

Grief Notes

November 2025

Help and hope as you face the holiday season by George McLaughlin, Bereavement Coordinator

With the holidays just around the corner, are you wondering how you will make it through these next couple of months? Are you dreading them, knowing much has changed and happy memories from past years can't be recreated? Despite what most people think, not everyone looks forward to the holidays. Losing someone through death often creates dread as the holiday season approaches. For the bereaved, the holidays tend to magnify feelings of loss.

Whatever your holiday traditions or beliefs may be, keeping a positive memory of your loved one can help to lessen your sadness. While nothing can erase the pain completely, there are things you can do to make the holidays less stressful. Here are a few suggestions to assist you in taking positive steps toward feeling better during the holiday season and throughout the New Year as well.

Accept Change: Be careful not to set expectations too high for yourself. Expecting things to be the same or go a particular way will likely lead to disappointment. Consider starting a new tradition, such as a donation in your loved one's memory or lighting

a candle in their honor. Include the deceased in conversations and celebrations. Once others sense you are comfortable doing so, they may share stories that will add to your pleasant memories. If thought to be helpful, change the times, locations and/or menus of traditional meals or perhaps replace a dinner at home with dining out.

Plan Ahead: Being caught by surprise can create added anxiety. Prioritize what needs to be done and decide which things to let go. Think ahead. Sit down with family and talk through what you'd like to do for the holiday season. Do only what each family member can comfortably handle. Family get-togethers can be hard so be honest with each other about your feelings. There's no right way or wrong way to handle the holidays. Some may wish to follow family traditions while others may choose to change things up. Handling invitations to family or special events during the holidays can often be stressful. Family and friends will attempt to get you involved and reconnected but being emotionally fragile can make social interactions difficult. Plan ahead to help lessen any anxiety these events may bring.

If hesitant, saying "Maybe... I'll see how I'm feeling" provides for the opportunity not to attend should the day of the event not be a good day for you.

Set Reasonable Limits: Do only those things that are special or important to you. What you choose the first year, you don't have to do next year. Find a balance. Consider what you want to do and what you don't need to do this holiday season. Spend time with others but also take time to reflect on your own thoughts and fully appreciate your memories.

"Family get-togethers can be hard so be honest with each other about your feelings."

Finally, remember that it's okay to do something for you! Purchase something for yourself, do something you've never done before, enjoy a simple pleasure or attempt a new adventure. While finding time and ways to honor and remember your loved one during the holidays is important, remember to also give your own life meaning and value during this difficult yet very special season.



Calendar

Bangor Area Grief Support

Grief can feel isolating and lonely, and griever 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.

Monthly Drop-in Grief Support Group (in person)

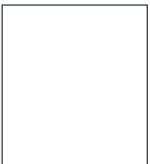
Tuesday drop-in grief support groups continue on the fourth Tuesday of the month, 2-3:30, at a local church in Bangor. The next two meetings will be on November 25 and December 23.

Online Grief Support Being Organized

We are organizing a 6-week online grief support group. Once a minimum of five participants signs up, we will find the best mutual time for all participants and schedule the meetings. The group is free of charge and open to anyone who has experienced the loss of a loved one. For more information or to register, please contact jane Cornman at 207-944-5534 or jcornman@northernlight.org.

“The holiest of all holidays are those kept by ourselves in silence and apart; The secret anniversaries of the heart.”

- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



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Calendar

South Portland Grief Support

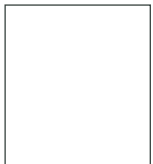
Holiday Grief Support: Holidays can be very difficult when you are grieving. Please join us for this meeting to talk about the challenges of this time of year and ideas to help you meet those challenges. This one-time meeting will be held on November 13 from 1-2:30 pm at our South Portland office at 225 Gorham Rd., 2nd floor. For more information or to register to attend, contact bereavement coordinator Linda Hopkins at 207-400-8714 or hopkinsl@northernlight.org.

Monthly Zoom Grief Support Meetings: Next meetings are on November 4 and December 2. If you are interested in attending, contact Linda Hopkins (207-400-8714 or e-mail hopkinsl@northernlight.org.) Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month.

Support groups are only one of the supports we offer. For more information about grief support, please contact Linda Hopkins, 207-400-8714 or hopkinsl@northernlight.org.

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Waterville Grief Support

Grief can feel isolating and lonely, and griever 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.

Waterville Area Grief Support Groups

In-Person Grief Support Groups

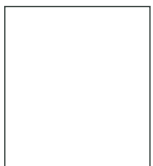
We are not currently offering in-person meetings in Waterville. If you would prefer an in-person experience, please contact Jane Cornman for assistance with finding a local grief support group.

Online Grief Support Being Organized

We are organizing a 6-week online grief support group. Once a minimum of five participants signs up, we will find the best mutual time for all participants and schedule the meetings. The group is free of charge and open to anyone who has experienced the loss of a loved one. For more information or to register, please contact jane Cornman at 207-944-5534 or jcornman@northernlight.org.

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Calendar

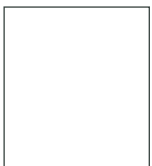
Ellsworth Area Grief Support

Grief and grieving is different for each of us. If you are struggling with grief, have questions, concerns, or if you would like information about bereavement support groups, please contact Tim Soucy, Bereavement Services Coordinator, at 207-356-1497 or tesoucy@northernlight.org or our tollfree number at 1-800-757-3326.

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Presque Isle Area Grief Support

Grief and the Holidays – Healthy Ways to Grieve Well During the Holidays

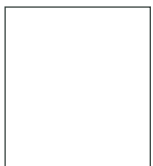
In spite of what most people say, everyone does not look forward to the holidays. Having lost someone through death, you may dread this holiday season. You may wish you could just snap your fingers and it would be over. Holidays often magnify the feelings of loss of a loved one. It is important and natural to experience the sadness that you feel.

This one evening seminar on Wednesday, November 5 from 6-7pm at AR Gould Hospital will address those things that often trigger our grief but also provide helpful ideas and suggestions as you prepare for the holidays after a significant loss. This seminar is open to the public and is free of charge. You are encouraged to RSVP by Monday, November 3.

Six Week Grief Support Groups – Have you lost a loved one? When someone we love dies it can feel overwhelming. You may feel alone and that no one understands what you are going through. The truth is that many are walking a similar path. Consider coming to a place where you can talk, grieve, and move forward with people who are also grieving. Please contact George if you are interested in participating in a Grief Support Group.

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