



MID HUDSON NEW YORK CHAPTER

Bereaved Parents of the USA

Newsletter

together we remember... together we heal...

Kathy Corrigan Chapter Leader

www.mhbpusa.com



NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2021

Please join us for our next monthly meeting

All in-person meetings have been canceled until further notice. In the meantime, we will meet via zoom on the first Thursday of every month.

For more information, please email Kathy kjcorrigan5@gmail.com or call her at (845) 462-2825



A WARM WELCOME TO NEWCOMERS

We understand how difficult it is to attend your first meeting. Feelings can be overwhelming; we have all experienced them and know how important it is to take that first step. Our stories may be different, but we are alike in that we all hurt deeply. We cannot take your pain away but we can offer friendship and support. Bring a friend or relative to lean on if you wish.

SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS

By: Alan Pedersen, Ashley's dad, singer, songwriter and founder of Angels Across the USA

1. Do it your way ... For some grievors keeping old traditions brings comfort, for others doing things "as usual" is painful. We are all different and what works for you may not work for somebody else. So, be true to yourself.
2. Rules are meant to be bent or broken ... Others in your life may try to "guilt" you into participating in an event or custom that you've always been a part of. While it may be important to them that you do not break tradition, let them know that it will take time for you to resolve what traditions you are able to keep, alter or do away with completely and that old rules DO NOT apply to new grief.
3. Pencils work better than pens... anticipation of Holidays and special events can often be more stressful than the events themselves. When considering accepting an invitation to a Holiday event, ask the host to "pencil" you in and let them know that your participation will depend on how well you are doing the day of the event. If you are pressed to give a definitive answer, trust your instincts when choosing to say yes or no. Pencils are best; just make sure you have an eraser close at hand.
4. Laugh and the world laughs with you; cry and you cry alone... Many people will try to cheer you up and try to find a silver lining to your grief. Expect cheesy clichés and well intentioned, bad advice from others who see your grief and tears as rain on their Holiday parade. Once again, be true to yourself, because masks are for Halloween and Halloween has passed.
5. Let people know you aren't "expecting" ... Expectations begin with you, so don't put big expectations about how well you will handle the Holidays or how much you will be able to participate in the Holidays. But on the flip side don't overestimate how difficult it may be. Grief during the Holidays can fluctuate wildly, you will have some good days... when you feel like you can function and you will have some bad days... when you feel the pain is unbearable. Expect the unexpected.

6. It's my "pity" and I'll cry if I want to... Tears are our tribute to our beautiful loved ones and nothing is more healing or makes us feel closer to them than when we cry. The Holiday season will surely touch every emotion and flood you with memories of happy times in the past. Throw yourself a pity party whenever you feel like it... a time to just sit with your memories and cry if you want to.
7. Take care of yourself ... When in doubt, choose to nurture yourself and be kind to you. Take ample time to do what you enjoy or what brings you peace. If it's exercise, reading, meditation, shopping or simply sitting alone with your thoughts. The Holiday season is the most stressful time of year for most grieving people, take extra care of YOU and YOUR needs.
8. Giving is the gift that keeps on giving... Healing begins when we help others. Many griever find that reaching out and helping the lonely and those less fortunate can be a great source of comfort during this season. Some will buy gifts for complete strangers or fulfill a needy child's Christmas Wish List. We know from experience that serving others during the Holidays gives us more healing than anything else we've ever tried. So, if you're up to it, start new traditions of volunteerism or helping to make somebody else's Holiday a little brighter. It just might lighten your load and brighten your Holidays, just a little bit.



“

The narrative arc of my grief story is a circle. Time and again, I find myself back at the beginning. And this is not a failure to accept things or complete the grief process – because “complete” and “grief process” really don't belong in the same sentence. I think there will always be times when I feel clumsy and awkward like an amateur griever.

~ *Grief Never Ends, And That's Okay,*
What's Your Grief

”

*Broken down eyes,
you can't hide.
I know that look,
I've seen it before.
I share your loss.
Broken down eyes
That you can't hide
I am walking with you
I share your loss
Broken down eyes
Like never before
I am here for you
broken down
You are not alone
We are broken down
But still stand strong*

~ Lori Canter



WHY DO I TELL PEOPLE MY CHILD DIED? www.ourmissingpeace.org/



WHY I TELL
PEOPLE MY
CHILD DIED

WWW.OURMISSINGPEACE.ORG

It's not for attention, it's not because I can't "move on" with my life, it's not because it's "all I can focus on"! I tell people my child has died because it has fundamentally changed who I am and how I see the world.

I tell health care professionals because they need to know that they are dealing with someone who has lost trust in themselves/ the system and the fact that in my reality the worst case scenario is that my child could die, one already has!

