



Greetings. We are thinking of you on your grief journey as the holidays and winter months approach. We are here to support you and available to provide grief services to all members of our community following the death of a loved one. Please call us at (303) 604-5300 if you have any questions or would like to get connected to a grief counselor or a free support group. We consider it a privilege to help those who are grieving to regain their balance and learn how to engage in life in new and meaningful ways.

Coping with the Holidays While Grieving

Many of us look forward to the approaching holidays as we anticipate a festive time of year with great joy, family togetherness and celebrations. However, people who have experienced the loss of a loved one often dread the holiday season, feeling overwhelmed and burdened at a time when their mood and energy levels may be at an all-time low. There are ways for those who are grieving to learn how to cope with, and even celebrate, the holidays despite their own loss. Here are some techniques to consider:

Be realistic.

If you were recuperating from major surgery, you wouldn't be capable of going above and beyond to decorate, shop, and entertain during the holidays. You would recognize that recovery means taking stock of your energy, going at a much slower pace, offering yourself grace, and letting go (at least temporarily) of your preconceived notions of how much you can accomplish. It's really no different for grieving people. Grief asks us to pay attention to our energy levels and respect our need for more quiet reflection and solitude. We may not have the physical wound that surgery leaves but we can certainly have emotional or spiritual wounds after loss. If you are grieving at this time, be realistic in your expectations about your own grief journey, and be gentle with yourself.

Make a plan, then give yourself the freedom to change your plans.

This may mean something very simple such as planning to change the time you'll attend a family gathering or a holiday worship service. Maybe your family has always gone to a midnight church service together, but now, you have less energy. Perhaps your sleep schedule is still off since your person died, and the thought of being out late brings on increased feelings of fatigue. It really is okay to step out of your tradition and plan something that better accommodates your reduced energy. Healthy coping with grief means giving yourself a wide berth for your ever-changing needs. It is a sign of strength to accept that you may have limitations in your grief and then to allow yourself to push yourself a little when you feel it may be the best thing for you. Changing your mind often while grieving is not a sign that you're not coping well. Rather, it is a sign that you are paying attention to and respecting your ongoing coping needs as you navigate the tricky waters of grief.

Honor the memory of your loved one.

There are a variety of ways to incorporate cherished memories of the deceased into our holiday plans. Many families say a prayer or light a candle or treasured menorah in memory of those who have died as a way to still feel the warmth of their presence. Some may cook their loved one's favorite meal as they gather in remembrance around the dinner table. Participating in these rituals can be a way of celebrating the family legacy and honoring a loved one. Some families choose to engage in a special project during the holidays in remembrance of their deceased family member, while others may decide to volunteer their time or resources with an organization the deceased may have supported.

It is important to remember that there is no right or wrong way to celebrate the holidays when you are grieving – ultimately, there is your way: respecting your unique needs, making a plan for self-care, and building into your celebrations what is personally meaningful to honor your loss.

Volunteer Spotlight



Jean Manifesto began volunteering with hospice care in 2015 while living in Steamboat, compassionately supporting those approaching the final stage of life. She then joined the volunteer team with TRU Community Care in 2020 after moving to Boulder County.

As a retired lawyer, Jean is keenly aware of the challenges that many families face when loved ones nearing the end may not have prepared for the final stages of their lives. She was first drawn to The Conversation Project at TRU, an initiative that supports discussions and planning for end-of-life care. She then used her diverse skillset in various volunteer roles with TRU's in-home patient care, the Care Center at Longmont United Hospital, and the Tuck-In Call program, checking in with hospice patients and their families mid-week to be sure they have medications and supplies needed before the weekend.

Jean found her way to Grief Services in 2023 where she currently conducts weekly outreach calls to bereaved family members and facilitates grief support groups. She has witnessed the power of grieving people as they connect in a group setting, helping each other process their losses.

We appreciate Jean and our dedicated group of volunteers who graciously support our community and TRU hospice family members along their grief journey. If you would like to get involved as a Grief Services volunteer, please contact us at (303) 604-5300 to learn more about opportunities that are available.

GRIEF SUPPORT GROUPS

Our adult grief groups are available to anyone needing support after the death of a loved one. Most support groups are free of charge. The meetings, led by experienced bereavement group facilitators, include specific topics and optional personal sharing in a safe and accepting atmosphere. Registration is required prior to first attendance for all groups. To register please visit trucare.org/grief or call (303) 604-5300 for group information, times, and locations.

Ongoing Adult Grief Support Groups

Bereaved Parents Group

Support group with program and sharing for bereaved parents only.
Meets 3rd Wednesday,
6:30 - 8:30 PM

First Year Spouse/Partner Group

For spouses or partners whose loved one's death has occurred within the past 12 months.
Meets 2nd Tuesday,
6:00 - 8:00 PM

Widowed Senior Group

For senior men and women who have lost a spouse or partner.
Meets 4th Wednesday,
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Meditation Support Group

The practice of Instinctive meditation prepares and supports us in our grief journey as well as all other aspects of life.
Periodic offering via Zoom

Spouse/Partner Loss Group

For people who have experienced the death of a spouse or partner.
Meets 3rd Tuesday,
6:00 - 8:00 PM

Sudden Loss Group

Support for those who experienced the sudden, unexpected loss of a loved one.
Meets 4th Monday,
6:00 - 8:00 PM

Yoga After Loss Group

Exploring grief through yoga poses, breath work, and meditation.
Periodic Offering

Adult Structured Grief Support Groups

Eight-Week Support Group

For anyone who has experienced a loss.
Meets for eight weeks

Newly Bereaved Support Group

Support, information, and networking for persons with recent death losses.
Offered monthly, in-person

Writing Through Grief Support Group

Members will engage in writing and reflection focused on their grief journey in a safe, nonjudgmental setting.
Offered periodically in-person

SEASONAL OFFERINGS

Stepping into the Holidays

It is often assumed in the wake of a loss that the holidays are something that requires "coping". While this is often true in various degrees, there is also the possibility of celebrating and connecting with our loved ones in meaningful ways as we step into the holidays. Join us for an engaging conversation around this topic.

