

Bereavement support services can make a difference. Some families may find it easier to start with online support services which can allow you to become familiar with what is available from the comfort of your own home. Below is a list of reputable online support services we hope can offer some comfort to you and your family.

GriefNet

www.GriefNet.org

GriefNet is an internet community offering support and resources for anyone who is dealing with grief, death, and major loss.

Center for Loss and Life Transition

www.centerforloss.com

Center for Loss and Life Transitions offers information regarding grief and loss.

AARP Grief and Loss

www.aarp.org/families/grief_loss

AARP offers grief and loss support and information for bereaved adults and their families.

National Donor Family Council

www.kidney.org

The National Donor Family Council provides support and education to donor families.

National Donor Memorial

www.donormemorial.org

The National Donor Memorial offers the opportunity for donor families to post a tribute to their loved.

Children's Grief Education Association

www.childgrief.org

Website dedicated to serving the needs of grieving children and families and to providing education and support to those who serve them.

Reflections and Hope Newsletter

*A quarterly newsletter honoring organ and tissue donors and their families
Fall 2013*

"Thank you for your amazing gift, and thank you to your loved one for being and organ and tissue donor. I will feel grateful for my entire life for the time my family and I had with my mother."

-A grateful recipient daughter



Once again fall has arrived. Crisp air, shorter days and cooler nights can be a welcome relief from the summer's scorching long days. For some, months and years have passed since your loss and there have been many seasons without your loved one. And for others, your loss is recent and the scorching pain, like lingering summer days, continues to endure, making it difficult to move into a new season of grief, a season which may be able to offer relief and comfort. We hope a time will arrive when the pain subsides and new and refreshing feelings of hopefulness and peace can help move you into a new season of your grief.

We hope that the information and stories contained in this newsletter can offer words of comfort and encourage you to reflect upon your grief and begin to move through the seasons following your loss.

We again would like to welcome stories, poems, pictures or ideas for future editions. It is essential to us that this newsletter grows from the hearts and minds of our donor families. Please submit your input by mail or email to the following address:

Donor Alliance
720 South Colorado Blvd
Suite 800N
Denver, CO 80245
familysupport@donoralliance.org

Thank you for your participation. Your thoughts may play a vital role in another family's grief journey.

Laughter and Loss



Donor Alliance Advocates for Life

Donor Alliance's "Advocates for Life" volunteer program is comprised of donor family members, transplant recipients, transplant candidates and others who are passionate about supporting organ and tissue donation and transplantation. Donor Alliance Advocates are the heart and soul of our efforts to inspire the public about the importance of registering as organ and tissue donors in Colorado and Wyoming.

We rely heavily on volunteer participation to make our programs possible, from grassroots advocacy to public outreach through education and awareness events. And we're grateful for each and every volunteer, their generous donation of time and talent, and their dedication to being "Advocates for Life".

Please visit donoralliance.org for more information or contact Ashlee Dixon, Volunteer and Special Events Coordinator at asdixon@donoralliance.org or by calling 303-370-2712.

If laughter is the best medicine, can it offer some respite from grief or even have the power to heal from the emotional pain of the loss of a loved one?

It may only be weeks or months since your loss and you are perhaps saying "How could I ever find humor in anything, ever again?" The pain may be so intense that any attempt at humor, to find anything funny or worthy laughter, might feel unimaginable.

The intention of this article is not to diminish the significance of your loss or attempt to mask the pain of your grief with empty laughter. The purpose is to open up the idea that one day you may be ready to add humor to the other emotions you are experiencing in your grief, even if it is infrequently and only for a short moment.

As you may already know, including humor in your life has many health benefits, benefits that may be especially helpful for those who have lost a loved one. Adding to the emotional impact, those who are grieving may also experience physical symptoms such as weakness, fatigue, loss of appetite, muscle pain and an overall feeling of being run down. Research shows that laughter can mimic the benefits of physical exercise and can produce endorphins, the body's natural pain-reducing enzymes which in turn may be able to prevent or mitigate some of the physical symptoms related to grief.



