

MHA NEWSLETTER

Mother's Day A Time of Grief for Parents and Children

Its spring, and Mothers Day is just around the corner. Some are planning a special brunch and searching for just the right card to bestow honor and love upon their parent. Mothers know it is their day and a time for feeling special and experiencing well deserved accolades.

Unfortunately for those parents who have lost a child the day will be one of great sadness, reflection and quiet grief. Although the day is dedicated to mothers the fathers too will experience sadness for it is actually a day that celebrates all aspects of parenting. The reminders of the day will touch siblings, grandparents and friends. In 6 weeks the scenario will repeat itself as we pause to celebrate Father's Day.

There are millions of parents that have lost a child. Society is uncomfortable with parents grieving the loss of a child, especially on days of celebration. There is little support and acknowledgment for these families. An internet search yields 1000's of results for Mother's Day gifts, cards, and poems but only a few results for coping with grief, and sadness on Mother's Day.

The parent child relationship never ends.

For mothers and fathers who have lost a child the day will bring many memories, quiet reflections of special moments and thoughts of "what could have been". The parent child relationship never ends. A mother or father will always remain a parent regardless of the age of the child at the time of death or the reason the child is no longer present. Time may bring more sophisticated coping strategies but the absence of the loved child lingers in the heart of the parent and remains there for their entire lives. Special days evoke memories bringing

them to the surface to be experienced. Friends may notice and question the source of a fleeting wistful look. Few people will acknowledge your loss. It seems more comfortable to remain silent. Yet it is during these special days when parenthood is celebrated that the loss of a child needs to be recognized. The joy and celebration of intact families will remind the childless parent of what they are missing and grieving.

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12 Tips to Support Recovery

Learn as much as possible about your loved one's condition.

Don't push too hard. Remember that recovery takes time.

Ask your loved one for permission to interact with their medical team, so you better understand their treatment plan.

Stress is easier to handle when shared with people who understand.

Encourage your loved one to follow their treatment plan.

Offer verbal encouragements to help them focus on the positive aspects of their life. Let them know you want to help.

Assign 'support' duties to everyone in the family. NAMI's Family-to-Family support group is a great place to start.

Avoid becoming isolated and resume "normal" activities, like going to the movies.

Be a good listener and try to recognize and acknowledge their feelings as they open up to you.

Prepare a crisis plan that includes phone numbers, such as the local crisis intervention team.

Make safety a priority. Talk to your loved one about the point at which you would involve the police (i.e. threats to harm oneself or others).

Don't give up. A person with mental illness can benefit greatly from family and group support such as NAMI's Peer-to-Peer group.

When a parent dies a piece of the past dies.

If your mother or father has died the special celebrations of Mothers Day and Fathers Day may awaken feelings and memories of cherished loved ones. Usually there are only a few people who can describe with authority and accuracy the story of your life. Our parents have an experience of us that is unique only to them. They watched and guided us as we developed. Your parent may have been your only cheering section, especially during those really challenging times. They may be your first experience of truly unconditional love.
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Addressee

Questions, comments, or feed-back on the MHA Newsletter?
We appreciate your thoughts!

EMAIL OPTION:

If you'd like to receive the MHA Newsletter electronically in color as a PDF, please send your full name and email to: erin@sevenvalleyshealth.org

Community Events & Support

"Cortland LGBT Men's Group"

Monthly group for LGBT men and their allies at Cortland LGBT Resource Center, 73 Main Street.
Contact 607-756-8970 for more information.

Parents & Change Support Group

This support group is for parents and caregivers of children, teens and adults with mental health conditions. Meetings are from 6:00pm to 7:30pm at 90 Central Avenue in Cortland. For more info please contact Beckey Tripp at parentsandchange@yahoo.com

2016 Meetings:

May 9	Jun 13	Jul 11	Aug 8
Sep 12	Oct 10	Nov 14	Dec 12

May is Mental Health Month Mental Health Association's Annual Dinner

Thursday May 5th, 5:00pm to 8:00pm
at the Ramada Inn (Cortland)

Mental Health Association of Cortland County's annual dinner and keynote presentation: Carry Your Heart

RSVP to Mike Pisa at
mpisa@ccocc.org or 756-5992
by April 21, 2016



Mental Health Awareness Walk 25 May - Beaudry Park 11:00-11:30 Registration

Direct any questions to
Youth Services Director, Alex Huntington-Ofner, MSW
ahuntingtonofner@cortland-co.org

If you have an upcoming community event or article you would like considered for admission to the MHA Newsletter, send your submission to ben@sevenvalleyshealth.org by the 7th of the month prior.

Disclaimer: The information presented here does not constitute professional medical advice. Individuals respond to treatment for mental health conditions in different ways, and treatment plans often need adjustment over time. Patients should work closely with their doctor and other health professionals in order to achieve optimal control of symptoms.



App(s) of the Month:

Grief Support Network - A free proximity-based social network connecting & supporting people grieving or who have grieved with the objective of creating a global community of Grief Angels that can be there for each other during one of life's most difficult time. Subscribers to the app are known as "Grief Angels" that know the people they may be helping now or in the future may be themselves, their families or friends.

iPhone: <http://apple.co/1ScxiXz> or Android: <http://bit.ly/1V3YN9a>



Mother's Day A Time of Grief for Parents and Children continued:

Parents are our first teachers. We can track our ethics, values, and opinions back to what our folks said or did. Frequently the first healer, the first hero, the first protector and the most forgiving person in our life was our parent.

