

THE *Benefits* OF *Journaling*

BY REBECCA SIMKIN

Journaling, an age old practice, is the act of writing down our thoughts and feelings. By focusing on internal feelings, experiences and reactions, we come to a deeper understanding of ourselves.

In his book, *Lessons of Loss: A Guide to Coping*, Dr. Robert Nemeyer explains, "Especially when losses are traumatic, they may be difficult to discuss or even disclose to another. And yet the psychological and physical burden of harboring painful memories without the release of sharing can prove far more destructive in the long run." Reconstructing your personal self-narrative is important to the healing process. A journal will provide a venue for expression without judgement. Journaling can help people cope with stress and process emotions. It is often used in counselling and suggested for use when dealing with grief.

With such benefits, it is well worth trying to journal and see what happens for you! Here are some ideas for how to get started:

1. Start small but try to write regularly, preferably every day, even if it's only for 5 or 10 minutes. Don't berate yourself if you miss a day - this is just for you!
2. Choose a journal format that suits you. Some choices include: a lovely hard-bound book with blank pages, a journal with pre-determined topics, an app on your phone, a program on your computer, or even a video. You can even write yourself emails and mail them to yourself. Do what feels comfortable to you.
3. Don't worry about grammar and punctuation, just let the thoughts flow from your pen to the paper (yes, it is best if you use a pen and paper).
4. Write as if no one will ever read it so you can be yourself. You never have to show your words to anyone! You have permission to lose control even.
5. Give yourself permission to write whatever comes without being critical or judgmental of content. You don't have to be a good writer to benefit from journaling.
6. If you don't know what to write about, start with how you are feeling.
7. Consider writing about what you are grateful for, as a way to switch a negative outlook to a more positive one.



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EVERGREEN NEWSLETTER

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Kimberly Carson - Board Chair | Jan Pearce - Executive Director
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Evergreen provides community based supportive programs to individuals and their families in Markham, Stouffville and Thornhill, who are living with life-threatening illness or coping with the death of a loved one. Services are provided free of charge and are specifically designed to meet the needs of children, teens and adults.

As you can see, it's not that complicated, and it has the potential to help you become a more grounded, less stressed person. In addition, if you are grieving, we recommend journaling as a way to assist you on your grief journey. Here are some great reasons why writing down your feelings and thoughts can be a powerful way to work through your grief.

- **Writing About Your Experiences Combats Avoidance.** While it's understandable to want to block out some of our more painful feelings when grieving in order to get a break from their intensity, it's important not to continually keep those thoughts at bay. Painful memories and emotions often don't go away on their own. It takes some effort to learn to cope with them, and journaling is one way to do this.
- **There are Physical Health Benefits to Journaling.** Journaling does more than just help you record your memories or find self-expression. It's good for your health. Some of the short and long term benefits of journaling include: stress reduction (a 2005 study showed that writing for only 15 minutes a day, 3-5 times over a 4-month period was enough to lower blood pressure and improve liver functionality); improves your immunity and decreases risk of illness; and keeps your memory sharp.
- **There are Mental Health Benefits to Journaling.** Writing has been found to reduce symptoms of depression as well as anxiety. Journaling can improve your mood and give you a greater sense of emotional well-being.
- **Journaling Promotes Better Sleep.** For many reasons, grief can impact your sleep pattern. People have reported either sleeping too much or too little. Research has found that writing before going to bed can help people fall asleep quicker, and improve the quality of sleep.
- **Journaling is Non-Judgmental.** Journaling doesn't require you to talk it out or share with others, and it gets your feelings out instead of blocking them.
- **Journaling Provides a Sense of Peace.** What you write, you control. Our short-term memory has limited storage capacity. We start to forget things and feel overwhelmed with information when we try to hold too many thoughts. Recording your thoughts by journaling clears out that storage. As a result, your mind becomes quieter. It stops returning to the same worn-out mental loops over and over. You can begin to think more clearly.

Here are some suggestions for journaling to help with grieving. You can try one or all of them.

- Write three words that describe your feelings. This helps you track your feelings over time and gives you an opportunity to notice that emotions shift with time and process.
- Set the timer and write fast and furious for a short time (5 to 10 minutes). The forced speed can sometime release your logical mind and help you access your feelings more directly.
- Write lists of your emotions, memories, plans, ideas, fantasies and more.
- Unsent letters are an excellent way to maintain a sense of communication with your departed loved one and can offer deep opportunities for soothing and comfort. Letter writing provides a meaningful ongoing relationship with a loved-one's memory.
- Describe how you imagine you will feel in a year's time. This is a way to fast-forward yourself to the healing side of the grief. Imagine a time when it might not hurt so much.
- Not into words? Try sketching instead. Even doodling helps.