A study found that oncology nurses who incorporated humor in their care plan had patients who were more relaxed and had increased feelings of well-being. One patient was quoted as saying "Laughter made me more open to ideas, more inviting to others, and even a little

stronger." Considering the positive effect laughter and humor can have on those who are ill, it is not surprising that research has also found a correlation between laughter and lower levels of grief.



While writing this article I received a call from a woman who attended our annual Donor Family Tribute in 2009. Her husband had died in 2007. She was calling because she wanted the name of the woman who spoke at the tribute. She explained that the speaker, a woman who had lost her husband, daughter, and granddaughter over the course of 10 years, amazingly was able to incorporate humor in her speech. The donor wife I was speaking with stated that after nearly four years she wanted to know the speaker's name. She went on to explain that at the time of the tribute, she was not yet able to find humor but said she was calling because she was now ready to do so; after almost four years she wanted to laugh again.

You may have heard well intentioned friends say "Time heals all wounds" or "Wait, things will get better". Time does not heal all wounds but time, as it did for the donor wife I spoke with, may allow you to learn new ways of looking at your grief and slowly allow you to return to humor even if right now, you think it is gone for good.

If you are ready, give yourself permission to laugh if you feel like it. There is a place for every emotion while grieving. Laughter, anger, hopelessness, fear, and relief can be present, maybe even all at the same time. Whatever emotions, thoughts or feelings you are experiencing on any particular day, please always be kind to yourself and be patient with your grief. And we hope very soon you find something knee slapping, eye watering, sidesplittingly hilarious.



Death is Nothing At All

Death is nothing at all.

***I have only slipped away to the next
room***

I am I and you are you.

***Whatever we were to each other,
That we still are.***

Call me by my old familiar name.

***Speak to me in the easy way which
you always used.***

Put no difference into your tone.

***Wear no forced air of solemnity or
sorrow.***

Laugh as we always laughed

***At the little jokes we enjoyed
together.***

Play, smile, think of me.

***Let my name be ever the household
word that it always was.***

Let it be spoken without effect.

Without the trace of a shadow on it.

Life means all that it ever meant.

It is the same that it ever was.

***There is absolute unbroken
continuity***

***Why should I be out of mind because
I am out of sight?***

I am but waiting for you.

For an interval.

Somewhere. Very near.

Just around the corner.

All is well.

Henry Scott Holland

To Our Donor Families

Although grateful, many organ and tissue recipients do not write to their donor family to thank them for the gift of life they have been given. A recipient may not write for many reasons; he or she may be unaware of the ability to write or feel uncertain of what to say or how to put into words their appreciation. A recipient may fear they will upset their donor family, cause additional pain, or their contact will be a painful reminder of the death. You may be a donor family that has not received a recipient thank you letter which for some can feel hurtful or as though your loved one's gifts were not appreciated.

On every recipient's behalf, we at Donor Alliance want to express our deep appreciation for the many lives your loved one has touched through their gift of donation. Below are some thank you messages we have received over the years written by recipients to their donor family. Please know that many of those who have received your loved ones gifts have experienced the same gratitude, joy, admiration, and restored health as the recipients who have expressed the following words of thanks.

"I am deeply sorry for your loss, but I hope you find peace in the knowledge that your loved one has helped me on the path leading to a healthy, pain free life. I am eternally grateful to you and your loved one and I will always remember your act of kindness."



Thank You!

"A day does not go by that I do not remember the gift that made it possible for me to stand and walk again without assistance."

"The tissues I received will allow me to heal faster and stronger and be back out on the fields doing what I love both with my own children and all the other youth players I coach. For that I will be forever grateful. My family and I will never forget what made this possible and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts."

"Your loved one gave me the gift of life, he is our hero. I owe my new life, filled with hope, to him and to you."

"I want to offer my condolences to your family for your loss. I can only imagine the sadness you feel from losing your loved one. Their choice to become a donor has not only helped me, but I am sure many others. Thank you."

"From the bottom of my (new) heart, THANK-YOU."

On behalf of everyone at Donor Alliance, thank you your selfless decision to help those in need through the gift of donation.

