A Healing Journey

HOSPICE of Palm Beach County
John J. Brogan Bereavement Center
Supporting your nonprofit end-of-life care provider
**The Sea Star**

When a sea star loses one of its rays – it has the ability to grow back or regenerate.

Notice that one ray always shows a line through it. This line is to acknowledge the pain of our loss and that we have been changed forever. It is also a reminder that the people we love will always be remembered and will always be a part of our lives.

Our sea star, however, will always be shown whole, with all of its rays intact. We believe that this symbolizes another tremendously important message; the belief that grief can transcend into a journey of healing.
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**Supporting your nonprofit end-of-life care provider**
Dear Families:

Above all, we would like to express our most heartfelt condolences on the death of your loved one. The journey you began with us at Hospice of Palm Beach County may have seemed overwhelming and daunting. You have experienced every emotion possible, and often, all at once. During this time, you have been our teachers and it has been a privilege and honor to be part of your lives.

When you first came to Hospice of Palm Beach County, you may have received a booklet from your hospice team entitled, “A Very Special Journey.” This booklet focused on preparing everyone in the family for the time of transition from life to death.

The purpose of A Healing Journey is to continue this very special pathway. You have been the most integral part of the care provided for your loved one. Without your devotion and love, our interventions would have been meaningless. However, our journey together now turns to one of healing. The focus shifts to your care. Please know that we hold this trust with the same sense of privilege as we held the trust between your loved one and us. Thus, in “A Healing Journey” we hope to leave you with the awareness that you are not forgotten and you do not have to walk this pathway alone.

We hope the information contained in this booklet can be a guide and a source of support to you. As always, remember that the bereavement counselors at Hospice of Palm Beach County’s John J. Brogan Bereavement Center are always available to answer questions, or assist you with any concerns.

We wish you all a healing journey…
What Is This Thing Called Grief?

All of us eventually experience the death of a person close to us – a family member, a friend or someone special to us. It is normal and natural to grieve or mourn this loss. It is important to know that there is no right or wrong way to grieve. There is also no time limit to your grief. Some people even call it “grief work” because it is not an easy process to go through. Grief is a process that helps us to adapt to a devastating life change, so that we can regain a sense of vitality and hope to our lives.

Grief is more than just mere feelings. We experience it in our hearts, minds, bodies and our souls. So do not be surprised if your grief results in strong emotions, physical changes and changes in your thoughts, beliefs and habits.

The following are some “normal grief responses” that our families have shared with us. They are, by no means, the only ones that you may experience. Each individual’s journey is uniquely their own. However, you may find some comfort in knowing that others have also experienced what you are experiencing.

Some common grief responses:

- Anger
- Guilt
- Relief
- Isolation
- Loneliness
- Uncertainty
- Acceptance
- Sadness
- Apathy
- Confusion
- Shock
- Anxiety
- Despair
- Strength
- Hopelessness
- Forgetfulness
- Fear for one’s future
- Changes in sleeping patterns
- Changes in eating habits
- Feeling uncared for
- Spiritual confusion or pain
- Joy in remembering
- Disbelief
- Thankfulness

Grief is a process that helps us adapt to a devastating life change.
Grief is often compared to an ocean. The feelings come and go, sometimes large and overwhelming, other times small and lapping at your feet. However, each time the waves of emotions are experienced it leaves you in a different place, and closer to a healing center.

Please note that we make no mention of “letting go” or “saying good-bye.” We do not believe that a healing journey is about having to “let go” of anyone. How can you forget someone with whom you have shared love and memories? No matter what anyone may say – you do not have to “let go” of any beloved person in order to gain a sense of quietness to your pain. They will always be a part of your life.

Some of you may be asking yourselves: “That makes sense for most people, but I never got along with my loved one! We had conflicts in our relationships all the time – even through his/her dying! Will I need to, should I, let go?” This brings up another aspect of grief often called “complicated grief responses.” Complicated relationships you may have had with your loved one can certainly magnify the emotional impact of grief on your life.
The following are some complicated grief responses. Please note that often the differences between normal or complicated grief responses may be the duration, intensity and the consequences manifested by the grief response.

