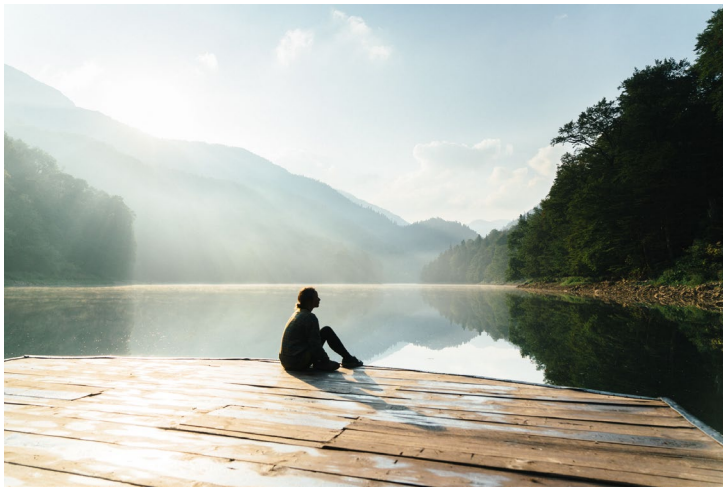




HEALING THE SPIRIT

Winter 2023

1-800-847-7831 | healingthespirit.org



Dear Donor Families,

Emotions are energy in motion. Sometimes we are overwhelmed with the need to find a way to set that energy free. Suppressing emotions and their energy becomes exhausting. Finding positive ways to process and let go of these emotions can help to alleviate the lowest lows and the surges that build. Channeling grief into opportunities that contribute to your healing and the betterment of our world is the best way to move forward with life after loss. The events and activities sponsored by LifeNet Health Donor Family Services can provide a safe space to connect with other donor families and move the emotions of grief.

All the Best,

Debbie Hutt, DFS Director



LifeNet Health offers opportunities for donor families to come together to remember their loved ones and find support amongst others. You are welcome to attend any and all events no matter where you are along your grief journey.

In Celebration & Remembrance

Roanoke – April 2, 2023 -

<https://cvent.me/NX79gB>

Richmond – April 30, 2023 -

<https://cvent.me/Ywmd2b>

Newport News – May 7, 2023 -

<https://cvent.me/NX7nqg>

Jacksonville – September 24, 2023

Save the date!

Pensacola – October 8, 2023

Save the date!

Donor Family Baseball Games

Jacksonville- May 13, 2023

Save the date!

Pensacola- May 20, 2023

Save the date!

Stay Informed...

We

look forward to seeing you at our Donor Family Services events. In addition to staying in the know for the events listed in the announcement section, we also offer activities, opportunities, and resources on our “Healing the Spirit” webpage.



Healing Tears

Dear Dr. Leary,

I have so much pent-up grief and love inside after the death of my son and I don't know what to do with it. Any suggestions?

Pent Up

Dear Pent Up:

“The universe is made of stories, not atoms.” Your feelings of grief and love are like individual, sacred stories, each one asking to be heard. Every loss deserves a hundred tellings, and we need to give words to our sorrow and our love.

When you are grieving, missing your loved one and have nowhere to put the love, you can tell the story of your loved one in a journal. You can connect with your loved one, sharing your life and your thoughts as you did before their death. You can keep the relationship close, unique, and personal. This is not to suggest that you need to change your grief or deny it. By exploring and expressing your grief, you are exploring it from an open and accepting perspective rather than denying or repressing it. Shared grief feels supported and validated, whether with someone you confide in or expressed to yourself in writing or artistic forms.

The benefits of a journal are many-fold:

- You can tell the story as many times as you have the urge to tell it.
- No one will interrupt you and tell you that “you’ve already told me that.”
- Paper is often more patient than people.
- You can keep it private or choose to share it with trusted friends.
- You can revisit memories and find new insights and meaning.
- You can spend as much or as little time on a feeling as you want without prodding.
- You can make sense of events and get rid of feelings that you no longer want to carry.
- You can pose questions and find your own answers without others giving advice.
- You can investigate scenarios and rehearse future situations.
- You can express appreciation and pay attention to our blessings.
- You can continue the connection and conversations with him.
- It’s free and always available.

