

Post Palliative Care Perspective Providence Hospice of Seattle Grief and Support Services

Providence Hospital has extensive bereavement support for their hospice clients.

After utilizing Providence Hospice palliative care for a loved ones death I spoke to a grief counselor on several occasions and was fortunate to participated in the *Ways to Remember: Writing through Grief* program they offer. Ways to Remember is a 5-week support group offering a focus on writing and reading (poetry, letters, journaling, etc.) as a way of expressing one's grief. The group of eight participants met weekly for one month. Each session lasted two hours. Tuesday nights were my nights to grieve and the dedicated time was a welcome opportunity I may not have otherwise had.

The facilitator created a comfortable safe space for us to talk about our grief in a creative and flexible way. At the beginning and end of every meeting a grief related poem was read to get our creative juices flowing. Everyone's story was different and we had so much to express, it was the perfect venue to focus on how I felt. We selected a journal to write in and during each meeting were given a variety of different types of prompts to help us share what we were experiencing when not in the group meeting. We had the option of reading our journals aloud but it was not mandatory. If you didn't like one prompt, you were encouraged select one you did like or write a letter. It was extremely flexible it met everyone's needs.

After 5 very productive sessions some of us in the group wanted to keep meeting so we started a Grief Book Group. There are four of us who attend monthly and we discuss the book, have a nice dinner together and talk about how we are coping. It's been a beneficial way to extend the work we were doing and read a variety of work on how others process grief. Here is a list of the titles we have read thus far.

- *Wave* by Sonali Deraniyagala
- *Love is a Mixtape: Life and Loss, One Song at a Time* by Rob Sheffield
- *The Year of Magical Thinking* by Joan Didion
- *Grief Observed* by C.S. Lewis
- *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place* by Terry Tempest Williams

- Priscilla Armstrong, Co-Director, Cambia Palliative Care Center of Excellence
Community Advisory Board

Summary of Providence Hospice Grief Support Services from their website:

Grief is not an event, it is a constant unfolding. Providence Hospice of Seattle offers a full range of compassionate response to children and adults who are grieving the loss of a significant person. We realize the importance of acknowledging the unique grieving process of every individual. Included in this acknowledgement is the understanding that grief has no timeline.

We offer a variety of opportunities for ongoing support and education regarding grief, loss, and life adjustments following the death of a significant person. Our purpose is to help individuals, families and communities identify their needs and strengths and to provide them a supportive presence for up to 15 months after the death.

Our program offers a continuum of support for children to older adults and is available not only to families of hospice patients, but to anyone grieving who resides within King and South Snohomish counties. For more information visit the website below:

<http://washington.providence.org/in-home-services/hospice-of-seattle/programs-and-services/grief-support/events-and-group-calendar/>