Adult One-Time Group offered in-person on Wednesday, November 8th from 6 to 8 pm

Sound Bath Support Group

A meditation during which participants will lie on yoga mats and experience the healing effects of sound vibrations. Participants will be "bathed" in sound for 45 minutes. No previous experience is required. We invite participants to wear comfortable clothing and bring a yoga mat or blanket for added comfort. Yoga mats will be provided for use during the meditation.

Adult One-Time Group offered in-person on Tuesday, December 5th from 6 to 7 pm

Online Resources

WEBSITES

<https://whatsyourgrief.com/>

What's Your Grief is a grief website and online community for grieving people and grief support professionals. We honor all types of loss and grief.

<https://www.joincake.com/>

Cake's end-of-life planning tools guide you in creating living wills, advance directive forms, and estate planning documents that explain your final wishes.

<https://www.centerforloss.com/>

The Center for Loss and Life Transition, led by death educator and grief counselor Dr. Alan Wolfelt, is an organization dedicated to helping people who are grieving and those who care for them.

PODCASTS

Terrible, thanks for asking

<https://ttfa.org/>

A show that makes space for how it really feels to go through the hard things in life.

This American Life – Good Grief!

<https://www.thisamericanlife.org/738/good-grief>

Stories of people figuring out how they'll grieve, and doing a pretty good job of it.

Dougy Center – Grief Out Loud podcast

<https://www.dougy.org/news-media/podcasts>

Hosted by Jana DeCristofaro and produced by Dougy Center, this podcast opens up the, often avoided, conversation around grief.

*I had my own notion of grief.
I thought it was the sad time
That followed the death of
someone you love.
And you had to push through it
To get to the other side.
But I'm learning there is no
other side.
There is no pushing through.
But rather,
There is absorption.
Adjustment.
Acceptance.
And grief is not something you
complete,
But rather, you endure.
Grief is not a task to finish
And move on,
But an element of yourself –
An alteration of your being.
A new way of seeing.
A new definition of self.*

- Gwen Flowers



Highlighting our Graduate Student Intern Program

TRU Grief Services is thrilled to welcome several impressive graduate students to our team who are gaining experience through the fall and winter months providing individual grief counseling and facilitating grief support groups.

As part of their graduate programs, these students have the unique opportunity to support grieving individuals while receiving clinical supervision from staff members and professional guidance to refine their competencies and skills. We partner with several universities to recruit students whose clinical focus is grief and supporting those who have experienced loss.

Students receive a comprehensive orientation to TRU Community Care and hands-on training to provide compassionate care and support to our hospice family members and community clients. Our students find their work with TRU

Grief Services to be rewarding and meaningful, given the opportunity to enhance their clinical skills while pursuing a degree in counseling.

As a reminder, most of our grief support groups are free and led by our graduate students and experienced bereavement group facilitators. Family and friends of patients served by TRU Hospice are offered complimentary counseling sessions by interns and professional counselors following the death of their loved one. We are pleased to offer bereaved members of the community quick access to grief counseling for \$85/individual session and at reduced rates when conducted by our interns - only \$50/individual session and \$65 for family counseling.

Please visit trucare.org/grief for more information about ways to receive support.

HOLIDAYS AND THE ART OF COMPROMISE

During the holidays, everyone in the family has different desires about how they want to remember their special person who has died. Some family traditions may be important to keep, and others may not. It takes everyone's involvement in making a plan and finding a balance in order to accommodate everyone's individual needs.

Kids and teens may want to keep some traditions which allow them to feel connected to their special person. Or sometimes, they may feel open to doing something new. No matter what is decided, the key is to ask important questions and have the necessary conversations about planning for the holidays before the holidays arrive, when grief often surfaces again like a wave.

KIDS' CORNER

Grief Support for Children and Teens



Grief Services Staff: Joan Hummel, Kathryn Messman, Briana Varto, Vanessa Schmutz, Brenda Langille

Grief Services Staff

Kathryn Messman, LCSW
Support Services Manager,
Adult Grief Counselor

Joan Hummel, LCSW
Adult, Youth, and
Family Grief Counselor

Vanessa Schmutz, LCSW
Adult, Youth, and
Family Grief Counselor

Briana Varto, LPCC
Adult Grief Counselor,
Groups Coordinator

Brenda Langille
Grief Services Coordinator

Contact Us

(303) 604-5300

Visit us at:

[TRUcare.org](https://www.trucare.org) and

[Facebook.com/TRUCommunityCare](https://www.facebook.com/TRUCommunityCare)

TRU Grief Services welcomes donations at [trucare.org/donate](https://www.trucare.org/donate). Donations help provide group resources and materials. TRU Community Care is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization. We appreciate your support.