I tell new people I meet as they will inevitably find out, either through social media, our children talking about their brother or

they will ask what I do for a job. I never want it to be an awkward conversation, or to be caught off guard, so I will always try to initiate the topic.

I talk about my son's death to friends and family because we all need to process the events of the day, we all have our own memories and it helps me put together a fuller picture of that day. I ALSO TALK ABOUT HIS LIFE WITH THEM!

I talk about my son's death on social media because I want to create a space for all to feel comfortable talking and asking about our children who are in our hearts not our arms.

I tell people my son died because: He didn't pass, like a bowel movement; He isn't lost, I know exactly where he is. He didn't grow wings, he died!

I use honest language because it helps everyone accept the reality of my world. A reality that no one wants to live in but you can certainly walk alongside. Knowing that you have educated yourself in some small way could make a huge difference to you/your friend/family member/ complete stranger.

Feeling awkward is hard, I respect that, we all feel awkward around this topic. That's allowed and incredibly natural! This is why I share to help break down this taboo so that in the future we can talk about child loss like any other loss, part of life.



HOLIDAYS, ANNIVERSARIES AND OTHER SPECIAL TIMES

By Karla Helbert

Anniversaries, Holidays, and Special Events

During the days, weeks or months after someone very close to you dies, there will likely be special events that will certainly be very different without your loved one.

Most families observe cultural and religious traditions on occasions such as holidays, weddings, graduations, anniversaries, reunions. Holidays and special events are reminders that life goes on around you. You may feel emotionally torn as you think of the ways holidays and celebrations have been traditionally observed in your family, and in your life with your loved one and how you

are going to celebrate them now, without your loved one. You may feel anxious, sad, and empty and long to have your loved one a part of the special times that usually involve the whole family. You may wish you could celebrate the way you did before your loved one died. You may wish you could just skip right over these days on the calendar. You may feel several things at once.



What to Expect as You Face the Special Times

The first year after the death will be hard--but not necessarily the hardest. Some people are in a state of fog or numbness and find the second or third year anniversary days harder than the first. There are no predictable rules about grief. His or her birthday and the anniversary of his or her death will be two very difficult days. If you have lost your spouse, the anniversary of your wedding will also be very difficult. Your own birthday can be a very hard day. This can take some people by surprise.

Even if you seem "better", the sadness and pain may return at these times and other holidays or special occasions for many years to come. These are normal feelings. Grief is a normal and healthy response to the death of someone we love.

Also try to remember that it is OK to celebrate and enjoy these times if you feel like it. It is OK to laugh and to cry at the same time. You might be surprised how quickly you can go from laughing to crying. We can hold joy and pain simultaneously.

Some People...

May choose to celebrate and participate in holidays and other special occasions as they always have in the past, finding comfort in the sameness, but others may find that doing things as they've always done them is incredibly painful and too difficult to manage.

May choose to do completely different things during the holidays and special events. They may not participate in any of the usual activities or traditions.

May try to balance participation in holiday activities and cope with the pain and sadness of missing their loved one.

These are difficult and personal choices.

Remember...

What you and your family decide to do for birthdays, anniversaries, during the holidays, or for other special events are your choice.

Your participation in these events may be very different during the first year or so. After a while, you may go back to normal activities or permanently change the way you observe and celebrate some holidays and special occasions.

Celebrating holidays and special events will reflect your cultural background and traditions. It is important for you to value these traditions because they are part of your life during happy and sad times.

Making Special Times More Tolerable

As you approach an anniversary, holiday or special event, make a plan to do something to remember your loved one and to help ease your anxiety as the day approaches. Anticipating such an occasion is often worse than the actual event. Having a personal memorial service or ritual, or going to the cemetery, before or on the day of, might bring comfort for you. [Do have a plan for those days](#)—you don't have to follow through with the plan if you don't want to. But have one anyway. Having a plan and choosing not to follow it, is far better than having no plan and finding yourself not knowing what to do with yourself on that day. Your plan can be something as simple as visiting the cemetery, sitting quietly with a photo or other reminder of your loved one, or dinner out with family or something more elaborate such as a tree planting, a large gathering of friends and family—it is entirely your choice.

Realize that sadness and confusion will likely remain with you during these times, particularly in early grief—even with a plan. Continuing to have feelings of deep sadness, anger, pain, confusion, or feeling a loss of control, is okay.

Feel free to make changes in the way you celebrate holidays and special events. These changes can be temporary or permanent.

Take care to remember that others (children, family members) will want to continue to celebrate the occasion as usual.

Think of starting a new tradition in memory of your loved one.

Talk or write to other bereaved people who have had a similar type of loss. Find out how they have coped with the special occasions.

