

## The Grief Journey

Grief is a natural response to a significant change or loss. The greatest loss is the death of a loved one. This loss can change a person's life and affect his/her personality and emotions. A survivor may not feel the full impact of his/her loss until several months later.

Anxiety, fear, depression, sorrow and anger are often present at the time of death and can last for months.

Grieving is not about forgetting the lost loved one. It is a process of learning to accept and coping with our loss while trying to find ways to live again. Grief cannot be hurried.

The intensity and frequency at which each stage is felt differs from person to person. Some stages may not be experienced at all.

Hospice of the Rock River Valley offers a variety of bereavement resources and services that can help individuals cope with death and grief.

## For More Information

Please contact our grief specialist at (815) 288-3673. More information is available at [www.hospicerockriver.org](http://www.hospicerockriver.org).

## Symptoms of Grief

The grief journey is unique to an individual. A person may or may not experience all of the symptoms listed below. What may seem 'normal' to one grieving person may seem abnormal to another. Understanding the differences and similarities of the grief process will guide you through your own journey.

### Emotional

sadness, anger, guilt, anxiety, relief, numbness, helplessness, loneliness

### Physical

hollowness in the stomach, tightness in the chest and throat, breathlessness, weakness, lack of energy

### Cognitive

disbelief, confusion, hallucinations

### Behavioral

sleep and appetite disturbances, absentmindedness, social withdrawal, dreams of the deceased, crying

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*"The melody that our loved one played upon the piano of our lives will never be played quite that way again, but we must not close the keyboard and allow the instrument to gather dust. We must seek out other artists of the spirit; new friends who gradually will help us to find the road of life again, who will walk that road with us."*

*Rabbi Joshua Liebman*

## Resources

The community bereavement center at Hospice of the Rock River Valley offers a variety of resources to Hospice patients, families and community members. The resource library includes reading materials and videos for adults and youth.

*"First Person, Singular. A Handbook for Survivors"*  
by Lucy Miele (about widowhood)

*"Men & Grief"*  
by James Van Praagh

*"The Helper's Journey"*  
by Dale G. Larson (for the caregiver)

Other books available include "Caring for Aging Parents" and the series "Living with Grief", which details the grief process at work, at school, with family, youth, etc.

## Services

Individual support includes visits to the home, phone calls and the hospice newsletter. Visits to schools can be arranged by calling the bereavement coordinator at (815) 288-3673.

Bereavement support groups provide an accepting atmosphere to talk about grief and learn to heal through the grief process. Hospice support groups are open to Hospice patients, families and community members.

The grief support group meets the second & fourth Tuesday from 6:30 - 8 p.m. in Classroom 1 at CGH Medical Center in Sterling.

*All resources and services are free of charge.*

## Who is eligible

### Hospice families

Bereavement services are available to any individual moving through the grieving process, including any caregiver, friend or family member of a hospice patient.

### Community members

Any community member is eligible for individual support and is welcome to attend our support groups.

### Youth

The loss of a pet, parent, grandparent, friend or sibling is a traumatic experience for young people. Our bereavement coordinator can meet with youth in the school, at home or at the Hospice office.

Hospice of the Rock River Valley also offers a youth bereavement camp each summer.

### Referrals

Feel free to refer family members, friends or bereaved to our bereavement coordinator. Often you can help a grieving loved one make the first step by calling for help.

*Hospice of the Rock River Valley will serve, to the best of our ability, any individual regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age or any other characteristic protected by law. The offices of Hospice of the Rock River Valley are accessible to individuals regardless of disability.*

## Bereavement Resources & Services

*Hope for those who  
are experiencing the death  
of a loved one.*



**Hospice of the Rock River Valley**  
264 IL Route 2  
Dixon, IL 61021  
815-288-3673

[www.hospicerockriver.org](http://www.hospicerockriver.org)



*Hospice of the Rock River Valley  
is a United Way agency.*