“Spring is a miraculous experience. The whole world comes alive after the winter in which it seemed that everything was dead. The world comes filled with color and the scent of delicious greenery. The world that seemed so dull and cold has come alive once again. Little did we know that beneath the cold hard ground the plants and trees were preparing for rebirth. Spring gives us hope for rejuvenation in our own lives as well. Spring is a time to renew the excitement and zest for life that lives inside.” –Spring, *Family Friend Poems* (2014).

Finding excitement and zest for life after a loss may seem impossible, but just as the world comes alive after a long winter, we too can find renewal and purpose in the midst of life’s changing seasons.

**Spring Newsletter**

- 10-Ways to Move Through Grief
- Helpful Self-Care Strategies
- Easy Spring Recipes
- Volunteering
- The Role of Social Work in Hospice
GRIEF - Grief is a complex, personal experience; it often leaves us feeling uncertain and wondering if what we are experiencing is normal. The grief diagram (below) lists four areas in the grieving process: Denial, Depression, Anger, and Acceptance.

You may experience all sorts of feelings or no feelings at all while learning to adjust or you may not be able to sleep or sleep a lot. The point is there is not a “right” way to grieve. You grieve in the way you grieve and the main thing to remember is what you are feeling is okay. If you are concerned, however, about what you or a loved one is experiencing, please call Circle of Life Hospice at (775) 827-2298 to talk about your concerns further.

**Denial...**

Depression.

**Anger...**

Acceptance

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Denial is often the first stage of grief. Depending on the individual and the situation, the denial stage may also be the shortest lived of all the four stages. As with the other stages of grief, denial can reappear; even after you think you’ve accepted the loss.

You may say to yourself; “The Can’t be happening to me!” or “It did not happen!”

Depression is one stage of grief that may be present throughout the process, in varying degrees. Depression is more than sadness; it involves feelings of loneliness, numbness and insecurity. You may find that your negative habits are worse and routine daily activities may seem extraordinarily difficult. Some days may be easier than others as your mind copes with the depth of the loss. Accept that depression is part of the healing process, accept it for what it is.

Anger following a loss is your mind’s way of fighting back. Anger may be the first emotion you feel or it may take time to show up. Like depression and denial, anger may ebb and flow. Anger may be directed at yourself, a loved one or the universe. It can be fleeting, or you may sustain it for weeks. Address anger as a part of your healing in order to deal with it and move on.

True acceptance is the final stage, but it does not magically dissolve your other emotions. Understanding the reality of your loss is part of acceptance, but you must also make peace with it to find true acceptance.
The following **10-Ways to Move through Grief** provides ideas that can be useful while coping with life after loss (adopted from Randall Oelerich)

1. **Take time and space**

   Your soul needs time to heal. Give yourself space. Lessen expectations. Relax. By all means don’t punish yourself if projects or goals do not get done.

2. **Share**

   Find a close friend to share feelings with. Humans are meant to be social beings, but balance this with the need for time and space to be alone.

3. **Say good-bye**

   Compose a good-bye letter to the person you’ve lost. It’s a type of catharsis that helps the healing process. But don’t push this. Do it only when it feels right.

4. **Remember**

   Put together a memorabilia collection of your loved one with photos, gifts, letters, and cards. Show this collection to others to help you share your feelings.

5. **Cry**

   Let the tears out when you’re ready. You may be in shock and denial and may not even feel sad during the first few moments, hours, or sometimes even days following a loss. When the emotions well up, let the waters flow.
6. Get out

Drive, walk, or ride a bike nowhere. Spend some time sipping tea or coffee at a coffee shop. Browse at bookstores. Wander through a shopping mall or a park. Make friends with a duck at a nearby pond.

7. Get support

Consider getting to a grief support group.

8. Forgive

You may be thinking or saying, “I should’ve” or “I shouldn’t have” or I could have” or “If only”. Such thoughts of omissions and commissions will only drive you nuts. Nobody is perfect, so forgive yourself and others.

9. Escape

Escapism can be healthy in moderate doses and comes in many forms. For example, a person who is depressed sleeps more, which is the body's survival mechanism. So escape! Watch movies, take up a new hobby, take a nap, or take a trip.