- Debilitating Isolation
- Clinical depression
- Refusal or inability to return to routine
- Frequent anger
- Debilitating anxiety or panic attack
- Sleep deprivation
- Suicidal thoughts or gestures
- Debilitating self-blame
- Obsessive thoughts about the deceased
- Extensive substance abuse (alcohol, illegal drugs or prescribed medication)
- Debilitating changes in eating behaviors which may lead to unhealthy conditions
- Increase in risk-taking behaviors (e.g. dangerous acts, threatened financial ruin, etc.)

If you, or any of your family members or friends, are experiencing any of these complicated grief responses, please know that assistance is available. As frightening as any or all of these behaviors are, there are many caring professionals and resources through our John J. Brogan Bereavement Center and our community that can guide you through this storm.

Above all, know that you are NOT ALONE.
Possible Manifestations of Grief in Children/Teens

The following is an outline of possible grief reactions for parents, guardians or teachers to use in observing children.

Behavioral / Social

1. Regressive behaviors
2. Aggressive behaviors
3. Rebellious, defiant behaviors
4. Withdrawn / passivity
5. Hyperactivity
6. Increased need for reassurance
7. Hoarding (food, toys)
8. Changes in eating patterns
9. Temporary assumption of a new role or personality, often related to the deceased.
10. Changes in sleeping patterns
11. Lower grades
12. Perfect child syndrome
13. Bad child syndrome
14. Drug use increase
15. Sexual promiscuity
16. Reckless or self-destructive behavior
17. Crying

Emotional

1. Self blame and guilt – “Did I cause the death?”
2. Numbness
3. Withdrawn
4. Demanding
5. Helpless / hopeless
6. Despair
7. Fear of the dark, going to sleep, or fears such as:
   “Who will take care of me?” “Will it happen to me too?”
8. Yearning
9. Unaccepting
10. Preoccupied
11. Anger
12. Anger disguised as general irritation
13. Sadness
14. Anxious
15. Bored
16. Apathy

Physical
1. Changes in appetite
2. Sleep disturbances
3. Bowel and bladder disturbances
4. Temporary slowing of reactions
5. Headaches
6. Stomach aches
7. Rashes
8. Breathing disturbances
9. Exaggeration of allergies
10. Increased number of colds and infections
11. Symptoms associated with illness or injury of the deceased

**Cognitive**

1. Impaired self-esteem
2. Disturbances in cognitive functioning (attention span deficit, hyperactivity)
3. Exaggerations in magical thinking
4. Loss of centered thinking
5. Avoidance and denial of the loss
6. Idealization of the past
7. Idealization of the future
8. Unrealistic thinking related to the loss
9. Increase in nightmares/dreams

Although each of these behaviors can be considered normal grief responses, they become a matter for concern when there are several behaviors observed in combination and over a prolonged period of time. Also, if these behaviors appear to interfere with the child’s or teen’s usual activities and level of functioning, professional consultation is recommended.
Parenting a grieving child when you yourself are experiencing the pain of the loss is chaotic for many parents and guardians. As parents or guardians, you may not often have the luxury of succumbing to your emotions and grief. However, an important way to provide support to your child is by allowing time for yourself.

We have found that maintaining, as much as possible, normal routines and consistency, can be extremely helpful for everyone. Children and teens need to know that there is someone “in charge.” Keep communication open. Be honest in answering questions and give as much information as you are comfortable in giving within the appropriate age of the child.

