

## Bereavement Care for Bronson Staff

For use with: *Grief When Someone has Died* Handout

This first page is a reference for staff; not necessary to share with family

### Handout

- Grief When Someone has Died
- Get a current list of area funeral homes at
  - [http://www.superpages.com/yellowpages/C-Funeral+Homes/S-MI/funeral home link](http://www.superpages.com/yellowpages/C-Funeral+Homes/S-MI/funeral+home+link)
  - [Area Funeral Homes](#)
- Grief Support Group List Available at Hospice Care of SW Michigan  
Link to: [Grief Support Groups](#)

### Bereavement Resources for Staff Reference

- [Bereavement: MedlinePlus](#)
- [Mosby's Nursing Consult - Grief and Loss](#)
- [Guide to Culturally Competent Care](#)
- Bronson Nursing Manual (see links under references)
- [Palliative Care Department Intranet page](#)
- Bereavement Intranet Page
- [Ethics Committee Intranet Page](#)
- [Scripting for Bedside Spirituality](#)

To access the links, gold down the Ctrl Key and click on the link.

### Resources for Staff for their self-care at times of patient or personal grief

Crisis Debriefing Team: <https://inside.bronsonhg.org/index.asp?pageid=162>

Pastoral Care: <https://inside.bronsonhg.org/index.asp?pageid=153>

HelpNet: [http://helpnetcap.com/work\\_life\\_login](http://helpnetcap.com/work_life_login)

Bereavement: [http://helpnetcap.com/work\\_life\\_login](http://helpnetcap.com/work_life_login)

### References:

- Nursing V-01 Patient Death Guidelines/Includes Gift of Life
- Nursing P-02 Use of Hospital Chaplain Guidelines
- Nursing V-02 Care of the Body After Death Procedure
- Nursing V-03 Medical Examiner Guideline
- Nursing V-04 Indications for Obtaining an Autopsy Policy

Approved by: Patient Education Council

Authored by: Bronson Medical Social Work, Nursing, Palliative Care, Pastoral Care Education Services, Patient Education Council, Patient/Family Centered Care Council

Last revision date: November 2010

To our staff:

*When someone dies, it is a priority that our patients' families know about self-care and resources to manage their response to their loss. We want to connect them to the community, social or religious resources that will provide them with ongoing comfort and help for their situations.*

*This Grief When someone has died handout is to assist you to meet grieving families' needs.*

- ✓ Use the Grief When Someone has Died information sheet as a guide to responding to your patient's family. Adjust your words and caring to what is comfortable for you and the situation
- ✓ Consider the timing of your work to share the needed information
- ✓ Ask the family, and offer what would be comforting
- ✓ Document the care and information that has been provided for the family or next of kin in the patient's record
- ✓ Care for yourself as you work with families who are facing grief



## Grief When Someone Has Died

We are very sorry for your loss. We know this is a hard time and want to share ways to support you now and in your near future.

### What to expect

Most of us have not learned how to deal with the hard feelings of the grief process. This makes it frightening as well as painful. Grief and sorrow are our feeling responses to the death. These feelings are to be expected. They are normal and natural. People deal with grief in different ways. The first shock may be followed by feelings of denial, loss of control, anger, sadness, and depression. There may also be relief, anxiety and stress about life changes and loneliness.

### At the time of death

- Call a friend, your clergy—whoever can help and support you at this time.
- Think about how to tell others. Who needs to know right now? What is the most thoughtful way to let them know?
  - When talking with adults
    - Use straightforward and plain words.
    - Be honest.
    - Respond to questions, rather than trying to cover all details.
  - For more information about how to talk with children about grief
    - Link to [Talking with Children about Death](#) for more information.
- Take care of immediate needs for things like child care, family notifications, meeting health needs of survivors, needed expected prayers/rituals
- Decisions about organ and tissue donation may need to be made. Gift of Life is the agency that works with Bronson for this. One of their staff may be in touch with you.
- Decisions about an autopsy may need to be made. An autopsy is the study of the body to learn the cause of death.
  - The police or doctor may ask for an autopsy. There will be no cost for the family.
  - If you or your family want an autopsy, the family is responsible for requesting it and for costs. We can help you arrange an autopsy if your request one.
- Choose a funeral home.
  - Ask your nurse or social worker for a list of area funeral homes. A list can also be found at
  - [http://www.superpages.com/yellowpages/C-Funeral+Homes/S-MI/funeral\\_home\\_link](http://www.superpages.com/yellowpages/C-Funeral+Homes/S-MI/funeral_home_link)
  - [Area Funeral Homes](#)
- The funeral home will help you with planning, meeting regulations, and getting needed documents.

## The emotions of grief

This is a challenge for anyone who has experienced a death.

Some things to think about are:

- There are many differing feelings during grief. They are no right or wrong feelings
- People find help for their feelings in many ways. Some of these are:
  - Family & Friends
  - Church or religious community
  - Rituals or cultural customs
  - Counseling
  - Meditation, Prayer
  - Journaling, writing
  - Support Groups
  - A list of support groups is attached to this handout. The list can also be Found at [Grief Support Groups](#)

## Normal Grief

After loss, you may feel

- Sadness, crying, feelings of loneliness, anger, anxiety
- Guilty about things you did or didn't do before this loss
- Feeling like you should have been the one who died
- You may think you hear or see the person who died
- You may have problems sleeping
- You may not want to eat, exercise, or be around other people

These are all part of the normal grieving process.

## Complicated Grief

When grief becomes more complicated it may lead to serious depression or substance abuse. When signs of grieving become extreme or last for a long period of time, it is time to get some help. Help can come from your clergy or community of friends. Help is also available through counseling, your physician or support groups.

## Resources

A serious loss affects our physical and mental health. There are actions and resources to use that will help you through the grief process. If support is needed, or you have questions about the grief process, call:

- Gryphon Place (Available 24 hours) <http://www.gryphon.org/>
  - Phone = 2-1-1-HELP 269 2-1-1-4357
- Hospice Care of SW Michigan <http://www.hospiceswmi.org> 269 345 0273

## Self-care during grief

Many people find some of the things below helpful.

- Do 20 minutes or more of physical activity at least every other day.
- Do something that interests you at least once or twice a week.
- Talk with friends and family.
- Learn ways to lower stress, such as breathing and muscle relaxation exercises.
- Get 7 to 9 hours of rest a night.
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet
- Do not abuse alcohol or drugs.
- Put off major decisions or life changes (such as selling your home and moving) until you feel better.