

# Sound Waves



“Joy is a return to the deep harmony of body, mind and spirit that was yours at birth and that can be yours again. That openness to love, that capacity for wholeness with the world around you is still within you.”

– Deepak Chopra, Holistic Integrative Doctor, spiritual author and teacher.

## In This Issue

- 1 The Mind-Body Connection
- 3 SoundCareKids
- 4 Music and Mood
- 5 Adult Support Groups

## The Mind-Body Connection

*We all expect to feel emotions when we are grieving. But how many of us expect to have our bodies respond physically to the grief we feel?*

We tend to think of grief as being a strictly emotional reaction. Yet it is almost always described in physical terms as well, such as stomach pain, tightness in the throat or literal heart ache.

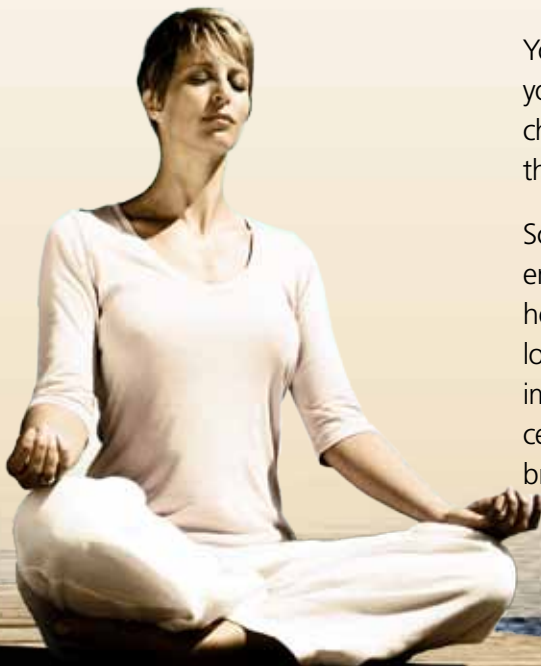
Sometimes we are not aware of the emotional connection with our physical bodies until we stop and think about it or talk to someone about it. Emotional pain **is** physical pain. Our physical bodies can hold onto emotional pain. Grief, anger and pain are stored in the body. So are joy, laughter and love.

### The Physics of Grief

Your nervous system is the messenger of your mind. It prepares and organizes you to move from the moment you decide on or think of a motion. Similarly, change in your body's position affects your mind. Your emotions are the bridge that connects your mind and body.

Scientists have recently begun to document the interaction of mind, body and emotions. A 1995 Harvard study showed that the simple act of remembering how it feels to take care of someone, or to be cared for by someone you love, can drive up—and sustain for an hour—the body's level of the antibody immunoglobulin A. Other studies show a link between loneliness and lowered cellular immunity. Dr. Candace Pert discovered the limbic system—the part of the brain responsible for moods and emotions—has 40 times more neuropeptide

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# The Mind-Body Connection

Continued from page 1

receptors than other parts of the brain. This means physical changes will result in emotional changes. There is no question now that body and mind are chemically and physiologically linked.

In today's world we are often forced to behave incongruently to an event: outwardly we say one thing while internally we feel a different way. An example in the process of grief is society's expectation that we "get over it." Rather than risk losing friends or a job, we can push our grief deep inside and bury it. This blocks our flow of energy.

(The information in this section was taken from *The Listening Hand*, by Ilana Rubinfeld, Bantam Books, 2000.)

## The Impact of Stress on Health

Researchers Holmes and Rahe developed a scale of stress (blocked energy) and its impact on a person's physical health. Holmes and Rahe identified numerous stressors and assigned a value to them. How many of these things have happened in your life during the last 12 months?

- Death of a spouse
- Death of a close family member
- Personal injury or illness
- Retirement
- Change in the health of an immediate family member
- Death of a close friend
- Change to a different line of work
- Spouse begins or stops work
- Change in residence
- Change in social activities (more or less than before)
- Sleep less than eight hours a night

These are just a few of the items Holmes and Rahe identify. You may be surprised at the amount of stress in your life, or may have exceeded your stress tolerance, and people who are overstressed can become ill (the mind-body connection).



## What Next?

Now that you are aware of the connection between your mind and your body, what does this mean to you?

As you are working through your grief emotionally, you may also want to work through your grief physically. Depending on your comfort level, this may involve simple everyday activities or the involvement of bodywork practitioners who are aware of the connection between emotions and physical health. Examples of integrated body work include acupuncture, aromatherapy, craniosacral therapy, massage, healing touch, Qigong and yoga.