Should your child attend the funeral?
Allowing children to be part of the funeral or attending the funeral should also be decided based upon the beliefs you have and/or your child’s wishes. A simple way to know if it is the appropriate thing to have the child attend the funeral is to simply ask the child/teen. If attending the funeral is not an option, they can be part of the memorialization by many other means. This can include, writing a letter, drawing a picture, etc. Above all, please know that we have found children to be incredibly resilient. Providing support, choices and love will be the most important intervention you can provide – and, of course, not to forget to take care of yourself.
How Do I Cope with It All?

We are aware that this time of transition and change is filled with pain and confusion. Earlier, your time and energies were focused on your loved one, and that focus, has now expanded to include the changing perceptions of your life. We understand that the months ahead may be difficult. You may be unsure as to how you can help yourself or where that help can be found. Here are some ideas for you to consider as you enter this period of bereavement:

- It is critical that you maintain balance in your life: try to eat well and get enough rest.
- We encourage all our families to get a physical examination within six months after the death of their loved ones.
- Add exercise and movement in your life (speak to your physician first if you had not been following some regular exercise program in the past). Physical activity has been shown to increase the natural anti-depressants in the body.
- Allow room for your emotions to be expressed, in a safe and healing way.
- Do not make any major life decisions within this first year, unless absolutely necessary.
- Find healing in the expressive arts (music, art, writing poetry etc.).
- Keep a journal (this can be written, audio-taped or even video-taped).
- Be realistic in your expectations of yourself - be kind to yourself. You cannot expect yourself to be at 100 percent immediately.
- Talk to someone – a friend, counselor or chaplain; someone you trust.
- Memorialize your loved one if you so desire. Planting a tree or lighting a candle are some examples of how to honor their memory.
- Allow moments of respite from the grief. Give yourself permission to take a time out. Go to the movies or just laugh out loud. Our bodies and spirit cannot contain grief 24 hours a day, 7 days a week without beginning to break down.
- Call the John J. Brogan Bereavement Center. Bereavement counselors are available to provide individual, family or group counseling if you should so desire.
What Do I Do?

The following are some of the most common concerns and questions asked by our families. They are by no means all encompassing, but we hope they will address some of your most pressing concerns.

CHILDREN’S BEREAVEMENT

My children are having difficulty in school after the death of their close family member (parent, sibling, grandparent etc.). Who can help us?

Please contact the John J. Brogan Bereavement Center. We have children’s counselors who can answer your questions or who can assist you. We also sponsor programs in both private and public schools throughout the Palm Beach County area. You may also contact the guidance counselor at your child’s school and ask if they have made arrangements to receive our services this year.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

What organizations do I need to contact to notify them of my loved one’s death?

Some immediate organizations that would need to be notified:

- Social Security Office
- Loved one’s employer
- Any insurance companies that you may have policies with which you may have policies in your loved one’s name
- Any financial institutions (e.g., banks, stockbrokerage firms)

Your funeral home may be able to give you copies of the death certificate. However, in most states you will need to contact the Office of Vital Statistics for the particular city in which you live. Please see the back of this booklet for telephone numbers.

I am feeling very depressed and wonder if I may need medication. Who do I go to, and what if I cannot afford a doctor’s visit?

Please contact your primary physician immediately or go to your local public health care center for assistance. You may also need to be seen by a specialist (e.g., a psychiatrist) for anti-depressants or anti-anxiety medications. This is not uncommon in newly bereaved individuals. Please do not hesitate to contact your physician or your local community mental health center.
**FINANCIAL**

*I have never even balanced a checkbook. Now I feel so alone. Who can help me with finances now that my spouse has died?*

Please contact your local banking institution. Often they have individuals who are available to assist individuals for these specific situations. If your banking institution does not provide this service, they may be able to refer you to someone who does. Also, if you retain a lawyer or financial advisor, they may be of assistance as well. Do not forget to ask friends and family members for help. They often feel helpless in seeing you grieving and would like a way to be of assistance – this may be a wonderful way to provide practical support.

**FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS**

*How can I place an obituary in the paper? How much does it cost?*

Funeral homes often assist families in placing obituaries in their local newspapers. However, most families contact their local newspapers themselves. Each newspaper has its own obituary department and their service representative can lead you through the process. Costs vary from newspaper to newspaper and often are based on how many lines are used.

*How do I write an obituary?*

Although a painful process, the obituary may be a beautiful way to memorialize your loved one. There are some practical aspects to the obituary as well; it can be a way to make friends and families aware of the details of the funeral arrangements. Some important information the obituary should include:

- Name, age, town of residence, place of death (cause of death is optional)
- Immediate survivor(s), living or pre-deceased as desired
- Summary of early life (place and date of birth, education, military career, etc.)
- Employment history
- Hobbies, civic and volunteer activities
- Funeral service arrangements (time and place)
Donations (sometimes in lieu of flowers)

Special thanks to certain individuals or agencies
   (e.g. hospitals, hospices etc.)

It is important to realize that how much detail is written in the obituary is your choice. Be comfortable with your decision. You may simply choose to write your loved one’s name, date of birth and death and the funeral arrangements. It is your decision.

*My loved one left all funeral arrangements to me. I can’t even think.*

*Who can I ask for assistance?*

You may certainly contact your Hospice Team’s chaplain or social worker for some direction and assistance. However, your chosen funeral home can always assist with the burial arrangements. Your local church or synagogue, or even friends, can assist with planning for the services for your loved one. You may also contact the John J. Brogan Bereavement Center for assistance with poems, prayer, etc to use. Please do not hesitate to ask for the help you need.

*My loved one wants to be buried up north. How do I go about making arrangements for this?*

Contact your funeral home director for details. They will assist you with the arrangements and often make all the calls necessary to the funeral home in the state your loved one will be buried in.

*We do not have the finances to pay for a funeral. Who can I contact for assistance?*

Palm Beach County has an assistance program for families needing support with funeral arrangements. The telephone number is in the back of this booklet. You will need to meet criteria set by Palm Beach County Burial Assistance program. Local funeral homes are also usually able to assist you in working with the county program. Sometimes, the funeral homes may even assist with the necessary paperwork. There are private companies that can assist you in finding a funeral home that best suits your needs. These telephone numbers are also in the back of this booklet.
**General Bereavement**

*Do you have any books that I can read that may assist me during this bereavement period?*

John J. Brogan John J. Brogan Bereavement Center has a bereavement library for your use. Please feel free to drop by and check out a book. If you are looking for a particular book, give us a call. If we do not have it, we may be able to direct you.

*Where may I receive bereavement counseling?*

You may receive bereavement counseling at the John J. Brogan John J. Brogan Bereavement Center. Simply call **561.227.5175**. There are also many different programs throughout the Palm Beach County community. Some of these numbers are listed in the back of this booklet.

*What if I move from Palm Beach County? Can anyone help me in the state that I move to? Will there be a fee?*

Most hospices across the country honor you as a hospice family. Thus, they provide support to bereaved families whose loved one has died in a hospice. To determine which hospice is closest to where you will be living, contact Hospice-Link at 1.800.331.1620 and give them the city and state.

*I have heard of bereavement support groups, what are they, and how can I get into one?*

Groups can provide you with a sense of community and mutual support. In bereavement support groups, you can meet other individuals who have experienced similar losses and issues as yourself. If you are interested in attending a bereavement support group, please contact the John J. Brogan John J. Brogan Bereavement Center for more information.

*I am a very private person, and am not interested in groups. Do I need to attend a bereavement support group in order to receive bereavement counseling? Are there other choices for me?*

This is an excellent question. The answer is a simple: “No, you do NOT have to attend a group.” The John J. Brogran Bereavement Center honors individual needs and comfort levels. Thus, you will be able to meet with a bereavement counselor, if you so desire, and discuss YOUR needs.
We provide group, individual and family counseling.