You can also move the energy of grief and love out into the world. You can transmute the heaviness of grief and the fullness of love into action for a cause that represents your loved one’s values. What did he stand for? Where did he give his attention and energy? How can you carry on his legacy, as though you are working in

the world on his behalf? How can you share who he was with others in a tangible, practical form? Can you share his love for nature by picking up his shovel and volunteering to maintain trails? Can you donate his science fiction in his name to your local library? What would make you think of him and smile if you saw it in your community; how can you make that happen?

There are many ways to make love visible and share it with others. For example, you may have repeated loving habits for your loved one; you may have phoned or texted him every day. You might have baked him cookies every week. And now, in your loved one's absence, you feel empty without the comfort of that ritual. Can you share the gift of that habit with another person in need? Can you share the details of that interaction with someone else, and share the love instead of keeping the memory bottled up inside? Who can you share with on a regular basis to share your great capacity for love?

It is important to remember that your grief, like your love, is unique and no one can tell you when or how to address it. When and how and with whom you work with your pent-up grief and love needs to be respected and honored. I hope you find the expression and outlet for your love for your son.

Blessings, Lani

Lani Leary, Ph.D., specializes in working with chronically ill, dying, and bereaved clients. Dr. Leary has worked for the past 25 years as a psychotherapist in private practice and in six hospices across the country.
[Have a question for Dr. Leary? Contact Aimee Evans at \[aimee_evans@lifenethealth.org\]\(mailto:aimee_evans@lifenethealth.org\).](mailto:aimee_evans@lifenethealth.org)



The Journey

Channeling the Energy:

Your Mind and Body

Have you ever heard the directive, “walk it off” when something painful happens? Our emotions can increase and decrease our life force or energy from within. Anger and happiness often build energy in our bodies propelling us to express and move our bodies. Sadness tends to deplete our energy reserves and cause us to want to stay in bed or get lost in a television show. So how can our awareness of this emotional influence on our bodies work to our advantage? By acknowledging this effect, we can choose behaviors and activities to help us express and balance our emotional energy. Much like the wind and waves, there is movement in our daily lives. Emotions can feel like they sweep you away or push you into places you feel unprepared for. What do you do when you become overwhelmed with your feelings? Do you have healthy outlets for letting them pass through you? One of the challenges in managing our emotions is that they often arise unexpectedly, and intensely and catch us off guard. Learning about emotional intelligence and ways to ride the waves, so to speak, gives you the ability to identify what you are feeling and why. Once you identify and understand, you have a chance to choose an outlet that will give you an avenue to let that emotion go. Here are some easy points of awareness that will take you through these steps:

- Label your feelings or emotions: anger, sadness, loneliness, guilt, disappointment, frustration, jealousy, happiness, fear, excitement, anxiety. You can define what the feeling is and label it for yourself or others. “I am feeling... “. Be sure not to blame others for this feeling and use the pronoun “I”. For example, you want to avoid starting your statement with “You are making me feel....”.
- Ask yourself what was the trigger or experience in the present moment that brought these feelings or emotions out in you? Answer the question for yourself or with others, “I am feeling _____ because_____.”
- Use a coping skill or activity that helps alleviate this feeling or feelings. Breathing exercises, taking a walk, meditating or other physical options could be your go-to coping skills. Make a list of what coping skills work best for you during specific emotions. If you are processing an emotion with another person, have them do this activity with you.
- After the wave of emotion has passed, use positive self-affirmations like, “It’s okay to be angry. There is no such thing as a bad or wrong way to feel. I am only human, and I have many emotions.”

Recognizing your emotions and the emotions of others with compassion allows us to be open to addressing the underlying reason the emotions arose in the first place. Being kind and curious gives us avenues to go from the why to what can I do now? It is empowering to take back the control that we feel we sometimes lose to our emotions. Channeling your energy out and into positive opportunities is a healthy avenue to promote healing. A great way to find positive opportunities is to do outreach in your community. Finding a purpose or mission that speaks to you and makes the world a better place for others can be incredibly rewarding.



Would you like to get involved in promoting donation in your community? Often donor families are needed to help with education in hospitals and at community events. Scan this QR code to find out more.