With the loss of our parent we grieve the loss of our past. Only a parent can remind us of our personal story. A current accomplishment could be just a bit more satisfying if we could look over our shoulder and see them nodding with approval. This type of approval can only come from the parental awareness of our humble beginning.

Honoring those we have lost. Taking care of ourselves.

Grief and sadness are difficult emotions and the tendency is to suppress our sadness which only makes it more intense. The avoidance of grief is also a subtle statement that our own sense of self, our sadness, does not matter enough for the expression of tears. The gentler way to move through grief and sadness is to embrace it, acknowledge it and tell the truth about it. Remember there is healing in the telling.

Often people who care about us do not know how to support us in the grief process. When they ask how you are doing, let them know. If they offer support accept it.

During special days remember those who are absent. Bring out the photo albums, tell stories, and reminisce. The truth is life matters and your loved ones continue to make a difference. Pass their teachings on to others. Retell their jokes and favorite stories. Share how your life has changed and how you have expanded as a result of knowing them and surviving their absence. Say their name, tell their life story. Include them in a ritual, in a prayer. Display their favorite flowers, play a favorite song. Serve a favorite food.

Be gentle with yourself and honor the lives of those whom you love. Allow your tears, your loved one is worth it. Your relationships have not ended they have changed form, the love continues. You are still a parent to your child and you are still the child of your parent. Give yourself permission to grieve and honor your loved one by keeping their essence alive.

My thoughts,
Julie Siri, LCSW

Abridged From: Siri, J., LCSW. (2011). Fathers Day and Mothers Day: A Time of Grief for Parents and Children. Retrieved April 14, 2016, from <http://www.journeythroughloss.com/mothers-day-and-fathers-day-a-time-of-grief-for-parents-and-children/>

What is the difference between grief and depression?
If you have any questions, please contact our Bereavement Staff or a Mental Health Counselor at 607-753-9105.

It can be confusing to differentiate between some of the natural emotions of grief and the clinical diagnosis of depression. Also, since Elizabeth Kubler-Ross named one of her stages of grief "depression," along with the rise in clinical diagnoses of depression, many people wonder about how to tell the difference.

In both grief and depression, people can sometimes have a hard time concentrating, can feel teary, lethargic, hopelessness, low energy, or have a change in appetite or sleep.

One of the main differences between grief and depression concerns the presence or absence of self-worth. When a person is experiencing depression, there is typically a loss of self-esteem and overall feeling of guilt. Some people do experience guilt as a result of the loss of a loved one, but this type of guilt is specific to the event of loss, whereas guilt related to depression is more pervasive.

Another signature of depression is intensity and duration. In grief, one may experience any of the above-named feelings very deeply, but one will also experience other emotions. Many "symptoms" of depression are normal in grief, but if they persist acutely and are sustained for a long period of time, one should seek a mental health evaluation.

For anyone with a history of depression or related diagnosis in the past, it is a good idea to seek professional support at the time of a loss to help navigate grief. This is just a general overview;



We are a volunteer Board of Directors that act to initiate and promote advocacy services, educational presentations, prevention programs, and information and resource referrals.

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To learn more about the Cortland MHA visit:

<http://www.mhacortland.com>

or contact:
mhacortlandny@gmail.com

Active Minds Chapter @ SUNY Cortland

The newly formed chapter will hold a stress-less week at the end of the semester. To participate, checkout their social accounts:

Twitter:
https://twitter.com/csu_activeminds

Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/activemindsstate/>

Active Minds empowers students to change their perception about mental

NAMI Syracuse Presents: Children's Educational Conference

Addressing Challenging Behavior in Children and Youth

Thursday, May 5, 2016
9am to 3pm
at

Rosamond Gifford Zoo
One Conservation Place
Syracuse, NY

PRESENTERS:

Adrienne D. Allen, MD
Children & Youth Services,
HPC Outpatient Clinic

Bridget Hier, Ph.D
Assistant Professor,
School of Psychology, University of Buffalo

Regina Canuso, MSN
NYS Council on Children & Families,
Coordinator

To register and for more information go to: www.namisyracuse.org

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES for CHILDREN in CORTLAND COUNTY:

Catholic Charities of Cortland County

- 33-35 Central Ave., Cortland, NY.
♦ Children & Youth Intensive Case Management
607-756-5992, ex. 127
♦ Supportive Transition, Education and Prevention Services (STEPS)
607-756-5992, ex. 118

Cortland County Coordinated Children's Services Initiative (CCSI)

Cortland County Office Bldg.
60 Central Ave, Room 102 Cortland, NY.
607-428-5487

Cortland County Mental Health Department

7 Clayton Ave., Cortland, NY.
607-758-6100

- ♦ Outpatient Clinic
- ♦ Prevention Services for Youth
- ♦ SPOA (Single Point of Access)
- ♦ Family Support Services

Cortland Youth Center

35 Port Watson St, Cortland, NY
607-753-3580

Family Counseling Services

10 N Main St, Cortland NY.
607-753-0234

- ♦ Mental Health Clinic,
- ♦ Chemical Dependency Treatment,
- ♦ School-Based Program

Cortland Prevention Resources

(A Division of Family Counseling Services)
73 Main St, Cortland NY.
607-756-8970

YWCA of Cortland

14 Clayton Ave, Cortland, NY.
607-753-3639

- ♦ Bridges for Kids
- ♦ Aid to Victims of Violence (AVV)

For a full list of [Health Care Providers](#) in Cortland County, visit www.sevenvalleyshealth.org

Gambling?

Know ALL of the Facts before YOU decide!



www.YOuthDecideNY.org
Giving teens the power to decide?

