

# Calvary in Touch

## Greetings

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Grief is a very natural response to death and comes with very intense feelings of longing, guilt, sadness and anger, just to name a few. Grief not only affects our emotions but reaches into every part of our life: our relationships, our work, and our image of ourselves. Some think that they are not grieving “properly” or that they are grieving for “too long”. These beliefs can be influenced by other people’s ideas of what grief should be like or from the griever’s difficulty seeing the changes that grief brings up in themselves and feeling like “this is not me”. Still others want to name and diagnose grief as “complicated”, even if a mere few months have passed since the death.

The truth is grief creates many changes in our lives-nothing is left untouched by grief. Such an upheaval will, of course, leave us feeling unbalanced and confused as to how to move forward. Sometimes it takes all the strength we have just to get up, go to the supermarket and pick up some groceries to sustain ourselves.

Grief operates on its own timeline and needs space to move through. It’s best to give yourself some love and understanding during this time. Remind yourself that you will not be able to give as much of yourself to activities and other people as you have in the past. Consider seeking out a bereavement group, a trusted counselor or other professional if you have fears that feel unmanageable or want some support during this process.

In time, your energy will pick up again. Grief is not something that goes away but you will find some relief over time and learn to make room for it when it needs a voice.

Please take a moment to read and reflect on the grief journey of one of our members in this newsletter. She has chosen to share a piece of her story with such honesty and I hope you will find some resonance in her words.

*Maria Georgopoulos, LMHC, FT  
Director of Bereavement Services*

## Spotlight On: Unexpected Loss

While the unexpected loss of your person (in my case, my fiancé) certainly wreaks havoc on much of your life, I was surprised by how much it completely upended my personal belief system. Now, I’m not talking about the impact that such trauma had on my religious views; no, I mean the principles that made up my personal ethos and my sense of self. Looking back, I can see now that I was entitled. I thought that because I was a “good” person, I was entitled to a “good” life. I believed that I deserved happiness. The chaos that follows traumatic loss, though, completely demolished my confidence, and with it, my understanding of how the world, specifically my world, worked.

And so, three months after my fiancé’s death, my personal therapist recommended that I attend a weekly grief group run by Calvary. She recognized that the program would bring together other young widows and widowers who were also looking to have their feelings validated. It’s important not to confuse validation with sympathy; instead of only offering condolences, Abby Spilka, our group leader, assured members that any emotional by-product of grief should be acknowledged, including any feelings around the loss of security or identity.

Now, a year and a half, days after I finished my last group, I feel....capable. While this

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## Spotlight On: Unexpected Loss

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may not seem like a positive change, it accurately describes where I'm at today, and the progress I've made since my first session.

At three months, I felt lost. At six months, I was numb. At a year, I oscillated between disappointment and anger. And now, eighteen months after I attended my first group, I finally feel ready to start a new job, travel to new places, and face unfamiliar challenges. Simply put, I feel capable of dealing with expected highs and lows that are certain to accompany so much change. If I was holding my breath, drowning in my feelings of loss before, now I can breathe a bit easier. And for that, I am thankful.

*By Ebony M. Pollard*



## Events: Bereavement Course

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### Calvary Hospital's Annual Bereavement Course

**To Be offered March—May 2020**

Calvary Hospital's 27th Annual Bereavement Course has started! **This course is designed for those in the helping professions, and not for bereaved family members.** This eleven-week course on bereavement and grief-related issues will be taught by various specialists from Calvary Hospital/Hospice. Upon successful completion, each participant will receive a Certificate of Attendance. Successful completion requires that participants (1) register for the course, and (2) complete course evaluations for each attended lecture. Contact hours will only be awarded for completed programs. Partial credit for Certificate of Attendance is available for those who attend 80% of the lectures.

#### Course Fees:

- \$250.00 for the full eleven weeks (discounted rate)
- \$200.00 each (2-4 people in the same institution)
- \$175.00 each (5 or more people in the same institution)
- \$80.00 for the entire course (graduate students)
- \$65.00 for any individual sessions

**Checks should be made payable to:**

**Calvary Hospital**

This continuing education activity has been approved by (1) the Pennsylvania State Nurses Association Approver Unit, an accredited approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation, (2) NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) for CASAC (Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor), CPP (Credentialed Prevention Professional) and CPS (Credentialed Prevention Specialist), (3) NYS Department of Health, Bureau of Funeral Directors, (4) Mental Health Counselors, and (5) Association for Death Education and Counseling (ADEC).

**For further information or to download the registration form please go to:**

[www.calvaryhospital.org/about/events-calendar/](http://www.calvaryhospital.org/about/events-calendar/)

**Or contact/send registration forms to  
Dr. Sherry R. Schachter at  
sschachter@calvaryhospital.org**

**Payment can be accepted at the door**

# Monthly Calendar

## BRONX GROUPS

Calvary Hospital  
1740 Eastchester Road  
Bronx, NY 10461

Adult Death of a Child  
2nd, 3rd & 4th Thursday: Sherry  
12:30 pm - 2:00 pm

Death of a Child  
Wednesday: Joanne  
1:00 pm - 2:30 pm  
Wednesday: Sarah  
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Adult Death of a Parent  
Wednesday: Stephanie  
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm  
Thursday: Joanne  
5:15 pm - 6:45 pm

Death of a Sibling  
Tuesday: Joanne  
5:30 pm - 7:00 pm

Death of a Spouse/Partner  
Tuesday: Joanne  
1:00 pm - 2:30 pm  
Monday: Joanne  
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Death of a Young Spouse/Partner  
Wednesday: Joanne  
5:30 pm - 7:00 pm

Spanish Speaking Group  
Wednesday: Yvette  
12:30 pm - 2:00 pm

Precious Moments Ages 6 - 9  
Tuesday: Sarah  
4:00 pm - 5:30 pm  
Thursday: Sarah  
4:00 pm - 5:30 p.m.

