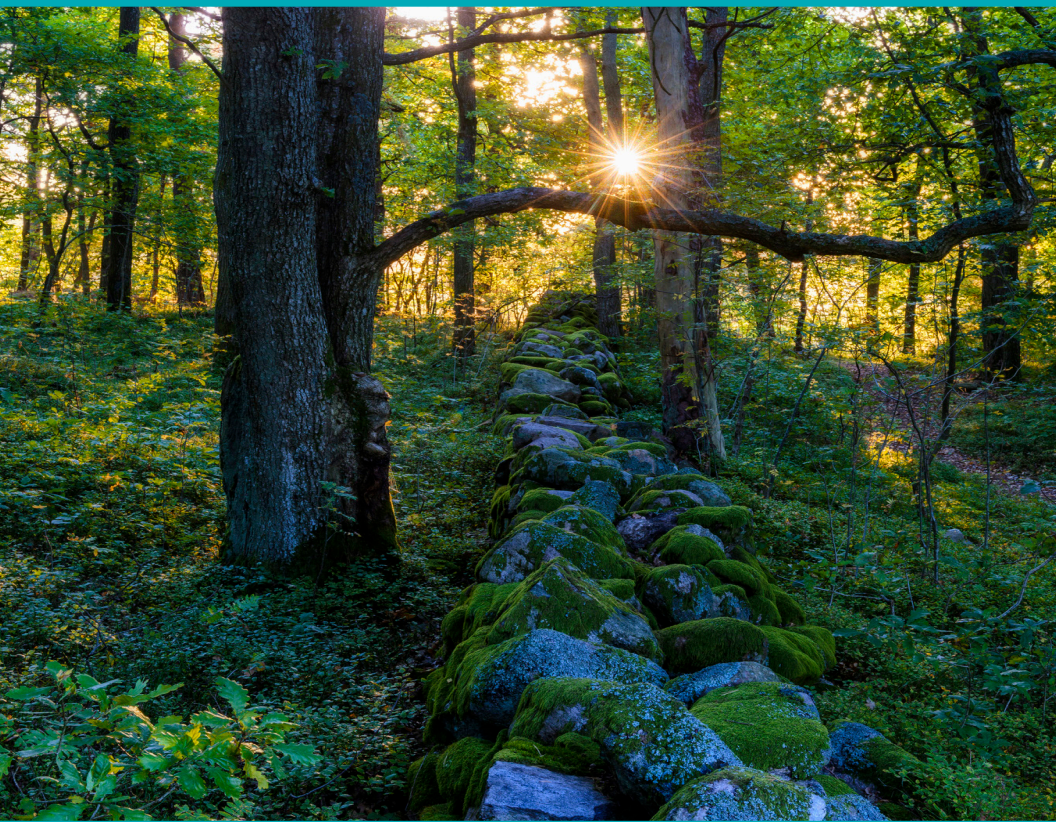


# Our Thoughts Are With You



**Beaumont**  
CHILDREN'S



Dear friends,

Through death, you have just lost the presence of a loved one. The separation may be more painful than anything you have known before. The grief may be overwhelming.

Beaumont Children's has prepared some materials to help you in your journey through grief.

Other losses in life may have taught you something of sorrow, sadness and adjusting to life again. This new grief, however, may feel deeper and larger than any you have felt before. Familiar ways of coping may not seem to work. Other resources, beyond life experience and immediate family, may be needed.

We are sorry for your loss,

*Your friends at Beaumont Hospital*

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# When a child dies

Children are not supposed to die.

Family expect to see children grow and mature. Ultimately, parents expect to die and leave their children behind. This is the natural course of life events, the life cycle continuing as it should. The loss of a child is the loss of innocence, the death of the most vulnerable and dependent. The death of a child signifies the loss of the future, of hopes and dreams, of new strength and of perfection.

## Common questions and answers

### What is grief?

Grief is the normal process of reacting to a loss, including physical loss like the death of a loved one. Everyone reacts differently to such a loss depending on the individual personality and coping style, relationships, past experiences and cultural or religious background. **The process takes time and should not be hurried.**

### What are bereavement and mourning?

Bereavement is the period after a loss during which grief is experienced.

