

Calvary in Touch

Greetings

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Fall approaches and with so many questions still unanswered, yielding and adjusting continues to be important. So many plans, ideas, stories, connections and careers have felt the heaviness of this abrupt pause. As heavy as it has been, it is also useful to acknowledge our ability to modify so many things in our lives and how we have worked toward doing our best through it all. Some of us have struggled to find some meaning in these events while others look for some peacefulness in their days. Despite all this upheaval, there are still ways to have meaningful interactions or engage in meaningful

activities right now. We have all been called upon to think more creatively about how we can continue to participate in our lives in these quite unfamiliar circumstances.

In this issue, we will share with you some of the recent activities in our department that have felt profound and enriching. These activities have definitely required us to stretch ourselves and our skills, to expand the scope of our bereavement services and to deepen our commitment to quality care and compassion for our communities.

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

Spotlight On: Calvary Hospital's Collaboration with ArchCare

As we continue to face new challenges, responding to a future that seems so uncertain, we continue to expand to meet the increasing needs of grieving families. One way we extended our services was by collaborating with our ArchCare community to assist them in providing more comprehensive bereavement services to their employees and to the families they serve. Out of this collaboration came the opportunity for me to join ArchCare's team as a bereavement counselor, allowing for more integrated emotional support services to be offered.

Since April, Calvary's bereavement team and I have made over 600 initial phone calls to ArchCare families who have experienced the death of a loved one. We offer support, assess bereavement needs, and ensure families are not alone in their grief. Families who have been open to ongoing supportive calls have expressed gratitude for the space to talk about their feelings and to share stories and memories of their loved ones. Families have also shared that despite the unprecedented circumstances of COVID-19, their experiences with ArchCare have been predominantly positive. There have also been expressions of intense feelings related to not being able to be present with loved ones nearing death due to Department of Health policies that were in place during the pandemic.

When families share these experiences, the counselors validate their concerns and provide compassionate emotional support. We recognize that many families who have experienced the death of a loved one during this pandemic bear the additional burden of not having been able to accompany their loved one for their final moments. This may bring up intense feelings of sadness, anger, and guilt. Families also express not being able to honor their loved one in ways they would have under normal circumstances, such as having memorial services or engaging in end-of-life rituals with family members. Not only do counselors validate and normalize these difficult feelings but they also discuss additional resources that may be helpful such as joining a bereavement group tailored to their grief needs. Families may attend one of our many different groups at Calvary or be referred to outside organizations depending upon what is most convenient for their circumstances and location.

Along with providing support to ArchCare families, there is also a great need to provide support to ArchCare employees who have been greatly affected by COVID-19. In addition to experiencing the death of loved ones, there is a collective grief experience shared in their work. They are watching patients they cared for die, they are grieving the loss of

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Spotlight On: Calvary Hospital's Collaboration with ArchCare

routines, social connections and a sense of normalcy and safety. In recognizing this, a virtual support group is now being offered for employees to have a safe space to share what they are going through; whether it is compassion fatigue, grief, or any other kind of loss. Individual counseling sessions are also available for those who prefer one-on-one support. In addition to these support services, in the fall, I will also be offering workshops for interdisciplinary care teams. These workshops will provide coping and healing strategies that address caregiving during COVID-19, along with suggestions on how to navigate grief and loss in the workplace.

This collaboration has opened up many opportunities to connect to support services during a time when grief and loss may feel compounded and overwhelming. Despite the uncertainties of the near future, what is certain is that we will continue to adapt, adjust, and expand our supports to ensure individuals who are grieving feel validated, heard, and supported.

*Melanie Rae Pappalardi, LMSW
Bereavement Services*

Spotlight On: Calvary's Virtual Camp Compass® 2020

In response to COVID-19, our Bereavement Services team has adapted and adjusted to the new world of virtual grief counseling. Although NY cases peaked in April, our bereavement support groups moved online in March, allowing us to serve our child and adult clients through this period of chaos and uncertainty. That uncertainty loomed as we navigated how to plan for our annual camp for bereaved children.

