



HEALING THE SPIRIT

Winter 2021

1-800-847-7831 | healingthespirit.org



Dear Donor Families,

The Donor Family Services Team is working hard to plan virtual activities and ceremonies that will support you and your family as well as to help shine the light of hope during the darkness of grief. The candles pictured above were part of our 2020 *In Celebration & Remembrance* ceremony. This ceremony, held to honor and remember organ, eye, and tissue donors, is available to view on our website www.healingthespirit.org. You can locate the link under “Donor Family Support – Events” on our site. The *In Celebration & Remembrance* ceremony is an Annual LifeNet Health event the Donor Family Services Team plans with love and looks forward to presenting each year.

The virtual 2021 *In Celebration & Remembrance* ceremony will be held on April 25 and May 2, with more information to come. Please mark your calendars and join us as we honor those we have lost and the gifts they have given.

With hope,

Debbie Hutt, DFS Director

If you would like more information on any Donor Family Service Programs, please contact us.

800.847.8731 | DFS@lifenethealth.org

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EX-21-131

Healing the Spirit

UPCOMING EVENTS

We are monitoring the current COVID-19 situation in hopes of returning to in-person events when it is safe to do so.



2021 Share the Love 5K Event
Help support the LifeNet Health Foundation, which promotes the need for organ and tissue donation, supports research and development, and fosters community awareness of LifeNet Health's mission in this virtual 5K event.

April 17

To find out more and register, log into: <https://sharethelove.enmotive.com/events/register/2021-share-the-love-5k/team:ee2bd39b-aea0-4fed-91fe-2d37153250e5>

In Celebration & Remembrance Virtual Ceremony dates:

April 25

2 p.m. Eastern / 11 a.m. Pacific Time

May 2

5 p.m. Eastern / 2 p.m. Pacific Time

Use this link for the event

<https://www.lifenethealth.org/healingthespirit/ICNR-2021>

Free Live Webinars by TAPS (The TAPS Institute for Hope and Healing)

- ♡ March 16: Grief & Guilt
- ♡ March 23: Grieving Styles
- ♡ April 20: The Helper's Journey
- ♡ April 27: Coping w/ Spring Holidays

To find out more and register, log into: <https://www.taps.org/institute>

Healing Tears



Dear Dr. Leary:

I have lost my daughter during this time of COVID, and because of the closures and restrictions, am unable to properly mourn her loss. We cannot gather our family and friends for a memorial service and burial. I feel in limbo, angry and confused about what to do to move forward, when it seems I can't acknowledge her life and death in the ways I need to. Can you help me find a different perspective? In Limbo

Dear In Limbo,

My heart goes out to you. It feels crazy-making to have one foot in the world of grieving the absence of your loved one, with the other foot in the world of waiting to put them to rest. We are used to having the support of family, friends and the community to ritualize the reality of death. We need to have others validate our loss and the change in our lives. And we want to hear that our loved one's life had meaning, and she made a difference in the world.

In these times and with the challenges of COVID, those needs and assumptions of support seem null and void. While thousands of others have also experienced not being able to be physically present for their loved one as they died, or say good-bye to their loved ones, it does not make your pain less. We still have the same needs for support and meaning-making. We still need to lay our loved ones to rest.

It is one thing to be angry at the outer circumstances that are out of your control and limit your options; but please do not confuse that with an inner belief that your grief is out of your control. You can still choose to acknowledge your grief and make meaning from her life and your relationship. It may be up to you to create and ask for different forms of support, but you can have rituals and remembrances; you can ask for and receive acknowledgement and validation; you can form your own support group; you can speak her name and remember the power of her life; and you can find a new way to live in a world without her.

The perspectives or responses that are not helpful to move forward include:

- Judging or evaluating yourself and your grief. Be aware of the tendency to ask yourself "Am I doing my grief right?", and of any negative, harsh self-talk. Before the pandemic, others were given the comfort of gatherings, rituals, and the physical relief of community; you have to find a way to grieve without that comfort.
- Comparing yourself or your grief journey to anyone else or their pace and process. Our grief is as unique as the loved one we are mourning, and any attempt to make it "one size fits all" is inauthentic and hurtful.
- Pretending that you are "put back together" or putting up a brave front to take care of others' concerns and needs for a return to normal. Denying your feelings usually leads to prolonged grief surfacing later in stronger, unexpected ways.
- Rushing your feelings, reactions, or behaviors so they fit into someone's time table or model.
- Numbing out or forget the death or circumstances. Going through the story and circumstances, along with all your feelings is the way through grief.

During this isolation, your connection to others and means of validation may come through zoom, Facetime, or the phone and not have the same comfort that physical touch and presence offers the bereaved.