If you are interested in pursuing some body work to help in your grief healing, you can find a practitioner by talking to your friends, looking through the phone book or searching for one online. If you want to schedule an appointment with a practitioner, explain that you are grieving and ask if the practitioner is aware of grief connections. Choose someone you feel good about talking to, someone you feel comfortable with. Follow the lead your body gives you. Many have also found relief by engaging in simple everyday activities such as walking, hiking, gardening or other exercise routines that you and your body are comfortable with.

– Adapted from article by Anne Howie, LICSW (2004)

### Recommended Readings

*"Minding the Body, Mending the Brain"*  
by Joan Borysenko, Ph.D.

*"It's not the End of the World: Developing Resilience in Times of Change"* by Joan Borysenko, Ph.D.

*"Come to Your Senses: Demystifying the Mind-Body Connection"* by Stanley H. Block

# SoundCare Kids

*Grief support for children, teens, and the adults who care for them.*

The SoundCareKids Illness and Grief Support Groups give children, teens and their parents an opportunity to connect with others who have also experienced a loved one's serious illness or death while sharing feelings in creative, experiential ways and learning coping skills for adjusting to difficult changes. Group nights begin with pizza and play. Then kids, teens and caregivers meet in small groups (Littles 3 – 5, Bigs 6 – 8, Middles 9 – 12, Teens, and Adults) for discussion and activities. Our regular session topics include:

- Learning about illness or grief and getting to know each other
- Exploring feelings and learning how to cope with them
- Sharing our stories
- Dealing with regret, guilt, and other unfinished business
- Identifying and adjusting to changes
- Memories and Staying Connected

A one-day camp is being offered in Shelton for youth ages 5 – 18 who have experienced the death of a loved one. Campers will have the opportunity to enjoy a fun day filled with activities focused on learning about grief and remembering their loved ones who have died

Call Providence SoundHomeCare and Hospice at 360-493-5928 for more information about individual or family counseling or to reserve your spots in an upcoming group or the day camp. Pre-registration is required.

The SoundCareKids program is provided at no cost to families in Thurston, Lewis and Mason counties through funding from the Providence St. Peter Foundation.



## 2012 Summer Group Schedule

Thursdays, 6:15 - 7:45 p.m.  
July 12th - August 16th

## 2012 Fall Grief Support Session

Thursdays, 6:15 - 7:45 p.m.  
October 11th - November 15th

## 2012 - 2013 Illness Support Group

First Tuesday each month,  
6:15 - 7:45 p.m.  
Beginning October 2

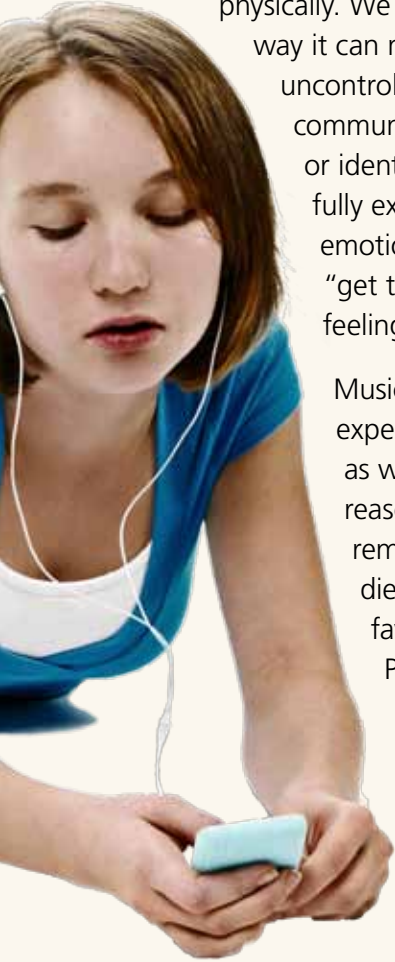
## 2012 Day Camp

Saturday, September 8th  
10:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.



<http://on.fb.me/ikYfdd>

# Music and Mood



Music has a way of touching us emotionally and physically. We see this, for example, in the way it can make us cry or tap our feet uncontrollably. We use it as a way of communicating our feelings, experiences or identities to others; helping ourselves fully experience and express our emotions when we are struggling to “get them out;” and adjusting our feelings and mood.

Music can give us a way of experiencing and coping with grief as well. There are many different reasons why a certain song may remind us of the person who died. Perhaps it was the person’s favorite song or was “our song.”

