

# CALVARY IN TOUCH

## BEREAVEMENT DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

### GREETINGS

Going into a new year can amplify the grief of many who experienced the death of an important person in their lives. The events and celebrations arouse and enhance emotions tied to the loss, like being at a dinner and not hearing family excitedly yell out the name of the deceased who made the *best* guacamole at family gatherings, and now that energy is absent. When the absence of the deceased is realized during the planning of events, or when an invitation is received, the griever may not want to attend or may experience anxiety at the thought of joining social gatherings. It is ok for the griever to give themselves time to process the painful emotions and to reflect on the relationship with the deceased. Isolating oneself from events can sometimes feel like the only way to avoid the reminders of the loss, or from the well-intentioned platitudes that make it uncomfortable to feel your grief. Isolating should not be the only way to cope with a death. Reliable outlets are essential, like support groups, therapy, or individuals in your social circle who are open to listening and being supportive during the unpredictably painful triggers.

It's ok to take time to process the reality of your loss and to give yourself grace when you feel your grief. Time, patience, self-compassion, and a supportive network can help. Prioritize your self-care by giving yourself the time and space to practice being patient with yourself by giving yourself space to breathe for your wellbeing.

Wishing you a new year that brings calm and a sense of balance to move forward, despite the emotional turmoil that your grief may bring.

Written by  
Joanne Castellanos, MA, LMHC, FT,  
Director of Bereavement Services

**CALVARY  
HOSPITAL**

*Where Life Continues*

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## Holding Space While Grieving

by Jasmine Caraballo

Grief doesn't discriminate on age,  
gender, or circumstance.  
One woman lost her boyfriend at twenty.  
Another lost her son at thirty.  
Different losses, same pain.  
The same ache.  
The same disbelief.  
Holding space is hard  
when you're grieving too.  
Mema has only been gone a year and a half.  
My Tio only four months.  
Some days I swallow my tears in session,  
other days I cry with them.  
I try not to hide it.  
I try not to apologize for it.  
Because grief isn't something you "get over."  
It isn't something you rush through.  
It doesn't move on your timeline  
and it certainly doesn't move on anyone else's.  
In those moments,  
we don't care about clichés  
that they're "in a better place,"  
or "no longer in pain."  
What we care about  
is that they're not here.  
We can't hug them.  
We can't hear their voice.  
We can't spend one more minute with them.  
So please stop rushing people.  
Stop telling them to move forward.  
Stop assuming you know what healing looks like.  
Let people cry.  
Let them be angry.  
Let them grieve in the way they need to.  
There is no one-size-fits-all for grief.  
If you don't know what to say,  
say nothing  
or simply say,  
"I'm sorry for your loss."

## THE MAGIC OF THIS NEW RELATIONSHIP

On September 15th 2024, I completed what I thought was the most physically, mentally, and emotionally exhausting feat of my life so far- my first triathlon. I was so excited to have my family and friends there- the most important people to me in my life. I can still vividly remember the overwhelming pride and joy in my dad's face at the finish line.

"Look at my daughter! She's not even out of breath!" He beamed with a joy so great, it radiated from him.

One week later, my dad passed away unexpectedly from a heart attack.

My dad was my best friend, my mentor, my coach, my teacher, and protector. He was everything to me.

The day he passed became the hardest day of my life.

At just 58 years old, my dad had vanished from my life overnight.

I was not ready, and to be honest, I still don't feel ready to be without him. I will always miss him, and for a very long time, I could not conceive that life could be joyful and meaningful and purposeful again without him.

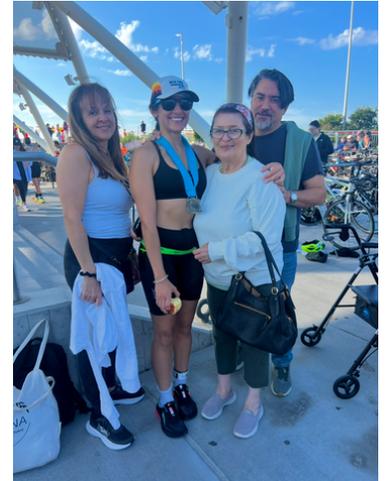
Grief is hard to hold, hard to explain, and harder to navigate than anyone can prepare you for. It is one of those things that you just don't know until you know. And once you do, you don't wish it upon anyone because it means the loss of something so incredibly important.

My dad and I used to spend hours talking and debating about spirituality. We would get into fights of frustration, each of us left wondering, why can't the other see what I see? But in reality, I think we were both saying the same thing differently the whole time.

Those debates feel like preparation for a conversation we never got to finish. Now, my connection with my dad has changed, and I still grieve the loss of his physical presence and safety. And still, in some of the most magical and unexplainable ways, I feel him still with me, still tethered to the pain of love in my heart.

As time passed, I learned to lean into the magic of this new relationship. I learned to be ok with my grief. At first, that looked like acknowledging the start of a heavy wave approaching the shore. This is how I can explain it best: I couldn't quite know when the pit of grief would swallow me whole, but eventually I could see the wave from afar approaching and I began to anticipate its arrival with more open arms than before.