The perspectives that can help you may include:

- Accepting that your grief, in this unusual and isolating time, is normal. That acceptance includes allowing for your feelings of not being validated; not having your daughter's life and death acknowledged in the usual ways of your community and faith; and not feeling supported and understood in the ways you want.
- Understanding that many of the ways that you are reacting, and the heightened sense of being "stuck" have to do with circumstances out of your control. Do what you can to bring your support system closer, more often, and as often as you

feel the need for validation and acknowledgement. This might look like a weekly zoom meeting with photos, letters, and music that reflect your daughter's life and values.

- Respecting and allowing your grief to speak to you, guiding you toward the healing it is asking for. Don't wait for others to know what you need; listen deeply and closely to your own aching heart and respond to that pain as you would like others to.

May this time of isolation also be a time of gentle cocooning, and may you find comfort in remembrance,

Lani

Lani Leary, Ph.D., specializes in work 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 Debbie Hutt at deborah_hutt@lifenethealth.org.



Donor Family Story

Tyler Spann | Tissue Donor

Tyler was a bright spot, a beam of light in the lives of all who met him.

At just 15 years old in 2018, Tyler Spann was a natural athlete with exceptional talents to the field in football, basketball, and track. He loved cooking, candy, shopping and collecting sneakers. But Tyler was not what most would consider a typical teenager. He and his mother, Angie, were extremely close. She fondly remembers how he would meet her at the door when she got home from work so he could carry in her laptop and work bag. He even had a sweet nickname for her; he called her "sugar."

For the family's 2018 summer vacation, Tyler picked Florida. A few days into the vacation, he was playing football on the beach when a riptide pulled him from shore. Tyler drowned before he could escape the strong current.

Tyler's father, Kimmy, was driving the family back to Tennessee when they received the call asking if the family would consider donation. As Tyler's family faced the worst moment of their lives, they made the selfless decision to help heal others by donating Tyler's tissue. Both his mother and father knew that it was something their son would not hesitate to do.

To honor the positive impact Tyler has made to the healing of others, the Henderson County Mayor and Lexington City Mayor issued a proclamation declaring June 19 "Tyler Spann Water Awareness Safety Day." This event includes water safety lessons and shares drowning statistics. His mother also started an annual summer crayon drive to help every elementary school child in the county, some of whom have never owned their own box of crayons before receiving the donation. This summer drive is in honor of Tyler's love of crayons and his football number 24 — the number of crayons that come in a pack.



The Journey

With Grief, the Goal is Not Moving On.

With Grief, it is About the Process of Moving Forward.

Grief and healing are both lifelong journeys. There is no finish line or point you will come to where you suddenly feel your losses are erased along with the physical and/or emotional scars they created. The goal in grieving and healing is not to become the person you were before these events happened

but to allow yourself to grow and gain wisdom from the losses. These experiences have made you who you are today and who you will become from this day forward. You do not have to move on from the losses you have faced, rather you can get to a stage in your grieving and healing journeys where you are able to move forward with your life while coping with the impacts of the losses. Eventually, you will even arrive at a place on your path where you can celebrate the cherished memories you bring with you.

An encouraging statement that can be helpful for those grieving is, “Hope is on the horizon.” When we are feeling lost in the darkness the most important thing a person can do is try to look for the light. Sometimes it may feel like it no longer exists, that the light is gone forever. One might even close their eyes and not want to engage in seeing any glimpse of a spark in their new reality. It is okay to take time to self-preserve in this state of mourning but remember, staying there for too long only compounds the feelings of emptiness and isolation.

When you are ready to allow the light back in, watch for that hope on the horizon. Opening your eyes to the light after not seeing it for awhile will sting; just as your eyes sting when you walk into the sunshine from the shade. But know that the temporary discomfort is worth it. You will find the beauty of life return one sunray at a time. The light will devour some of the darkness and the more you let it in, the more it will highlight the best aspects of life. Your heart will feel the warmth that light brings to us. You will be able to let joy into your world again.

There is no race or time limit on grieving and healing. Be patient with yourself and surround yourself with people who are patient with you. If those around you do not understand your journey, find people who do. When you are ready, reach out and tell your story. Loss is a universal experience; hope can be too. Allow yourself to look for even the tiniest of sparks in the darkness and you will begin to find your way.

Aimee Evans LifeNet Health Donor Family Advocate

LifeNet Health offers opportunities for families who have walked their own grief journey to be trained as Grief Companions. Grief Companions at LifeNet Health are paired with other donor families who are seeking emotional support and encouragement. Grief Companions understand the unique experience of grief, and support others as they mourn. If you are interested in learning more about this opportunity, please contact our Donor Family Service Department at 800-847-7831.