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Evergreen has a program for letter writing to your loved-one call Loving Letters. See <https://bit.ly/2sDCLnu> for more details.



An Evening of Fun, Frivolity and



**Thursday, March 26, 2020
at Angus Glen Golf Club**



The event: An Evergreen Hospice Fundraiser

Cocktail and Appetizer Reception at 6:00 pm
Gourmet Meal at 7:00 pm - OPEN BAR



Entertainment

Music
Dancing
Mystery solving



Great Live Auction Deals

Last year's deals included
a week at a cottage; Maple
Leaf tickets and hotel package;
Caribbean Island Escape



Dress Code

Come as a Clue
character or
come as you are

Loads of silent auction steals, dancing, and casino games for FUN

It is your job, if you wish, to discover who committed the murder, where they did it and what they did it with. Was it in the Casino and Games Lounge or, perhaps, the Silent Auction Library? This is an evening of fun and frivolity, but it is also an evening of MURDER.

(Based on the popular board game, CLUE)

To buy tickets, to sponsor, or for more information
call 416-499-2185 or email info@evgcares.org
Tickets are \$200 inclusive. Save \$25 with our
Early Bird price until March 12, 2020.

A portion of your ticket price is eligible for a TAX receipt
Charitable No. 12802 6143 RR0001


Evergreen
MARKHAM STOUFFVILLE THORNHILL
Supporting Life and Living



THE Healing CYCLE RIDE



On September 15th, 9 riders braved the rain to participate in The Healing Cycle – a ride to support hospice palliative care in Ontario – on behalf of Evergreen. The riders included some of Evergreen’s palliative care physicians (Dr. Emilie Lam and Dr. Andrew Patterson), past and present board members (Hang Mei Chen and Ray Lai), and volunteers (Ruth Patterson, Suzanne Murphy, Nick Bidwell and Alex Tesoro). Also riding for Evergreen was Dr. Allen Grill, the Chief of the Department of Family Medicine at Markham Stouffville Hospital. Dr. Grill came third in overall individual donations. Thanks to all those who donated!

30TH ANNIVERSARY

On September 26th, 2019 at the Markham Civic Centre in Council Chambers, Evergreen was recognized for 30 years of service to the community by Mayor Frank Scarpitti on behalf of the City of Markham.



CHILDREN'S BEREAVEMENT PROGRAM



On October 3, Evergreen started a 6-week children's bereavement group with 12 children. This program encourages young children to express themselves through play therapy (art, music, writing and other crafts,) and supports them as they work through the numerous emotions that accompany the grieving process.

We're writing a book!



We need your stories about how you received the support you needed from Evergreen for our new project.

We will be compiling a collection of stories from clients past and present to distribute free to clients and when approaching potential donors.

Contact Rebecca Simkin
at 416 499-2185 ex 109 or
rsimkin@evgcares.org
for more details.



Compassionate COMMUNITY

The basis for this project is that evidence suggests that social activity and engagement in community activities has an impact on dementia and reduces loneliness and improves quality of life for seniors.

Evergreen was approved for a grant from the Centre for Brain Health innovation (CBHI) continuing Evergreen's Compassionate Community work.

This pilot program will create a training program for volunteers and a database of available activities for seniors. After their training, the volunteers will then meet with local seniors to learn about their needs. Once their needs are understood, the volunteers will then access the database to find appropriate programs, and return to the senior to share this information.

CANADA SUMMER JOBS

Evergreen will again be looking for exceptional students to fill three summer positions. Typically, the jobs are for 20 to 30 hours a week for approximately 12 weeks and are dependent on Federal funding.

Email your resume to
jpearce@evgcares.org
to be considered.

Have you been thinking about volunteering?

You can make a difference in a number of different ways:

- In home Visiting Volunteers are URGENTLY needed as families are waiting to be matched with a caring individual. Training is available in several locations and online.
- Fundraising Committee members. Join the team to plan special events.
- Are you a Complementary Therapist? Consider volunteering a couple of hours a month at the Markham office or in a client's home for appointments with clients in need.
- Do you have a special dish that is your favourite to serve a group? Consider providing a lunch main dish for the Living Room Day Program on Thursdays. Once or twice a year can really help!

Call **Tricia Stanton** at 416-499-2185 ext 107 or email her at tstanton@evgcares.org to discuss specific opportunities to give back to your community.



