



# Together Learning to Cope

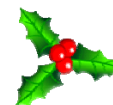


## “TLC”

November/December 2011



*Memorial services will be held the second Tuesday in May and October.*



Our Facebook group page is now up and running. You can find us on Facebook under [Ministry's Together Learning to Cope \(TLC\)](#). The TLC support group has started again and will be held monthly the second Sunday of every month 6:30-8pm at St. Joseph's Hospital Conference Room K on the first floor. The next one will be held December 11<sup>th</sup>. You can park in Lot E, just south of the Ronald McDonald House and then come in the first door off of St. Joseph's Ave. Anyone that has ever lost a baby during pregnancy, at birth or shortly after birth is welcome to be a part of Facebook and our support group. So please spread the word. Our goal is to help as many people as we can during their grief process. If you would prefer to be contacted by e-mail instead of by phone, please let me know by e-mailing me at [stacie.krieg@ministryhealth.org](mailto:stacie.krieg@ministryhealth.org).

The Healing Place at Hillside Cemetery is a place for meditation. It is located behind and to the left of the maintenance garage. You are able to have a steel heart placed there with your baby's name on it. For more information, please call the Hannah Center at 715-387-6300 and ask for Bonnie or Jennifer. Donations are accepted, but not required.

May you find some joy in this holiday season. Please know that we are thinking of you and wish you only the best.

*Stacie*



The measure of a life is not how long it was, but rather how full it was. Your baby's life ended far too soon, but the impact his or her little life had, is immeasurable.

Dr. Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D. writes: Holidays are often a difficult time for anyone who has experienced the death of a loved one. The emptiness, sadness and loss can take the place of family togetherness, sharing and thanksgiving.

Since love does not end with death, the holidays may result in a renewed sense of personal grief - a feeling of loss unlike that experienced in the routine of daily living. Society encourages you to join in the holiday spirit, but all around you the sounds and smells trigger memories of the one you love that has died. No simple guideline exists that will take away the hurt you are feeling. We hope, however, the following suggestions will help you better cope with your grief during this joyous season.

- ❖ Talking about your grief, don't be afraid to express your feelings. Find caring friends or family members who will listen unconditionally. This will help you feel understood.
- ❖ Feelings of loss may leave you feeling fatigued. Respect what your mind and your body are telling you, and allow yourself this time to take care of yourself. Eliminate unnecessary stresses-don't over-extend yourself. Also, avoid isolating yourself. Be sure to recognize the need to have special time for yourself. Realize that merely "keeping busy" won't fill the void within you, but may actually increase stress and postpone your need to talk out your feelings related to your grief. Focus on what *you* want to do this holiday season verses what others may think is good for you. You know *you* better than anyone.
- ❖ Identify those friends and relatives who understand that the holiday season can increase your sense of loss and those who will allow you to talk openly about your feelings and encourage you to be yourself and accept all your feelings-both happy and sad.
- ❖ Talk about your baby; include his or her name if you have chosen one. If you are able to talk openly, others are more likely to recognize your need to remember that special person who is so important to you.
- ❖ Decide which traditions you want to continue and what new ones you would like to begin.
- ❖ Ask for what you need. Don't follow other people's holiday plans if they don't feel right. Ask for help with planning, shopping, entertaining if you feel you need too.
- ❖ Be with those who comfort you.
- ❖ Raise the memory. Include your loved one's name in conversation and share your memories. They may bring both sadness and joy, but, but those memories were made in love and should be treasured.
- ❖ Plan ahead! You may choose to celebrate as usual, recognizing that family traditions cannot be the same. Or you may choose to avoid the holidays, go somewhere and not celebrate at all. You may choose to create new traditions and try new things during the holidays.
- ❖ *Don't feel guilty for having a good time!! It doesn't mean you have forgotten.*



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In one of Lucy Cannon's newsletters from a few years ago, she had an article that I would like to reference. On an Oprah Winfrey show years ago, Lucy talks about one of Oprah's guests that is a doctor. I would like to quote him. He was talking about infant loss and I thought his incite into this very sad happening, would be of benefit to anyone who has gone through it. *"This soul stayed with you as long as it chose---the short stay was a gift---you grew from the interaction, even if the experience was a few short weeks. When you speak of your child, you are sharing your gift with others."* This is so true. The short time you had of knowing you were having a baby, you shared with others. Your thoughts of parenthood were often verbalized, and your happiness radiated from you. Your joy brought smiles to others as they saw how happy you were. The pregnancy ended and though you felt like your world collapsed, you again, hopefully, found that many people stepped in and helped your through the awful first few weeks. Now, there are times when you can again speak of your baby or pregnancy, and tears often still come, but you can look back and feel that the time you had, even if short, was a truly magnificent time in your life.



### ***Always Near As You Walk Along the Lakeshore***

*And I am no longer with you  
Let no tears fall or sorrow prevail  
When you see your reflection shimmer in the water  
Smile and know that I see your smile  
When you feel the cool grass beneath your feet  
And the sun's warmth upon your back  
Know that I feel it also  
When you hear the leaves rustling in the wind  
Know it is my voice softly whispering to you  
When you see a butterfly dancing among flowers  
Know that I am dancing also  
When you gently touch a puppy's soft fur  
Know that I too feel your touch  
When the wind swirls across your skin  
Know that it is I who caresses you  
When you love another  
Know that I too feel your love  
These words are truth, my love  
Have faith, my love  
As long as beauty lives upon the earth and in the stars  
And love lives in every beat of every heart  
So then do I.*

*Author Unknown*



**Contact us at:  
Birth Center  
715-387-7071 or  
Neonatal ICU  
715-387-7083**

*I thought I was doing much better. The pain had subsided; I could laugh again. I was beginning to spend time with friends. My eating and sleeping patterns were back to normal. Then, I had to face my first holiday without him. I felt the familiar effects of grief wash over me and it was just like the healing process had never even begun.*

*-Anonymous*



### **Creating Memories**

Your baby is a part of your life whether it was for a few weeks, a loss during pregnancy, or if your baby lived for period of time. You can do just about anything to remember your baby. Some things you could do are:

- Giving a donation to your favorite charity
- Asking to do something special for your church
- If you have an Angel Tree in your community, donate something in honor of your baby
- Have a memorial service for your baby.
- Buy something special that you can add to each year like a charm bracelet and add a charm to it every year.
- Put flowers on the Altar at your church.
- Start a collection of something that reminds you of your baby. Angels perhaps and add to it each year.
- Light a special candle each year around the holidays.
- If you have a special picture of your baby, you may want to make your own holiday cards and include your baby's picture. Sign them *in memory of* (your baby's name).