In Be-tween Ages 10 - 12  
Thursday: Sarah  
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Teen Group Ages 13 - 17  
Tuesday: Sarah  
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Men's Discussion Group  
1st Thursday: Sherry  
12:30 pm - 2:00 pm

## BROOKLYN GROUPS

St. Joseph High School  
80 Willoughby Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Precious Moments Ages 6 - 9  
Tuesday: Rashida  
4:00 pm - 5:30 pm

In Be-tween Group Ages 10 - 12  
Thursday: Abby  
4:00 pm - 5:30 pm

Teen Group Ages 13 - 17  
Wednesday: Rashida  
4:00 pm - 5:30 pm

Death of a Spouse/Partner  
Thursday: Rashida  
4:00 pm - 5:30 pm

Death of a Young Spouse/Partner  
Thursday: Abby  
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Adult Death of a Parent  
Tuesday: Rashida  
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Death of a Child  
Monday: Rashida  
5:30 pm - 7:00 pm  
Tuesday: Abby  
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Death of a Sibling  
TBD  
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Young Adult Group  
Wednesday: Abby  
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Mindfulness & Movement for Grief  
TBD  
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Living with Spouse/Partner Loss  
Grief 2 Years and Beyond  
1st Monday: Abby  
5:30 pm - 7:00 pm

What Now? Adults Grieving the Death of a Parent 2 Years & Beyond  
2nd Monday: Abby  
5:30 pm - 7:00 pm

## MANHATTAN GROUPS

Terence Cardinal Cooke Health Care Center  
1249 Fifth Avenue 9th Floor  
New York, NY 10029

Precious Moments for Children 6-9  
Wednesday: Stephanie  
4:00 pm - 5:30 pm

In Be-tween Group Ages 10-12  
Wednesday: Melanie  
4:00 pm - 5:30 pm

Teen Group  
Thursday: Stephanie  
4:00 pm - 5:30 pm

Death of a Parent  
Wednesday: Melanie  
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Death of a Spouse/Partner  
Monday: Stephanie  
5:30 pm - 7:00 p.m.  
Thursday: Stephanie  
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Death of a Young Spouse/Partner  
Thursday: Melanie  
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

***Please make a note: You must call to schedule an appointment prior to attending any of our groups. We do not accept walk-ins.***

## MEMORIAL SERVICES

Bronx Christian  
March 14  
April 11

Bronx Jewish  
March 8

Brooklyn Christian  
March 29

Brooklyn Jewish  
March 22

***All groups are free & open to the community. Please call to schedule an appointment***

## Contacts

**Maria Georgopoulos, LMHC, FT**  
**Director of Bereavement Services**

**(646) 739-1005**

**[mgeorgopoulos@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:mgeorgopoulos@calvaryhospital.org)**

### **Bronx**

Joanne Castellanos, LMHC

(917) 574-4941

[jcastellanos@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:jcastellanos@calvaryhospital.org)

Stephanie Mastropaolo, LMSW

(718) 518-2574

[smastropaolo@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:smastropaolo@calvaryhospital.org)

Lynne Marie Pappalardi

(718) 518-2173

[lpappalardi@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:lpappalardi@calvaryhospital.org)

Sarah Peralta, MHC-LP

(917) 708-0133

[speralta@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:speralta@calvaryhospital.org)

Yvette Ramirez, Spanish Chaplain

(718) 518-2569

[yramirez@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:yramirez@calvaryhospital.org)

Sherry Schachter, PhD., FT

(646) 739-6480

[sschachter@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:sschachter@calvaryhospital.org)

### **Brooklyn**

Rashida Sanchez, MA, FT

(347) 504-2704

[rsanchez@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:rsanchez@calvaryhospital.org)

Abby Spilka, MA, CT, MHC-LP

(917) 574-6879

[aspilka@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:aspilka@calvaryhospital.org)

### **Manhattan**

Stephanie Insalaco, MA, MHC-LP

(646) 771-6604

[sinsalaco@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:sinsalaco@calvaryhospital.org)

Melanie Rae Pappalardi, MSW

(917) 624-0266

[mpappalardi@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:mpappalardi@calvaryhospital.org)

## Tree of Life



*Calvary Hospital complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.*

Through the Tree of Life, we can recognize your significant naming gift in a permanent and meaningful manner. Your loved one's name will exist in perpetuity with the lifetime of the Hospital.

This a loving way of memorializing someone special to you or saying thank you, because your gift of love helps patients and families today and for many years to come.

For more information on the Tree of Life, contact Sandrina Fernandez at **718-518-2039**.

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