Perhaps our loved one played an instrument that is featured. Or maybe the lyrics reflect some aspect of our relationship or of our grief at losing that person.

Maybe a song reminds us of a happy time with our loved one or an experience we missed out on. Whatever the case, being

aware of the power that music has to affect our moods can allow us to use it as a tool for coping with grief.

Although music is important to us at every stage of life, at no time does it seem more important and influential than during adolescence. Helping your teen understand the impact of music on his emotions gives him a tool to use in regulating his emotions related to grief in addition to the feelings related to all the other aspects of his life. If he increases his awareness of the impact that various music has on him, he can learn to use it with intention rather than simply being influenced by it.

Encourage your child to make a list of favorite songs that elicit feelings such as sadness, anger, peace and hope. When a teen recognizes the impact of his preferred music he can make choices about how to use it: whether to choose music that matches or intensifies his feeling or music that will change his feelings and balance his

mood. For example, if he is feeling the dull ache of sadness and would find relief from crying, listening to a song that triggers tears can be helpful. However, if he is feeling hopeless, he can listen to a song that he finds encouraging in order to renew his sense of hope for the future. Another benefit of music that teens report in SoundCareKids support groups is related to movement. Many teens find dancing to be a helpful outlet for the emotions they experience in response to a loved one’s death. They are able to discharge some of their energy and to express their emotions in a creative, non-verbal manner.

Sometimes people have difficulty moving beyond the intensity of their feelings while connecting with certain music. If this seems to be the case for your child or teen, it might be helpful for him to vary the musical selections and, if necessary, to seek help from someone who can help him understand why he is consistently choosing music that worsens feelings of depression or anger and to find ways of expressing those feelings that encourage healing instead. With your support, your teen can learn to use music as a tool for managing his emotions that will benefit him not only throughout the tumultuous years of adolescence but throughout adult life as well.

– Sharon Shadwell, SoundCareKids Program Coordinator



## Recommended Readings

For Children: *“Lifetimes”* by Bryan Mellonie and Robert Ingpen

For Teens: *“I Will Remember You: What to Do When Someone You Love Dies”* by Laura Dower

For Parents: *“Tear Soup”* by Pat Schwiebert and Chuck DeKlyen

# Adult Support Groups

Every individual has the capacity to heal and grow after the life-altering experience of a major loss. Our goal is to help people understand and cope with their grief while offering support and opportunities to learn and grow. We help people identify needs and strengths and work with them to develop a plan to address these. We work with individuals, families and groups in the community.

*For information about individual counseling or to make an appointment call: 360-493-4667.*



## Adult Support Groups (Ongoing)

### Daytime

- 1st and 3rd Monday of each month  
10:00 – 11:30 a.m.  
Lacey Presbyterian Church  
3045 Carpenter Rd. SE, Lacey  
Information: 360-493-4667
- 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month  
1:30 – 3:00 p.m.  
Shelton Health and Rehabilitation Center  
153 Johns Court, Shelton  
Information: 360-493-4667

### Evening

- 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month  
6:00 – 7:30 p.m.  
Providence SoundHomeCare and Hospice  
3432 South Bay Rd. NE, Olympia  
Information: 360-493-4667
- Loss of Child Support Group  
(The Compassionate Friends)  
1st Monday of each month  
7:00 – 8:30 p.m.  
Providence SoundHomeCare and Hospice  
3432 South Bay Rd. NE, Olympia  
Information: Allen Roth @ 360-427-1418



**Providence SoundHomeCare and Hospice**

3432 South Bay Road NE

Olympia, WA 98506

[www.providence.org/pshch](http://www.providence.org/pshch)

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## *Grief Support for All Ages*

Providence SoundHomeCare and Hospice provides a full range of grief support and bereavement services for adults and children. We can help you better understand and cope with your grief, while offering support and opportunities to learn and grow.

See **INSIDE** for more information!

## *The Thing Is*

– Ellen Bass

*to love life, to love it even  
when you have no stomach for it  
and everything you've held dear  
crumbles like burnt paper in your hands,  
your throat filled with the silt of it.  
When grief sits with you, its tropical heat  
thickening the air, heavy as water  
more fit for gills than lungs;  
when grief weights you like your own flesh  
only more of it, an obesity of grief,  
you think, How can a body withstand this?  
Then you hold life like a face  
between your palms, a plain face,  
no charming smile, no violet eyes,  
and you say, yes, I will take you  
I will love you, again*