**Spiritual**

*We did not belong to any organized church or synagogue. I would like some kind of spiritual memorial service. What do I do?*

Most churches and synagogues will be happy to assist you with some type of memorial service. We recommend you call the ones in your general area and inform them of your needs. Asking assistance from your friends or family members who may have contacts can also be helpful. Often they may know of a priest, minister or rabbi who would be happy to provide spiritual support. As always, you can contact your Hospice Team’s chaplain, who can assist with these arrangements as well. Our chaplains also may be able to conduct the service as available.
Grief Support Services

Grief support services are available to family members and others who enter the journey of healing and transition after the death of their loved ones.

THE NATURE OF GRIEF
A three-part educational series for bereaved adults, which provides information and education in the following areas: overview of the grief process; impact of grief on relationships; world view; jobs; identity; etc., and ways of coping. Our families often find this series to be helpful as a starting point.

GRIEF SUPPORT GROUPS
We sponsor several support groups designed to provide an opportunity for individuals to share their grief safely and gain a sense of community and mutual support who have had similar losses. Specialized groups are offered for adults, children and teens.

INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY GRIEF SUPPORT
John J. Brogan Bereavement Center provides individual and family bereavement counseling to Hospice of Palm Beach County and community families. We recognize the individuality of grief and of expression. Therefore, our counselors utilize a variety of modalities to support adults, children and teens in their grief journey.

ANTICIPATORY GRIEF SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS
Children and teens who are facing the loss of a loved one to terminal illness can receive support in their grief at John J. Brogan Bereavement Center through individual, family, and group counseling.

SCHOOL SUPPORT GROUPS
We offer support groups throughout our community schools – both...
public and private. These support groups are designed for children and teens that have a seriously ill loved one or have experienced the death of a loved one.

**Messages of Caring**
Hospice of Palm Beach County families will receive supportive messages through the mail, which give information about the grief process and provide suggestions for coping. These letters also serve as a reminder of our ongoing availability to the families.

**Telephone Grief Support**
John J. Brogan Bereavement Center staff or volunteers are available to provide supportive contact by telephone after the death of your loved one.

**SHARE**
This program assists families coping with the devastation of pregnancy or infant loss. SHARE also offers education on prenatal and infant loss for health care professionals and organizations.

**Celebration of Life – An Annual Memorial Service**
John J. Brogan Bereavement Center sponsor this annual event to celebrate the memories of our loved ones.

**Holiday Programs**
Holidays and special days can be overwhelming and exacerbate grief issues. Therefore, we provide special programs for adults, children and teens to gather together, share concerns and gain some coping strategies for these special days. Our “Coping with the Jewish Holidays” program is offered every September and “Coping with the Holidays” in November.

**Camp Sea Star**
We offer camp each spring for children and teens that have received services through John J. Brogan Bereavement Center.
RESOURCES / REFERRALS
Reading and learning about the grief process can be helpful. We provide materials about grief and mourning to our hospice and community families upon request or as part of the counseling support.

Throughout the year, other special workshops, events, and services may be offered. If there are any questions about these programs, or if you are in need of further information, please do not hesitate to contact us at 561.227.5175.
Community Resources

Counseling

Al-Anon ......................................................... 561-882-0308

Catholic Charities
West Palm Beach office ................................. 561-842-2406
Delray Beach office ................................. 561-274-0801

CARP ............................................................... 561-844-6400
(Comprehensive Alcohol Rehabilitation Program)

Center for Family Services
West Palm Beach office ................................. 561-616-1222
Delray Beach office ................................. 561-330-2266
North Palm Beach office ............................... 561-776-4364
Wellington office ........................................... 561-793-1698

Children’s Home Society ............................... 561-840-8443

Hanley Center .................................................. 561-841-1000

John J. Brogan John J. Brogan Bereavement Center .................................. 561-227-5175

Hospice-Link ................................................... 1-800-331-1620
(for information on out-of-state counseling through hospices)

Jewish Family Services
Central & North Palm Beach County .................. 561-684-1991
South Palm Beach County ............................... 561-369-3800

