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# Non-profit center offers bereavement support year-round

The non-profit Good Grief Center for Bereavement Support offers phone and in-person one-on-one peer support, a lending library with grief-related books and tapes, and programs on grief support in the workplace.

Lulu Orr, executive director, says co-workers, bosses, neighbors, friends and even family members are unsure of what to say or how to act toward someone who is grieving, especially during the holidays, which are generally a happy time for others.

"Avoidance is easy, but it is most hurtful," says Orr.

In addition to ongoing support groups throughout the region, the center offers its own holiday grief workshops and compiles a list of other agencies that provide holiday-specific



grief support groups and sessions.

The center, located on the second floor of Carnegie Library of Homestead in Munhall, has available a holiday survival guide on how to best support a grieving individual. As an alternative to sending flowers or to let someone know they're thought of, the center also has for sale Care

Packages, including tips for grieving, mug, tea, journal, pen, candle, phone card, tissues and other items.

"The Good Grief Center has received more than 5,000 calls in the four years since we've been open," says Orr. "Each year, from September through January, more than 75 percent of those calls are from people wondering how they're going to make it through the holidays."

Many of the calls are from people middle aged or younger, some of whom are experiencing a close death for the first time.

"People need to know what they're feeling is completely natural," says Orr, who has fielded calls from people who are afraid they are losing their minds.

Some of those feelings are shock, anger, panic, sadness, guilt, shame or feeling left behind. Physical problems can include numbness, upset stomach, headaches, lack of sleep, chest pain, low energy and not wanting to eat.

To help cope, those experiencing grief should talk with others, especially those who share similar experiences, spend time with people who are supportive, draw on personal strength and not hesitate to seek help.

"You'll never get over this, but you will get through it," Orr says. "The anxiety is sometimes worse than the actuality when the day is here."

For information on bereavement support, details on Care Packages or copy of the survival guide, call 412-461-1776 or visit [www.ggconline.org](http://www.ggconline.org).