

Pulaski Area Bereavement Support Group



When significant events take place in our lives, we discover that we can never be who we were before. Many of life's events and transitions are beyond our understanding, and certainly beyond our control. Adapting to those places of change is oftentimes beyond our understanding; our identity is forever altered. Transitions and change, however, are not always negative, but can be considered "windows in time." We are reminded that, although we want predictability and change in our lives, neither is guaranteed. Life-changing events challenge our coping skills and force us to re-examine our priorities.

Those of us who have experienced the death of a loved one see life through a whole different lens. Our perspective is changed. Some of us have experienced the sudden or traumatic death of a loved one and did not have the opportunity to say good-bye. Anyone experiencing the death of a loved one finds that their hopes and dreams have been affected. Those who have experienced a loss through death find themselves looking through this new "window in time" and wonder about life as they thought it was. Everyone who is affected by the pain of grief looks back and questions their judgments, their motives, their efforts. We all search for answers.

A sudden or traumatic death is extremely hard to accept, due to the shock and the suddenness of the death. Nothing makes sense. It is impossible to understand. We try to reconstruct the events leading up to the death, trying to convince ourselves that we can somehow change the outcome. We are vulnerable. There is clearly a sense of loss of security, with the feeling that nothing can be trusted again.

After a loved one dies we enter a period that knows no timelines, a period of individual and family grief. This is a time to share our concerns and feelings with others, to acknowledge our pain and sorrow, to allow ourselves to know we have been changed. There are several different symptoms in the grieving process, among them shock, depression, anger, loss of sleep and/or appetite, guilt. One day you may be happy and the next day you find it hard to get out of bed. You may be angry in one moment, and feeling guilty in the next. Those who are grieving do not experience these symptoms in any set order. They do not 'move' from one symptom to the next, as if cured. Sometimes the symptoms revisit the grieving person. Also, not everyone will experience every possible symptom.

Again, there is no set timeline in the process of grieving. You may find that it takes some family members a short time and for others, it may take years, or a lifetime. Every one of us processes our grief differently.

The Pulaski Area Bereavement Support Group is composed of people just like you, who have experienced the loss of a loved one and have come together to form this support group. The Group meetings are held every 3rd Wednesday of the month, 6:30 p.m., in the St. Clare Room at Assumption B.V.M. Parish in Pulaski (located in the lower level of the church). You can also call for an appointment or with any questions: 920-822-3223 (Rich or Mary) or 920-822-3955 (Sharon). There are no age restrictions on attendance.

A typical session would include viewing professional presentations (DVD format), each covering a different part of the grieving process. These presentations are used by other bereavement support groups throughout the country and are very well done. The video is followed by a time for discussion, where you are encouraged to express your needs. Be assured that all discussions and sharing is always voluntary and confidential.

There are no quick-fixes; there is no medicine to take to "get over" the loss of a loved one. From personal experience, we know that having a place to go and someone with whom to talk and share the pain of loss can make a difference. We believe that being surrounded by those who understand and care is invaluable in helping to heal broken hearts.

Won't you consider joining us for an evening?
We'd like to offer our shared support.

(Portions of this article were inspired by *For Those Who Grieve*, a newsletter written by Ben Wolfe, Grief Counselor)