Mourning is the process by which people adapt to a loss. Mourning is influenced by cultural customs, rituals and societal norms.

### What are some of the normal feelings of grief?

Grief may be experienced as a mental, physical, social or emotional reaction.

Many people report feeling an initial stage of numbness after first learning of a death, but there is no order to the grieving process. Everyone grieves differently.

Some emotions you may experience include:

- anger
- denial
- disbelief
- guilt
- sadness
- yearning
- confusion
- despair
- humiliation
- shock



Some physical reactions you may experience include:

- crying spells
- headaches
- diarrhea
- nausea
- dizziness
- restlessness or irritability
- tiredness
- sleeping more than usual
- trouble concentrating
- feeling a lump in your throat
- fast heartbeat or tightness in chest

These are all normal and common reactions to loss. You may not be prepared for the intensity and duration of your emotions or how swiftly your moods may change. Sometimes the feelings can be strange and scary during the first few weeks after the loss of a loved one, especially a child.



## **Suggestion to keep you moving in the right direction**

1. Accept the grief. Do not try to be brave. Take time to cry.
2. Talk about your loss. Find a friend to talk to and talk often. If the friend tells you to “snap out of it,” find another friend. Seek professional counseling to assist with the grief process.
3. Recognize you may feel guilt, which may be real or imagined. You did the best you could at the time. Only hindsight is 20/20. If you are religious, a pastor can help you believe also in God’s forgiveness.
4. Keep busy. Do work that has a purpose. Use your mind.
5. Eat well. Grief stresses the body. You need nourishment now more than ever, so get back to a good diet soon.
6. Exercise regularly. Exercise lightens the load though biochemical changes. It also helps you to sleep better. Return to an old program or start a new one. Or take a walk every day.
7. Nurture yourself. Each day try to do something good for yourself.
8. Join a grief support group of others who will understand your feelings.
9. Hold off on making major decisions. Wait before selling your house or changing jobs.

## **When you return home**

- Contact other family members and close friends. Gather a circle of people who will provide emotional support.
- Notify your spiritual leader, such as a pastor, priest, or rabbi. Let them know if you want the funeral or memorial service at your place of worship.
- Call the funeral home you have chosen. Let them know of any special services you may need.

- If not done already, notify the hospital about which funeral home will be serving you.
- Have a relative, friend or neighbor answer the phone or help with phone calls if there are many people notify.
- Have someone keep a list of all phone calls received, flowers and food donations.

## **Before going to the funeral home**

- Funeral and burial options vary. Ask for descriptions and costs of the kind of service that will honor your loved one.
- Gather information for the obituary. You should provide your child's full name and nicknames, date of birth, school, father's and mother's names and a list of relatives and relationships. Include a list of church, sports organizations, clubs or other memberships your child was involved in.
- Bring the names of organizations or charities to which you wish to have donations made in memory of your loved one.
- Select and bring the clothing in which your child will be buried.
- Get a book for the signatures of those who will attend the funeral or memorial service.
- Have a friend or family make arrangements for food or a reception after the burial service.
- Provide a basket to collect cards guests may bring.
- Think of individuals you might want as pallbearers and people who may speak about your child at the service.



## Local organizations and programs

Many area programs are available to provide assistance after the loss of a child. Some of them are listed below.

### **Alana's Foundation**

C/O 5788 Burnham Road, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302

*alanasfoundation.org*

Alana's Foundation guides grieving families who have experienced the tragic loss of a child with compassionate care throughout their healing process. The Foundation provides resources for emotional counseling, short-term financial support and assistance in fulfilling basic needs.

### **Compassionate Friends**

877-969-0010 • *compassionatefriends.org*

Compassionate Friends offers support meetings for bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents who are dealing with the devastating death of a child. Meetings are not facilitated by professionals, nor do they offer counseling or advice-giving. Participants will be just like you, someone who is going through the natural grieving process.



## **Ele's Place**

517-482-1315 • [elesplace.org](http://elesplace.org)

Ele's Place is a healing center for grieving children, supporting families in the Lansing and Ann Arbor regions. Ongoing peer support group programs help hundreds of children and teens to cope with the death or life-threatening illness of a parent, sibling or other close family member or friend. The organization offers peer support groups for bereaved children of all ages, including young adults, and their parents.