Over time, it became easier to spot the waves coming. At some point I started to dive headfirst into them because at this point, I had come to terms with the fact that my grief is the last standing physical connection I have left with him. And while it hurts, there is a wholeness in knowing it is still there, the love that hasn't died, and lives on in this bittersweet memory.



"In loving memory of my  
father, Santiago Francisco  
Mayol  
May 8th, 1966 -  
September 21st, 2024"

By Madison Mayol

# VIRTUAL BEREAVEMENT GROUPS

## DEATH OF A SPOUSE/PARTNER CLASSIC

Joanne Castellanos  
• Tuesday: 1:00 - 2:30 PM

Jacqueline Marlow  
• Thursday: 12:00 AM - 1:30 PM

Jackeline Abbondandolo  
• Thursday: 6:00 - 7:30 PM

### Death of a Spouse Partner - 2 Years & Beyond

Marissa Piazzola  
2nd Thursday of each month: 12:30 - 2:00 PM

## DEATH OF A YOUNG SPOUSE/PARTNER

Bethanie Railling  
• Wednesday: 6:00 - 7:30 PM

Marissa Piazzola  
• Tuesday: 6:00 - 7:30 PM

## ADULT DEATH OF A PARENT

Jackeline Abbondandolo  
• Tuesday: 6:00 - 7:30 PM  
• Wednesday: 6:00 - 7:30 PM

Bethanie Railling  
• Thursday: 6:00 - 7:30 PM

Marissa Piazzola  
• Friday: 10:00 - 11:30 AM

### Adult Death of a Parent - 2 Years & Beyond

Jackeline Abbondandolo  
• 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday 6:00 - 7:30 PM

## DEATH OF A SIBLING

Jacqueline Marlow  
• Tuesday: 5:30 - 7:00 PM

Marissa Piazzola  
• Wednesday: 5:30 - 7:00 PM

## MEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP

Jackeline Abbondandolo  
• 1st Thursday of each month: 12:30 - 2PM

## BEREAVED YOUNG ADULT GROUP

Marissa Piazzola  
• Monday: 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

## DEATH OF A CHILD

**Death of a Child**  
Joanne Castellanos  
• Monday: 5:30 - 7:00 PM

**Death of a Child - 2 Years & Beyond**  
Joanne Castellanos  
• 2nd & 4th Thursday: 12:30 - 2:00 PM

**Death of a Young Child**  
Jackeline Abbondandolo  
• Wednesday: 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM

## TEENS AGES 13-17

Jacqueline Marlow  
• Thursday: 4:00 - 5:15 PM

## TWEENS AGES 10-12

Jacqueline Marlow  
• Tuesday: 4:00 - 5:15 PM  
• Wednesday: 4:00 - 5:15 PM

## DROP-IN VIRTUAL PARENT GUARDIAN GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Jackeline Abbondandolo & Jacqueline Marlow  
• 1st Monday of each Month: 6 PM - 7 PM

## CAREGIVER & FRIEND GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Bethanie Railling  
• 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday: 6 PM - 7 PM

## CONTACT US

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# BRONX IN-PERSON CHILDREN'S GROUP

## IN-PERSON PRECIOUS MOMENTS, TWEEN & PARENT GUARDIAN BEREAVEMENT GROUP IN THE BRONX

### PRECIOUS MOMENTS AGES 6-9

Jacqueline Marlow

- Monday: 4:00 - 5:15 PM

### TEENS

Bethanie Railling

- Tuesday: 4:00 - 5:15 PM

### Parent/Guardian Group: runs concurrently with Precious Moments Group

Jackeline Abbondandolo

- Monday: 4:00 - 5:15 PM

## CONTACT US

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# BROOKLYN IN-PERSON CHILDREN'S GROUPS

### PM AGES 6-9

Marissa Piazzola

- Thursday: 5:15 - 6:30 PM

## CONTACT US

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# INDIVIDUAL BEREAVEMENT COUNSELING

People continue to struggle with the emotional pain of grief even years after losing a significant person in their lives. If you're feeling overwhelmed navigating through your grief and need a safe space to process the challenging emotions, don't hesitate to reach out to Calvary's Bereavement Department for Individual Counseling Services to receive the support and guidance you deserve during these difficult times. The service is offered for a nominal fee.

For more information, please call 718-518-2281, or email [calvarybereavement@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:calvarybereavement@calvaryhospital.org).

## TREE OF LIFE



Through the Tree of Life, we can recognize your significant person in a permanent and a meaningful manner. Your significant person's name will exist in perpetuity with the lifetime of the Hospital. This is a loving way to memorialize someone special to you or say, "thank you," because your gift of love helps patients and families today and for many years to come.

For more information, please call 718-518-2689.

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.

## THANK YOU FOR READING!

Calvary In Touch has been made possible by a generous bequest from Michael Camara.