



A 13-MONTH MAILING SERIES

Bereavement Series

Please remember: the Bereavement Team at Choice Hospice cares about you and your loved ones. Over the thirteen months following a loss, we walk alongside you — one gentle reflection at a time.



Our bereavement program includes

Sign up for services any time by calling us or visiting the bereavement section of our website.

- ✓ **Healing Hearts through Helping Hands Outreach**
- ✓ **Private 1:1, Group & Family Counseling Sessions**
- ✓ **Referrals to Community Resources**

MONTH 01 Denial

Denial is the first of the five stages of grief — it helps us survive the loss. The world can feel meaningless and overwhelming, and we go numb, wondering how we can go on.

Denial and shock help us cope and make survival possible. They pace our feelings of grief so we take in only what we can bear. There is a grace in denial.

MONTH 02 Grief & Mourning

Bereavement is the period of sadness after losing a loved one. Grief and mourning occur during this time and are closely related — mourning is how we show grief in public.

The way we mourn is shaped by belief, religion, and culture. Common reactions include emotional numbness, disbelief, anxiety from separation, depression, and — in time — feelings of acceptance.

MONTH 03 Take Care of Yourself

- **Rest:** grief is exhausting — allow naps and quiet.
- **Caring:** stay close to those you trust.
- **Routine:** do things at your own pace.
- **Process:** let grief come and go, a little at a time.
- **Activities:** exercise, walk, visit friends.
- **Pleasures:** enjoy small comforts to regain joy.

MONTH 04 Companioning

The companioning model helps people integrate loss by being present with them. Being a good companion is:

- About walking alongside — not leading
- About listening with the heart — not analyzing
- About being present to pain — not taking it away
- About sacred silence — not filling every moment with words

MONTH 05 Bereavement & Rituals

Rituals give us acts to engage in for the purpose of meaning-making, and a symbolic connection to a lost loved one — something as simple as baking a mother's chocolate cake for family gatherings.

Certain dates are especially hard: birthdays, anniversaries, holidays. Plan a remembrance ritual ahead of time to acknowledge the day both cognitively and symbolically.

MONTH 06 Complicated Grief

The sadness of losing someone never disappears completely, but it shouldn't remain center stage. When pain is so constant it keeps you from resuming life, you may be experiencing complicated grief — like being stuck in a constant state of mourning. Watch for:

- Intense, intrusive longing or imagining the loved one alive
- Avoiding reminders, or extreme anger over the loss
- Feeling that life is empty or meaningless

MONTH 07 Tips from Survivors

Use grief to fuel creativity: keep a journal, draw, write poetry, make a scrapbook or collage, or take an art class.

Create rituals: set aside time once a week to focus on your grief — to acknowledge your love and recognize the person is always with you in memory and spirit.

MONTH 08 Gender & Grief

A common belief holds that women talk about feelings easily while men appear more stoic. But we must recognize the uniqueness of each individual — one's personal style may blend both patterns.

There is no right or wrong way to grieve. There is only the individual's way; whatever works for that person is what matters.

MONTH 09 A "Hands On" Approach

If there is a grave or memorial site to visit, you might bring flowers, clear away leaves, or leave a small gift or light.

You could also volunteer for physical work — wrapping gifts for children in need, serving meals at a shelter, or visiting patients in a nursing home, even as a companion.

MONTH 10 Grief as Sacred Service

Dedicate your grief to others who are suffering with you. Use meditation or prayer to contemplate that we are all connected in our mortality and our suffering.

The pain itself can become a powerful tool for growth and healing — for ourselves, and for others.

MONTH 11 Tell Stories

Spend time with others who are also grieving and take turns telling favorite stories about the person who has died.

Often these sessions fill with laughter and lightheartedness — a wonderful way to honor your loved one and keep their memory close.

MONTH 12 Grief & the Holidays

- **Be honest** about your grief — don't feel you must fake being happier than you are.
- **Include the loss** in your holidays — light a candle in their memory.
- **Take grief online** — share photos of past holidays and reminisce on good times.

MONTH 13 With Gratitude

We have felt so privileged that you allowed our team to care for you and your loved ones. Thank you for trusting us and welcoming us into your hearts and homes.

As this 13-month period ends, if you or your loved ones need continued or additional services, please call us at **313-551-4626** — we'll help connect you to a program in your area.



Sign up for bereavement services

Call us, or visit the bereavement section of our website — support is here whenever you're ready.

(313) 551-

4626

choicehospice.org