Getting Through Holidays

The whole world seems consumed with merry making, every place filled with decorations and lights and especially at the Winter Holiday season, people fairly ooze with holiday spirit. The holidays can make those who are grieving even more painfully aware of the terrible hole in their hearts. Here are some helpful thoughts which other bereaved people have shared, with the hope of making your holiday season easier:

Actively grieving persons have definite limitations, especially early in grief: we do not function at normal capacity; therefore, we must know our limitations, reevaluate our priorities and decide what is really meaningful for ourselves and our family.

We must decide what we can handle comfortably and let these needs be known to family and friends. We may have to communicate some difficult things, such as whether we can handle the responsibility of the family dinner, or holiday parties, whether we will stay around for the holidays, etc.

Don't be afraid to make changes. Have dinner at a different time; attend a different church; let children or friends take over the decorating or making cookies, wrapping or even shopping, change the way you decorate, or if you decorate, or what you cook, etc.

Our greatest comfort may come in doing something for others. Giving a gift in memory of your loved one; donating money you would have spent on gifts for your loved one to a particular charity; adopting a needy family, inviting a guest to share our festivities. Each holiday season, we encourage others to perform acts of kindness, large or small, in memory of our son and those they love who have died at [Theo's Christmas Stocking](#). Also check out the [MISS Foundation's Kindness Project](#) for inspiration.

Find a creative outlet. Write a poem or story about your loved one, create a work of art, put together a scrapbook or memory book, whatever you like and share it with others if you wish.

Balance solitude with sociability. Solitude can renew strength but being social can be equally as important. Spend some time with close friends and family.

Call another person with a similar loss who has experienced a holiday without their loved one and find out what they did to make things easier. There can be some relief just by knowing that you are not alone.

[Also check out Surviving the Holiday Season in the Midst of Grief.](#)

Memories

The memories of your loved one are some of the most important "keepsakes" you will have. You can treasure them. You can share them with others. Family and friends often feel they will cause you more pain by talking about the

one who has died. Let them know if you want to talk, and together you can share memories. As time passes, happy memories of your loved one will gradually replace the sad ones, and you will be able to laugh and to celebrate again.

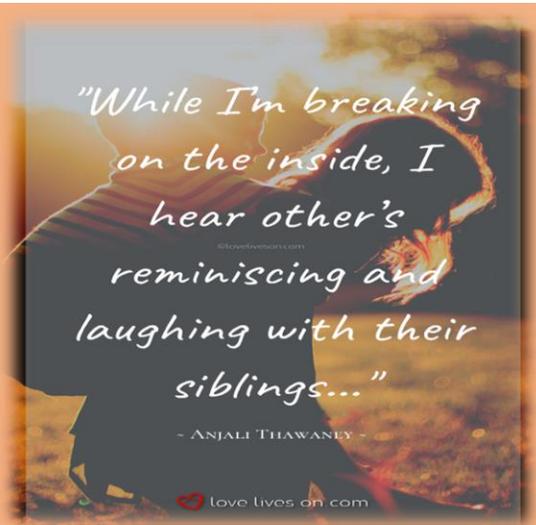
"What we have once enjoyed and deeply loved we can never lose, for all that we love deeply becomes a part of us." ~Helen Keller

FOR SIBLINGS:

They say grieving siblings are the forgotten mourners... Are you feeling lost and forgotten?? Do you feel like you have no one to talk to??

The BPUSA Virtual Bereaved Sibling Chapter is hosting a monthly Zoom meeting on the last Thursday of every month at 8 pm EST.

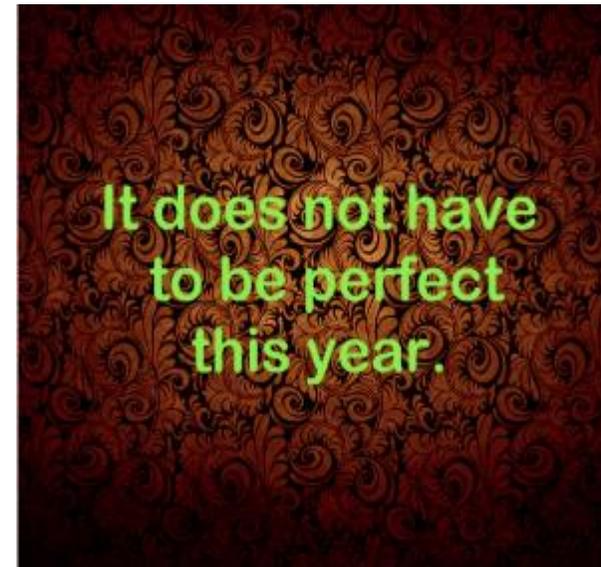
Please email bpvirtualsiblingchapter@gmail.com for the zoom link and for more information.