For the past 22 years, our department has hosted a week-long bereavement camp for the children attending our groups as a way to connect and support one another in their grief. Calvary's Camp Compass® is usually filled with laughter, vulnerability, excitement, sharing and many interactive activities for the children. Experiencing camp last year for the first time, I was fueled by the consistent energy and conversation that flowed throughout the week. When hearing that camp was not an option this summer, due to the restrictions of COVID-19, my heart felt heavy thinking about sharing this news with the children. However, through much planning and preparation, we successfully coordinated a virtual camp experience through the Zoom platform.

Our virtual camp was held over a three-week span, allowing the children to log into Zoom once a week at their designated time. Our theme for camp this year was, "Grief is not a sprint, it's a marathon." This theme was integrated into grief activities such as creating signs to identify what motivates you along your grief journey and what are words of encouragement that support you while running your race. This allowed the children to express their creative side while also thinking of ways they would like to be supported during their grief. Interactive activities such as an in-home scavenger hunt had the children engaged and challenged to find daily items and sentimental items within their personal space. Children shared pictures and objects, which led to deep and meaningful discussions of their deceased loved ones. During our usual, in-person camp experience, we are joined by clowns who do face painting and acrobatics the entire week, adding humor and joy to our grief activities. To surprise the children, those same clowns joined our virtual camp weekly to engage in different

workshops such as puppet making, magic and TikTok dancing. Watching the children laughing as they attempted to juggle rolled socks in their living rooms and practice magic brought a smile to my face. It was apparent that they were enjoying themselves. During the last week of our virtual camp, children shared their appreciation for this online camp experience. Many children expressed how special they felt that we took the time to engage with them virtually. To me, this made the entire process of organizing camp virtually well worth it.

Although bereavement counselors were unable to see the children outside the computer screen during camp, they were able to spend a few minutes with them during their backpack drop off. It is customary that all campers receive a Calvary Camp Compass® backpack with t-shirts, a sweatshirt and a hat to wear at camp. This year we loaded backpacks with school supplies, a water bottle, a mindfulness book for guardians and iPad minis that were donated from the hospital, and delivered these items throughout the city. Seeing the expression on the children's faces as they dug through the bag and found the iPad was priceless. There were squeals of shock and glee throughout the day as guardians and children welcomed the counselors. The ability to be present, both virtually and physically during this challenging time, was a comfort for the bereavement team. Although our virtual camp was a success, both campers and counselors hope to come together next year for our usual fun and hugs.

*Samantha J. Iannuzzi, MA, MHC-LP
Bereavement Services*

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: Jacqueline
5:30 pm - 7:00 pm

Adult Death of a Parent
Thursday: Melanie
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm
Thursday: Joanne
5:30 pm - 7:00 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 for Children
Ages 6 - 9
Tuesday: Jacqueline
4:00 pm - 5:00 pm

In Be-tween Ages 10 - 12
Thursday: Jacqueline
4:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Teen Group Ages 13 - 17
Thursday: Jacqueline
5:30 pm - 6:30 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 - 5:00 pm

In Be-tween Group Ages 10 - 12
Tuesday: Samantha
4:00 pm - 5:30 pm
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
Wednesday: Samantha
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Living with Spouse/Partner Loss
Grief 2 Years & 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 Ages 6-9
Wednesday: Stephanie
4:00 pm - 5:00 pm

In Be-tween Group Ages 10-12
Wednesday: Jacqueline
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 Young Spouse/Partner
Tuesday: Stephanie
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Death of a Spouse/Partner
Monday: Stephanie
11:00 am - 12:30 p.m.
Thursday: Stephanie
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

ArchCare Employee Support Group
Tuesday: Melanie
5:00 pm - 6:00 pm

COVID-19 Groups

Death of a Spouse/Partner
Tuesday: Samantha
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Death of a Parent Group
Tuesday: Maria
5:00 pm - 6:30 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
Bronx Jewish
Brooklyn Christian
Brooklyn Jewish

Due to COVID-19 there are no Memorial Services at this time.

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

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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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