



Tom Bekkers, MSW, APSW, is an Advanced Practice Social Worker with over 25 years of experience in professional counseling related to patients and family members faced with the challenges of health situations, lifestyle adjustment issues, death, and grief. Tom holds a Master's Degree from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

For more than two decades, he worked at St Vincent Hospital in Green Bay and served as facilitator of the "Understanding Grief" group and "Taking Time" cancer support group. Tom also worked at Unity Hospice as a grief counselor and has co-facilitated grief groups at Unity for family members after the death of a loved one. Tom is currently employed as a social worker with Green Bay Oncology. He is co-author of "The Widower's Toolbox: Repairing Your Life After Losing Your Spouse" which helps channel men's grief into constructive tasks and provides tools that will enable bereaved men to recreate lives that can be fulfilling once again.

Tom lives in Denmark, Wisconsin with his wife Patty, and he has two daughters. Tom and Patty are members of the Circles of Faith Catholic Community, belonging to St. James Parish in Cooperstown. Tom may be contacted by phone at (920)-660-8066 or by e-mail at [tbekkers@centurytel.net](mailto:tbekkers@centurytel.net)

## GRIEF RESOURCES

### Books: General Bereavement

- Living When a Loved One Dies (Grollman)
- Life After Loss (Deits)
- Good Grief (Westberg)
- The Journey Through Grief (Wolfelt)
- Heaven is for Real (Burpo)

### Books: Death of a Spouse

- The Widowers Toolbox (Schaefer/Bekkers)
- How to Survive the Loss of a Love (Colgrove)

### Books: Death of a Parent

- How it Feels When a Parent Dies (Kremetz)

### Books: Bereaved Parents

- The Bereaved Parent (Schiff)
- The Worst Loss (Rosof)

### Books: Helping Children with Grief

- The Grieving Child (Fitzgerald)

### Books: Sudden and Traumatic Loss

- No Time for Goodbyes (Lord)

### Books: Suicide

- Suicide Survivors: A Guide (Wroblewski)

### Websites

- Sympathy Sharing Site  
[www.bereavement.com](http://www.bereavement.com)
- Journey of Hearts  
[www.journeyofhearts.org](http://www.journeyofhearts.org)
- Survivors of Suicide  
[www.survivorsofsuicide.com](http://www.survivorsofsuicide.com)
- The Compassionate Friends  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

Grief Support Ministry  
is an outreach program of the  
**Circle of Faith Catholic Churches**

# Circles of Faith Bereavement Ministry and Grief Support Group



March 2022  
to  
July 2022

## GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP OFFERINGS

All sessions will take place in person  
and through Zoom at:

St. James Parish Hall  
18228 CTH R, Denmark WI 54208  
12:00-2:00PM

Zoom is available by contacting  
Mr. Tom Bekkers, Facilitator - Info on reverse

**SUNDAY, MARCH 20, 2022**

### ***Where Are You God in the Midst of my Grief?***

Faith questions sometimes arise during the agonizing times after the death of a loved one. How can I pray when I hurt so much? What do I do when the ways I used to pray don't work anymore? This session will help us see that God is not only the God of the sufferers, but the God who suffers, and can provide comfort to those in the midst of grief.

**SUNDAY, MAY 22, 2022**

### ***What's Really "Normal" When You're Grieving?***

While knowledge of various sensations, behaviors, and feelings may be helpful, remember that your grief journey is your own unique process. You don't have to fit into anyone else's preconceived mold. There are, however, some predictable responses to loss as you struggle to face what has become an unthinkable world.

**SUNDAY, JULY 17, 2022**

### ***What to Say to Someone Who is Grieving***

A grieving person needs friends who are willing to cry with them; sit with them, listen, reminisce, care, have creative ideas for coping, be honest, help them feel loved and needed; believe that they will make it through their grief. This session will assist not only the person who is in the midst of their grief journey, but also their support person who may be looking for tips to help them in knowing what to say.

## General Tips on Grief

- Give yourself permission, time, and space to
  - Be patient and gentle with yourself
  - Seek support through family, friends, clergy, support groups or counseling
  - Learn about grief...understanding helps you to realize that you're not "going crazy"
  - Express your grief...talk, write in a journal, paint a picture, play music, write a poem, do something physical...any activity that helps you vent your feelings
  - Don't overextend yourself or take on new responsibilities right away
  - Accept your grief...don't pretend that it doesn't hurt. Grieving is a natural and healing process
  - Don't compare yourself to others who are grieving. Everyone heals in their own time and way
  - Respect your own timetable...there is no fixed time frame for mourning
  - Cry...it is not a sign of weakness. Tears release tension and are healing
  - Pace yourself...grief takes energy
  - Take good physical care of yourself. Try to get enough rest...emphasize nutrition...exercise in moderation...see your doctor for a physical
  - Find balance in your life...take time to do nice things for yourself
  - Plan activities that are enjoyable
  - It's OK to laugh and have fun times
- Don't become dependent on alcohol or drugs to get through the painful times...they will only mask the pain
  - Get involved in meaningful activities...work, hobbies, and volunteering
  - Ask for help when you need it and accept help when offered. Let others know what is right for you; they will take their cues from you
  - Realize that death often causes one to examine his/her faith or philosophy of life. You may find yourself questioning old beliefs. Talking about it can help. For many, faith offers help to accept the unacceptable
  - Set small, manageable goals - one day (hour/minute)—whatever you can do
  - Postpone major decisions, such as selling your home or changing jobs, if possible. Also avoid making hasty decisions about your loved one's belongings. Gauge your own readiness
  - Realize that grief is a process that has both ups and downs, strides, and backslides, times of rest and pause. Honor your own process
  - Avoid thinking "what if..." "if only..." "I should have..." Feelings of guilt are normal, though often not realistic
  - Forgive yourself, if necessary
  - Share memories. Use their name. Healing through grief doesn't mean forgetting your loved one