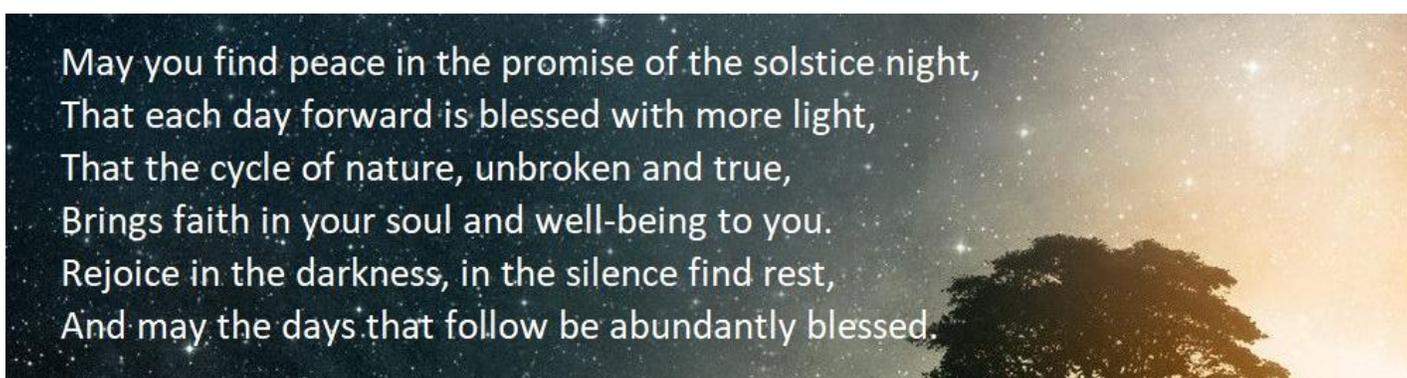
"While I'm breaking on the inside, I hear other's reminiscing and laughing with their siblings..."

- ANJALI THAWANY -

love lives on .com



It does not have to be perfect this year.



May you find peace in the promise of the solstice night,
That each day forward is blessed with more light,
That the cycle of nature, unbroken and true,
Brings faith in your soul and well-being to you.
Rejoice in the darkness, in the silence find rest,
And may the days that follow be abundantly blessed.

Why do we light candles in memory of our loved ones during the holiday season??



Let's face it, no matter how little or how much time has passed since the death of our children, siblings, or grandchildren, the holiday season is always very difficult. While the rest of the world is joyfully preparing to gather with family and friends, we are painfully reminded that our family circle is broken. Our holiday celebrations will never be the same; there will forever be an empty chair at our holiday table.

Holding an annual Candle Lighting Remembrance Ceremony has become an important and meaningful tradition for Mid Hudson Bereaved Parents of the USA. We gather together as our own unique family, take off the "masks" we wear for the rest of the world and acknowledge our pain and sadness. We honor and remember our loved ones with readings and music, a slide presentation and the lighting of candles as their names are read aloud. The flicker of the candle flame symbolizes the end of darkness and a beginning of hope in our hearts that our grief might subside just a little as we lean on each other for support.

We need this special moment in time to reflect on the lives of our precious loved ones and to take good care of our grieving selves when it seems that the rest of the world has forgotten.

We hope you will join us for our 18th Annual Candle Lighting Ceremony to be held on Sunday, December 12, 2021, at the Christ the King Church Hall in New Paltz, NY. <https://www.newpaltzchurch.org/>



MID HUDSON BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA

ANNUAL CANDLE LIGHTING CEREMONY

Sunday December 12, 2021

Christ the King Episcopal Church Hall

2 Eugene L. Brown Drive

New Paltz, NY 12561

6:30 Registration

7:00 Ceremony

Slide Presentation of Our Children

Music, Readings & Poetry

Reception immediately following the ceremony

♥ **Please bring a finger food to share after the ceremony** ♥

If you have not already done so, please submit your child's picture to be included in the Slide Presentation as soon as possible.

Email Kathy -- kjcorrigan5@gmail.com



Tribute for your Child on our Website

If you would like to honor your child on our website www.mhbpusa.com, we are taking requests.

The Tribute **runs for one month from the 15th to the 15th**. Your child's name, picture, dates and a brief quote or message can be added to the Tribute. This is a meaningful way to honor your child while supporting the MHBUSA website. Email Pinky to request the dates for your tribute. She will be in touch with you to finalize the information needed to create your tribute.

Suggested donation for this sponsorship is \$30 but please choose an amount you can afford. Please mail donations to Patti Tucker, 11 Trails End, Hopewell Junction, NY 12533.

Please email your Tribute request to franbpusa@gmail.com

To see other sample tributes please visit our website at www.mhbpusa.com



Jenn Divito
1991-2010

*Love You
To The
Moon & Back*

Love, Mommy

