Eng, Jennifer Puskar,

Brittany de Beer, Natalie Mann, Mike Nearing, Bruce & Jackie Somerville **Special Thanks To:**

Pickering College for allowing us to use their facility & the students for volunteering AND our wonderful speaker Leanna Reeves

Bereaved Families of Ontario—York Region respects your privacy. We protect your personal information and adhere to all legal requirements with respect to protecting your privacy. We do not rent, sell or trade our mailing lists or other personal information. We use your personal information to assist us in providing you with appropriate services, and to keep you up-to-date on the activities of BFOYR, including programs, services, special events, funding needs, opportunities to volunteer.

If at any time you wish to be removed from any of these contacts, please advise us by telephone at 905-898-6265 or via e-mail at bfoyr_program@bellnet.ca and we will gladly accommodate your request.

In The Community:

Part of BFOYR's mandate is to provide public education about bereavement issues, and to sensitize the community to the needs of the bereaved. Staff and volunteers are available for presentations and workshops for adults, children and teens on a variety of topics.

BEREAVED FAMILIES OF ONTARIO, YORK REGION AN ASSOCIATION OF FAMILIES WHO HAVE LOST A LOVED ONE THROUGH DEATH

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bfoyr_program@bellnet.ca

Community Development & Fundraising, Diane Humeniuk

bfoyr_info@bellnet.ca

Website: www.bfoyr.com

Office Hours:

Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Evening appointments are available on request.