10. Meditate

Meditation is therapeutic in whatever form works for you (prayer, chanting, sitting in the woods, or strict transcendental meditation). Cognitive mood therapy, pioneered by David Burns, MD, has shown that you cannot separate thought from brain chemistry. The two are inexorably linked. So thinking affects thinking. Your thoughts change your brain chemistry.
Helpful Self-Care Strategies

1. Maintain regular daily routines. Set times for waking, meals, and bedtime.
2. Eat a balanced diet and drink plenty of water, even if your appetite has diminished significantly.
3. Avoid too much caffeine, as it will interrupt your sleep.
4. If you're having trouble sleeping, develop a relaxing pre-sleep routine.
5. Wind down with a book, crossword puzzle, or quite music before bed rather than watching television.
6. Enjoy outdoor activities such as going for a walk or playing catch with a friend. They will take you away from the stress and refresh you mentally.
7. Exercise helps to counteract depression and makes you feel good physically and mentally. The exercise does not need to be strenuous. If you have doubts about your fitness, consult your doctor.
8. Try different relaxation techniques such as meditation, massage, listening to music, visualization, or yoga.
9. Engage in something creative like writing, drawing, playing an instrument, dancing, etc.
10. Try keeping a journal. Writing down your feelings and memories of your loved one can be comforting.

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EASY SPRING RECIPES

Sometimes it is difficult to eat after loss—food just isn't appealing. Even though nothing sounds good, it is important to take care of yourself and eat good quality, nutrient dense foods every day. Below are two suggestions: Blueberry Banana Smoothie and Chicken Pita Salad.
Blueberry Banana Smoothie

Blueberries are very nutritious compared to most fruits and are loaded with powerful antioxidants, some of which can increase the antioxidant value of the blood and have protective effects on the brain.

**Ingredients**
- 3 oz Blueberries, fresh or frozen
- ½ banana, cut in chunks
- 3 oz vanilla or plain yogurt
- 1-2 ice cubes (optional)

**Preparation**
- Blend well at high speed
- Pour into a festive glass
- Enjoy immediately

Grilled Chicken Pita Salad

**Ingredients**
- 1 chicken breast
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 4 asparagus spears
- 2 ounces feta cheese
- ½ cup halved grape tomatoes
- ¼ cup pitted kalamata olives
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon oregano
- 1 cup lettuce or spinach

**Preparation**
- Rub chicken breast with olive oil, cook until no longer pink. Slice. Whisk lemon juice, remaining olive oil, oregano, and black pepper; Boil asparagus (ends trimmed), cut in chunks; Combine chicken; feta cheese,; asparagus; grape tomatoes; pitted kalamata and olives. Add lettuce or and toss to combine.
VOLUNTEERING

Why become a Circle of Life Community Hospice Volunteer? Volunteers provide an important service for patients, family and friends. They are part of the interdisciplinary team. Each patient is cared for by doctors, nurses, social workers, spiritual care, certified nursing assistance and volunteers. Maybe you have considered becoming a volunteer based on your own hospice experience or feel this is part of your own journey of giving. You can gain great personal satisfaction from knowing you make a difference and can impact another person’s life. Part of caring for the hospice patients, caregivers and those they love can be a life changing experience by offering support to them. A hospice volunteer is no ordinary volunteer; rather they are exceptional individuals willing to share in an amazing part of living. At the end---of---life people do continue to grow in a variety of ways—intellectually, spiritually, emotionally or socially. It is a privilege and incredible opportunity to be invited to share in this precious time. For more information, contact the Volunteer Coordinator, at 775-824-3865.

*Each volunteer brings a unique style, set of skills and experience,*

*which enhance and impact hospice care. Join us for the journey!*
The Role of Social Work in Bereavement
Alana Klumpp, LCSW

Social workers begin bereavement support from the moment they contact a family. Throughout the entire time someone is on hospice service, social workers are key players in the emotional support of the patient and their loved one. They evaluate situations, the needs and strengths of the people involved and what coping mechanisms might be useful before and after a loved one passes away.