## **National Institute for Trauma & Loss in Children (TLC)**

13725 Starr Commonwealth Road, Albion, MI 49224

800-837-5591 • [info@starr.org](mailto:info@starr.org)

TLC's mission is twofold: to create environments where traumatized children can flourish through trauma-informed education, training, strategies and consultation as well as to provide professionals with evidence-based, trauma specific intervention programs, strategies and referral services. The Parents Trauma Resource Center is an excellent online tool for parents and caregivers to find information about grief and trauma. TLC staff members are available to help parents evaluate where a child stands on the continuum of grief and trauma, to offer parents support and guidance and if needed, to refer parents to a TLC Certified Trauma & Loss Clinical Specialist in their area.

## **New Hope Center for Grief Support**

133 West Main Street, Suite 113, Northville, MI 48167

248-348-0115 • [griefhelp@newhopecenter.net](mailto:griefhelp@newhopecenter.net)

New Hope Center for Grief Support is a bereavement outreach center that offers support services to adults and children who are grieving after the death of a loved one. Grief seminars, support groups for all ages and supportive literature are available. Services are centered on Christian principles. There is no cost to participate in the support groups.



## Support groups for children and families

Child and family grief and loss support groups

### **Grief Support Group - Angela Hospice**

734-464-2683 • [angelahospice.org](http://angelahospice.org)

Angela Hospice offers individual counseling for children and young adults ages 4 to 25. Sessions are free.

### **SandCastles Grief Support Program**

313-771-7005 • [aboutsandcastles.org](http://aboutsandcastles.org)

SandCastles is a support program offered by Henry Ford Hospice to children and teens ages 3 to 18 who grieve the loss of a loved one. Participation in group activities with peers supports the healing process by helping young people to accept grief as a normal response to loss. Families are encouraged to take part in the program for as long as they feel the need. There is no time limit to grief and SandCastles honors this idea.

### **Gilda's Club**

248-577-0800 • [gildasclub.org](http://gildasclub.org)

For losses due to cancer, Gilda's Club offers four different groups with no fee.

# Adult grief support

General support groups

## Wayne County

### **Angela Hospice - Compassionate Care for Children/Adults/Families**

14100 Newburgh Road, Livonia, MI 48154  
734-464-7810 • [angelahospice.org](http://angelahospice.org)

## Oakland County

### **LivingOn - Hospice of Michigan**

43097 Woodward Avenue, #102, Bloomfield Township, MI 48302  
248-334-1323

### **Grief Share**

multiple Detroit area locations with monthly meetings  
[griefshare.org](http://griefshare.org)

### **A.J. Desmond & Sons Funeral Homes**

[desmondfuneralhome.com](http://desmondfuneralhome.com)

2600 Crooks Road, Troy, MI 48084  
248-362-2500 • [CrooksRd@AJDesmond.com](mailto:CrooksRd@AJDesmond.com)

32515 Woodward Avenue, Royal Oak, MI 48073  
248-549-0500 • [Woodward@AJDesmond.com](mailto:Woodward@AJDesmond.com)

3725 Rochester Road, Troy, MI 48083  
248-689-0700 • 800-210-7135 • [RochRd@AJDesmond.com](mailto:RochRd@AJDesmond.com)



# Bereavement support

Grief and loss references

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H. Norman Wright (2009) *Reflections of a Grieving Spouse: The Unexpected Journey from Loss to Renewed Hope*. Harvest House Publishers.

### Magazines and Articles

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Grief and Loss Magazine: [griefandlossmagazine.com](http://griefandlossmagazine.com)

Living with Loss Magazine: [bereavementmag.com](http://bereavementmag.com)

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"Grief Observed: Using Movies to Move through Grief" by Matty Tousley, Bereavement Counselor

"A Prescription to Laugh: Healing Through Humor and Laughter" by Lynne Shaw, Laugh Therapist

## Websites

*childrensgrief.net*

*griefnet.org*

*livinglifecounseling.com*

*recover-from-grief.com*

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