Mental Health Association ................................. 561-832-3755

Parent-Child Center ........................................... 561-688-9113

A Healing Journey
Financial Aid / Medical Assistance / Social Services

Abuse Hotline ........................................... 1-800-96-ABUSE

Crisis Line / Information Services ................................. 211

Division of Senior Services
North Palm Beach County .............................. 561-355-4746
Central Palm Beach County ......................... 561-627-5765
South Palm Beach County ......................... 561-586-6155
Western Palm Beach County .................... 561-966-4818

Elder Help-line ........................................ 561-930-4050

Health Care District ................................ 561-655-8100

Medicaid Office ........................................ 561-841-2000

Medicare Information ................................ 1-800-633-4227

Public Health / Social Services
North Palm Beach County ......................... 561-845-4644
South Palm Beach County ......................... 561-274-3130
Western Palm Beach County .................... 561-966-1630
Administration ........................................ 561-355-4766

Social Security Administration ...................... 1-800-772-1213
West Palm Beach office ............................. 561-616-5199
Funeral Arrangements / Financial Assistance

Palm Beach County Burial Assistance ....................... 561-547-6961
Death Certificates ................................................. 561-514-5300
Funeral Consumer Alliance of Southeast Florida .... 1-800-288-9676
Funeral Service Consumer Assistance Program ...... 1-800-662-7666
Medical Examiner ................................................... 561-688-4575

Hospitals

Bethesda Hospital .................................................. 561-737-7733
Boca Raton Community Medical Center ............... 561-395-7100
Columbia Medical Center ........................................ 561-842-6141
Delray Medical Center ........................................... 561-498-4440
Glades General Hospital ......................................... 561-996-6571
Good Samaritan Medical Center .............................. 561-655-5511
JFK Medical Center ................................................. 561-965-7300
Jupiter Medical Center .......................................... 772-747-2234
Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center .................... 561-622-1411
Palms West Medical Center .................................... 561-798-3300
St. Mary’s Medical Center ....................................... 561-844-6300
Veterans’ Administration Hospital ...................... 561-882-8262
Wellington Medical Center .................................... 561-798-8500
West Boca Medical Center ..................................... 561-488-8000
## Community Resources

### Psychiatric Hospitals
- **Oakwood Mental Health Facility**
  - 561-844-9741
- **Pavilion at Columbia Medical Center**
  - 561-744-4444
- **St. Mary’s Institute of Mental Health**
  - 561-840-6040

### Senior Services / Day Programs
- **Department of Housing**
  - 561-233-3601
- **Home Delivered Meals**
  - 561-930-5040 / 561-745-8000
- **Kosher Meals**
  - 561-616-0707
- **Housing Authority**
  - 561-655-8530
- **Jewish Community Center**
  - 561-740-9000
- **Just Checking**
  - 561-540-1376
- **Mae Volen**
  - 561-395-8920
- **Palm Tran Transportation**
  - 561-841-4BUS (4287)
- **Sunshine Telephone Calls**
  - 561-930-5040
We’re there to help you heal. At Hospice of Palm Beach County, we’re there with a simple promise: to provide comfort and support for our patients, families and those with the responsibility of caring for them every day. We know that every experience is different and that every individual is a son, daughter, parent, grandparent, child, spouse and friend. The John J. Brogan Bereavement Center is here to help you embark on a healing journey that celebrates the memories of your loved one and respects your wishes, traditions and heritage. It is our privilege to support you in this healing journey.
Mission Statement
John J. Brogan Bereavement Center

To provide professional guidance through counseling, community outreach, education, and training.

We acknowledge and respect individual values and beliefs while striving to create an environment of safety and trust for healing.
Published by Hospice of Palm Beach County

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Call 1.800.HOSPICE
in Palm Beach and Broward counties
Call 888.848.5200 anywhere in the U.S.

Call 561.227.5140
for admissions & referrals

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