

JULY/AUGUST 2017

LifePath Hospice Bereavement and Support Group Programs



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After the loss of a loved one, some survivors may find that the pain associated with their loss doesn't lessen with time. Individual grief counseling and support groups provide a safe place to express feelings, share experiences and move ahead in the grief process. LifePath Hospice offers support groups, individual counseling and seminars throughout the year. We hope you will attend the programs that best suit your particular needs and circumstances.

You don't have to be the loved one of a LifePath Hospice patient to participate in these support services. We are pleased to offer our programs to anyone residing in Hillsborough County who has experienced the death of a loved one. Preregistration is required for all offerings.

For more information and to register for support groups, please call 813-877-2200.

New Beginnings Adult Grief Support Groups

Eight-week support groups for adults grieving the loss of a loved one. For more information, visit the Calendar at www.chaptershealth.org or call 813-877-2200. We make every effort to accommodate your group preference, but please be aware that the group size is limited.

South Tampa

Mondays, July 31 – Sept. 18, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

Northwest Tampa – Carrollwood

Thursdays, Aug. 3 – Sept. 21, 2:30 – 4 p.m.

Brandon

Tuesdays, Aug. 8 – Sept. 26, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

Plant City

Thursdays, Aug. 10 – Sept. 28, 10:30 a.m. – noon

Sun City Center

Thursdays, Aug. 10 – Sept. 28, 3 – 4:30 p.m.

Temple Terrace

Thursdays, Aug. 17 – Oct. 5, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

Memorial Hospital – Tampa

Wednesdays, Sept. 5 – Oct. 24, 2:30 – 4 p.m.

Ongoing Adult Support Group

Second and fourth Mondays every month

July 10 & 24, and August 14 & 28

3 – 4:30 p.m., Sun City Center

Second and fourth Wednesdays every month

July 12 & 26, and August 16 & 30

2 – 3:30 p.m., Riverview

Wednesdays, July 19 & September 13

10 – 11:30 a.m., Plant City Living Center

Tuesdays, August 8 & October 10

10 – 11:30 a.m., Plant City Towers

Suicide Loss Support Group

Second and fourth Tuesdays every month

July 11 & 25, and Aug. 8 & 22

6 – 7:30 p.m., South Tampa

Loss of a Child Support Group

For loss of a child at any age. Please call 813-877-2200 for details and scheduling.

Young Adult Support Group

A support group for young adults, ages 19 to 25.

First and third Tuesdays every month

July 18, and Aug. 1 & 15

6 – 7:30 p.m., South Tampa

Circle of Love Center

Ongoing evening grief support group meetings for children and teens, ages 3–18, and their families.

For more information or to register, please call Corinne Gaertner at 813-357-5671.

Tuesdays or Thursdays

July 11 or 13, and 25 or 27

August 8 or 10, and 22 or 24

6 – 7:30 p.m., South Tampa

E-Newsletter

If you would like to receive this calendar via email, please email crowea@chaptershealth.org.

Healing through Volunteering

If you'd like to channel your time and energy into something productive and meaningful, there are many ways to volunteer with LifePath Hospice—clerical work, running errands for patients or giving caregivers a much-needed break. Call Volunteer Services at 813-877-2200 or complete the volunteer application at www.chaptershealth.org to get started.

One Call Changed It All

By Sue Garno

I found out about Hospice 10 years ago when my father was terminally ill. He became severely ill right after my mother passed away, and he went into the hospital two weeks later. Two weeks after that, they found cancer all through his system. He was referred to hospice by someone in the hospital on a Sunday. On Monday, the representative from LifePath Hospice met with me at the hospital to fill out the paperwork. He let me know what services were available and answered a lot of my questions. My father was so happy to be taken to the hospice house, and the first thing he asked the nurse for was to give him a shave because he wanted to “look good” for all of them! I got there soon after, then my husband came to visit, and I finally sat down to rest about 11:30 that evening. At about 12:45 a.m., the nurses came in to check on Dad and said he had just passed away. I was not expecting it so soon, but they were so wonderful to me. Somehow I made it through planning his funeral, but I really fell apart after that. My parents had passed away only 32 days apart. I did not know how to handle that very well.

At Dad’s funeral, right in the middle of the eulogy, I lost my train of thought. I also lost my name, my family’s names, what I was doing standing there, and what I was supposed to do next. I really hit rock bottom that day. It was so difficult making it through the days that followed. I did not have any close friends to lean on, as we had just moved back after being in Kentucky for four years. Getting through a day without sadness was very trying. Then a miracle occurred. Yes, I considered this a miracle: Someone from LifePath Hospice called me the following week and asked, “What can we do for you?” I had just figured they took care of Dad and that was it. I was truly surprised when they told me that they had bereavement support groups and counselors. I was so happy to hear that! They sent me Lew, and he was *my hospice angel*. He spent one-on-one time with me every week, was a fabulous listener and was always there for me. In the beginning, he just listened while I cried. Then it got to the point where I would question things, and his wisdom gave me good direction to find myself again. He was there for me for almost a year before I finally felt I was back to myself. I will always remember him saying, “You do the best you can with what you have

to work with.” It was true; I was stronger than I thought I could be. In all that time, LifePath Hospice never asked me for anything in return. I was truly blessed by my experience with the bereavement services. It was absolutely what I needed.

After my first year, I thought, “How can I give back to hospice?” Then I read some of the patient manual that they had given my dad. I was not ready to read it before that time. I saw they had volunteer training, and that I could help in so many ways. I took the training, and they really give you good tools to work with them, no matter your interest. Since I was in others’ shoes with my experience, I decided to provide respite care in patients’ homes. I thoroughly enjoy doing that. I love meeting patients and their families. Most of the time, patients just need someone to talk to. In some cases, they like to tell their life stories or those of their family members. They love knowing they have someone coming just to see them. They know, as their volunteer, I am there for whatever they need or want to talk about. I have also started going to the nursing homes to visit with our patients. They have their own stories, and I am always grateful that they share them with me. I have met some truly remarkable people. After one of my patients passes away, I take the time to speak to the family members. I love hearing their stories, and I always let them know about the bereavement counseling.

I have done other volunteer tasks at LifePath Hospice, including assembling patient manuals, doing computer work, helping with flu shots, and working on special projects, fund raisers and donation days for the thrift store. They are all great tasks, but I enjoy being with patients the most. That phone call from LifePath Hospice bereavement staff was 11 years ago, and I have been volunteering for almost 10 years. I hope I can keep on helping for many, many more!



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