

# Grief Notes

February 2025

## Coping With the Hardest Times by Jane Cornman, Bereavement Coordinator

I used to believe that nighttime is the worst time for people who are grieving. So many people told me this, and it was a common topic in grief support groups. Then I met a woman who told me that she had no problem with evenings and nighttime, because her recently deceased spouse had a night job, and they were never together in the evening. Her worst time was in the morning, each time he failed to return home from his night shift.

Regardless of when your hard time is, the fact remains that most grieving people find that there is a time of day (or of the week, month, or year) that is particularly hard. We bereavement coordinators spend a lot of time dispensing advice for dealing with the big days: the birthdays, holidays, and anniversaries. But what about the day to day, week to week hard times that every grieving person struggles with?

First, let's talk about what makes hard times hard. Usually, it is a combination of at least two things. It's a time of the day or week when there was a routine involving your deceased loved one. And it's also a time when you may naturally struggle, based on factors such as your circadian rhythms, physical health, and personality. We've all heard productivity experts talk about identifying our most productive times of the day for getting things done. It follows that most of us, even if we're not grieving, have times of the day when we're not at our best. Combine these low times in the day with routines that incline us to miss our loved ones, and it's a recipe for dread.

Maybe the next step, then, is to deal with the dread we feel towards our hard times. It's helpful to pick a time of day when things are easier – those better times that productivity experts want us to use to our benefit – to plan ahead for the

harder times. Waiting for a sunny day or the company of a friend might help if it sounds like this exercise will be difficult. Begin by identifying what, exactly, is so hard about your hard times. It may seem obvious, but it's worth spelling it out: "When I have to cook dinner for one, then spend the evening alone, I feel sad and depressed. Then I can't sleep." Now pick it apart to gain some clarity. How do these experiences feel in my body? What is going on in the environment when this happens? What are the memories that are being repeatedly triggered? What's so bad about feeling these feelings? It can be helpful to write these things down.

Sometimes just going through this exercise will bring enough clarity to come up with a plan for coping with the hard times. But if a solution is not obvious, then here are some ideas. First, focus on making small changes. We may not be able to control the big events in life like someone dying, but we can create small, new habits related to mindfulness and acceptance that will help. We can ask family and friends for help and companionship. We can plan new routines or treats that give us something to look forward to during the difficult times. We can give ourselves dedicated time to work through sadness and grief, knowing that it is okay to limit that time and stop after a while, also building in time to soothe and care for ourselves. We can try harder to follow all those tips we know so well about getting enough physical activity and getting enough rest, giving ourselves grace when we are inconsistent or imperfect, and continuing to try and do our best.

If you are struggling with a predictable hard time that brings you dread and you need more help, please reach out to your local bereavement coordinator, named on the back of this newsletter. We are always happy to help!



# Calendar

## Bangor Area Grief Support

Grief can feel isolating and lonely, and griever's are sometimes surprised by the intensity and duration of their grief. Here at Northern Light, we believe that no one should grieve alone. Our bereavement coordinators are available for questions and grief support. Please feel welcome to contact your bereavement coordinator, Jane Cornman, to learn more about how we can help, or to sign up for a support group: 207-944-5534 / [jcornman@northernlight.org](mailto:jcornman@northernlight.org).

### Bangor Area Grief Support Groups

#### **Monthly Drop-in Grief Support Group (in person)**

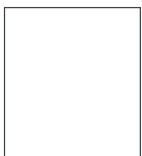
Tuesday drop-in grief support groups continue on the fourth Tuesday of the month, 2-3:30, at a local church in Bangor. The next two meetings will be on February 25 and March 25.

#### **Online Grief Support Begins in March**

We will be offering a six-week online grief support group which will take place on Mondays, 10-11:30 am, starting on Monday, March 24. This group will be available based on need. A minimum of five participants is needed to schedule the group, and it will be limited to 10 participants. This group is free of charge and is open to anyone who has experienced the loss of a loved one. Registration is required. For more information or to register, please contact Jane Cornman at 207-944-5534 or [jcornman@northernlight.org](mailto:jcornman@northernlight.org).

**“We cannot release  
or discover or heal  
by the use of our  
minds alone...It  
is the heart that  
will blaze the trail  
through the thicket  
of grief.”**

**- Carol Staudacher**



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