



Tom Bekkers, MSW, APSW, is an Advanced Practice Social Worker with over 30 years of experience in professional counseling related to patients and family members faced with the challenges of health situations, life-style adjustment issues, death, and grief. Tom holds a master's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

For more than three decades, he worked at St. Vincent Hospital in Green Bay and served as facilitator of the "Understanding Grief" group and "Taking Time" cancer support group. Tom also worked at Unity Hospice as a grief counselor and has co-facilitated grief groups at Unity for family members after the death of a loved one. Tom is currently employed as a social worker with Green Bay Oncology. He is co-author of "The Widower's Toolbox: Repairing Your Life After Losing Your Spouse" which helps channel men's grief into constructive tasks and provides tools that will enable bereaved men to recreate lives that can be fulfilling once again.

Tom lives in Denmark, Wisconsin with his wife Patty, and he has two daughters. Tom and Patty are members of the Circles of Faith Catholic Community, belonging to St. James Parish in Cooperstown. Tom may be contacted by phone at 920-660-8066 or by email at tbekkers@centurytel.net

GRIEF RESOURCES

Books: General Bereavement

- Living When a Loved One Dies (Grollman)
- Life After Loss (Deits)
- Good Grief (Westberg)
- The Journey Through Grief (Wolfelt)
- Heaven is for Real (Burpo)

Books: Death of a Spouse

- The Widowers Toolbox (Schaefer/Bekkers)
- How to Survive the Loss of a Love (Colgrove)

Books: Death of a Parent

- How it Feels When a Parent Dies (Krementz)

Books: Bereaved Parents

- The Bereaved Parent (Schiff)
- The Worst Loss (Rosof)

Books: Helping Children with Grief

- The Grieving Child (Fitzgerald)

Books: Sudden and Traumatic Loss

- No Time for Goodbyes (Lord)

Books: Suicide

- Suicide Survivors: A Guide (Wroblecki)

Websites:

- Sympathy Sharing Site
www.bereavement.com
- Journey of Hearts
www.journeyofhearts.org
- Survivors of Suicide
www.survivorsofsuicide.com
- The Compassionate Friends
www.compassionatefriends.org

Circles of Faith Bereavement Ministry and Grief Support Group



January 2024
to
May 2024

Grief Support Ministry
is an outreach program of the
Circle of Faith Catholic Churches

GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP OFFERINGS

Sessions are held in person and through Zoom.

St. James Parish Hall
18228 CTH R, Denmark WI 54208
12:00-2:00PM

Zoom is available by contacting
Mr. Tom Bekkers, Facilitator - Info on reverse

SUNDAY, JANUARY 14, 2024

Where Are You God in the Midst of My Grief?

Faith questions sometimes arise during the agonizing times after the death of a loved one. How can I pray when I hurt so much? What do I do when the ways I used to pray don't work anymore? This session will help us see that God is not only the God of the sufferers, but the God who suffers, and can provide comfort to those in the midst of grief.

SUNDAY, MARCH 10, 2024

Continuing to Care for Yourself While Grieving the Loss of a Loved One

Those who are grieving can feel pressure to move through grief at a particular pace and in certain ways. Many of our friends and family will begin to act as if life should be "back to normal" within weeks or months following a death. Attending to your physical, emotional, and spiritual needs while you grieve will be critical in your overall well-being and future health. Finding ways to gently care for yourself through the pain and loneliness that grief brings will be one of the most important parts of your healing.

SUNDAY, MAY 19, 2024

Dealing With All the Stuff After a Loved One Dies

Sorting through the belongings of a loved one can bring up many issues: pain of past hurts, or anger over decisions made about inheritance or a cherished item. Dealing with the stuff becomes a responsibility for someone after each person dies. Are you that person? This session will offer ideas to help you cope with this task in a healthy fashion.

General Tips on Grief

- Give yourself permission, time, and space to grieve.
 - Be patient and gentle with yourself.
 - Seek support through family, friends, clergy, support groups or counseling.
 - Learn about grief...understanding helps you to realize that you're not "going crazy."
 - Express your grief...talk, write in a journal, paint a picture, play music, write a poem, do something physical...any activity that helps you vent your feelings.
 - Don't overextend yourself or take on new responsibilities right away.
 - Accept your grief...don't pretend that it doesn't hurt. Grieving is a natural and healing process.
 - Don't compare yourself to others who are grieving. Everyone heals in their own time and way.
 - Respect your own timetable...there is no fixed period for mourning.
 - Cry...it is not a sign of weakness. Tears release tension and are healing.
 - Pace yourself...grief takes energy.
 - Take good physical care of yourself. Try to get enough rest...emphasize nutrition...exercise in moderation...see your doctor for a physical.
 - Find balance in your life...take time to do nice things for yourself.
 - Plan activities that are enjoyable.
 - It's OK to laugh and have fun.
- Don't become dependent on alcohol or drugs to get through the painful times...they will only mask the pain.
 - Get involved in meaningful activities...work, hobbies, and volunteering.
 - Ask for help when you need it and accept help when offered. Let others know what is right for you; they will take their cues from you.
 - Realize that death often causes one to examine his/her faith or philosophy of life. You may find yourself questioning old beliefs. Talking about it can help. For many, faith offers help to accept the unacceptable.
 - Set small, manageable goals - one day (hour/minute)—whatever you can do.
 - Postpone major decisions, such as selling your home or changing jobs, if possible. Also avoid making hasty decisions about your loved one's belongings. Gauge your own readiness.
 - Realize that grief is a process that has both ups and downs, strides, and backslides, times of rest and pause. Honor your own process.
 - Avoid thinking "what if..." "if only..." "I should have..." Feelings of guilt are normal, though often not realistic.
 - Forgive yourself, if necessary
 - Share memories. Use their name. Healing through grief doesn't mean forgetting your loved one.