Social workers can ease a person into these changes by making referrals to community resources to help with finances, offering counseling to help adjustment with new roles, helping people reconnect with friends or family... This can be done before or after a person passes away; the support of social workers can continue if needed for 13 months through Circle of Life’s bereavement program.

With the illness of a loved one, family dynamics shift. A daughter or son may be a parent’s caregiver causing role reversal, which is never an easy proposition. After their parent dies the child may then become the oldest in the family: hence the matriarch or patriarch. Perhaps they are not ready to have the rest of the family look to them for answers. With the loss of a sibling, a brother or sister may become an only child.

With the loss of a spouse a husband of 60 years may have to care for the house and yard or a wife may have to learn to handle the finances. They may have to manage living alone without their longtime partner for counsel and support. These elements of change add difficulty to grieving. There is also the element of grief counseling and grief support the social workers provide during personal contact with family, friends and the
patient, as well as during group support meetings. Circle of Life provides ongoing support groups which are lead alternately by spiritual care, social work and the bereavement coordinator. These groups are open to family and friends of clients and to the general public. Each discipline may have a slightly different focus, with social workers often talking about family dynamics and how people are coping with the changes and the loss(es).

There are many losses when a person dies. The relationship is certainly lost on the physical plane. There is also the loss of future plans together, loss of money available to continue a lifestyle, the loss of a chance to make amends, the loss of a secure feeling with the person present, and the loss of a specific role in life. The losses are too numerous and varied to name.

Social workers can help anticipate some of these losses and changes, and can help plan for how to cope with them. If the coping becomes more difficult, social workers can be supportive in listening and helping problem solve solutions. They can help people rebuild and continue living well while grieving.

Social workers also participate in training volunteers to offer grief support. Volunteers who are involved in the bereavement program can continue to assist families through phone calls and visits. There can be a sense of loss when there are no more visits from numerous staff members for the person on hospice. A volunteer visiting can offer some of the supportive energy that hospice has been giving and help ease the empty feeling of the days.
Community Events
Circle of Life Community Hospice has several events available for you as you maneuver through life’s changes. These events take place at Circle of Life located at 1575 Delucchi Lane, Suite 214 in Reno. For further information contact us at (775) 827-2298, ext. 241.

I. SUPPORT GROUPS: Held the first and third Tuesday of each month at 5:30pm. If desired, small break out groups for those who have experienced a similar loss can be facilitated. For example:

- Parents who have lost an adult child
- Those who have lost a spouse
- People who have experienced multiple losses

II. GRIEF WORKSHOPS - Held each month on the third Saturday at 12:00pm. The workshops are meant to create an opportunity to process grief through hands-on projects. There will be creative activities, learning new (or sharing existing) skills like making soup, as well as community-helping projects. Let us know if you have an idea of a workshop topic.

III. ONE-ON-ONE SESSIONS - Available for individuals or families and can include emotional support, education, and topics like those offered in the Grief Workshops. Call for additional information or to set up an appointment.
Schedule of Grief Workshops
(subject to change)

January: Day at the Movies: Enjoy a film while enjoying snacks and hot beverages

February: Remembrance Collages and Moving Forward Vision Boards

March: Memorial Quilts (option to utilize old clothing)

April: Celebration Gardening

May: Multi Cultural Day: Discuss cultural grief rituals and enjoy ethnic snacks and beverages

June: Self Care Day: Learn simple strategies for taking care of yourself

July: Snack Making: Learn to make simple and nutrient dense snacks for Summer

August: Serving our Community: Write thoughtful notes to encourage others

September: Learn to Make Soup: Learn to make simple and nutrient dense snacks for Fall

October: Death Cafe: Open forum on end of life

November: Journal Making with a discussion on continuing bonds

December: Candle Making and Candle Lighting Ceremony

All workshops are free and snacks will be provided. To reserve a spot at one of the monthly workshops, please call Circle of Life at (775) 827-2298, ext. 241, by the Wednesday prior to the event.
If you notice an error in your name or address, or if someone else in your family would like to receive our mailings, please contact Circle of Life Hospice