Welcome



STEPHEN ASHLEY, who formerly worked with Evergreen as an intern from the Masters of Counselling program at Yorkville University, has graduated and is now joining the Evergreen staff as a counsellor. Stephen is well known at the Living Room program, at the C-Care Cancer support program for men, and has been counselling clients for a while now. Welcome Stephen!

Welcome also to **SERENA MANOCHEHRI**. Serena is finishing her Masters of Counselling/ Psychology at Yorkville University and is doing her internship with us. Serena also earned a Bilingual Honours Psychology Bachelors Degree in English/French from York University. She also speaks Spanish and Farsi. She will be assisting with our Living Room and C-Care programs, among other duties.



Volunteer TRAINING

TOPIC

Legacy Activities – Capturing Memories

DATE

January 20, 2020

TIME

4:00PM to 6:00PM

DETAILS

Sometimes clients might request volunteers to help them with recording some memories for their family after they are gone. This session derives to give volunteers some ideas about what to do upon this type of request, offers suggestions to capture your own memories, and will discuss how to open up communication.



CALENDAR of EVENTS

GALA

Thursday March 26th, 2020

WALK

Saturday May 23rd, 2020

VOLUNTEER TRAINING

“Legacy Activities – Capturing Memories”
January 20, 2020 from 4:00pm to 6:00pm

VOLUNTEER TRAINING

“Health of the Heart”
TBA February, 2020

VOLUNTEER TRAINING

“Cancer Awareness”
TBA March, 2020



In Home

Our volunteers can offer help with practical needs - whether it is reading aloud, respite for the caregiver, a compassionate listening ear or legacy work. Social and emotional support to clients of all ages is provided.

Powerful Tools for Caregivers

This 6-session seminar covers topics essential for those who are caring long-term for a loved one. Strategies to care for yourself and reduce stress, ways of communicating in challenging situations, and learning from your emotions are some of the topics.

Family Caregiver Support

Friends and family receive help and guidance in caring for their loved ones and themselves. Caregiver focused support groups and calls can make the difference in managing the very special work of the family caregiver. Caregivers may sign up for regular mailings about resources, self care and support.

Living Room Program

Provides life-affirming activities for adult clients of all ages and respite for caregivers every week. Activities include yoga, exercise, art, legacy work, massage, and complementary therapies. Guest speakers and information sharing sessions help those individuals and their family members wanting to "take charge" of their own care. Participants share a delicious meal and conversation with staff, volunteers and others who are living with the impact of life threatening illness.

Drop-In Bereavement Groups

Drop-in groups providing education and resources for individuals impacted by death are available regularly.

Bereavement Correspondence Support

This educational bereavement program is distributed by mail for one year to all interested families.

Circle of Hope

An 8-week bereavement support group for adults who have lost a loved one. It is not a therapy group, but is based on the belief that sharing common experiences and concerns can aid in the healing process of the bereavement experience. Offered as required.

C-Care, A Support Program for Women Experiencing Cancer

A 7-week closed support program facilitated by professionals and survivors to provide women experiencing cancer with useful skills and helpful information.

C-Care, A Support Program for Men Experiencing Cancer

A 6-session closed support program facilitated by men to provide men experiencing cancer with useful skills and helpful information.

Short Term Individual Counselling

Professional hospice staff offers assessment, support and guidance in dealing with life threatening illness and the grief process.

Speaker for Community Meetings

Speakers are available for meetings of service groups, faith groups and community groups about the services of the hospice, palliative care, family caregivers and coping with grief and bereavement.

The Evergreen Team

Executive Director

Jan Pearce x100

Community Hospice Manager

Lerryn Pitcher x101

Client Care Coordinator

Tammie Milburn x103

Counsellors for Care and Bereavement

Bonnie Strand x106

Michelle McMinassian x104

Stephen Ashley x 110

Living Room Coordinator

Hedi Spiar x108

Coordinator of Volunteers

Tricia Stanton x 107

Fund Development Coordinator

Rebecca Simkin x109

Fundraising Support

Caroline Allen x102

Administrator

Cindy Knowles x 111

C-CARE

CANCER SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR MEN

A FREE six-week program providing MEN experiencing cancer with useful skills and information.

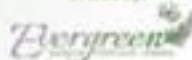
Learn strategies to help with:

- The physical impact of the disease and treatments
- Coping with expectations
- Communication and relationships
- Finances and other practical concerns
- The impact of having cancer

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

For more information on C-Care Support Program or any other Evergreen Program, or to register for an upcoming group:
Call - 416-499-2335
Email - info@evgcares.org

Offered by:



5762 Highway 7 East, Suite 201
Markham, ON L3P 1A8

C-CARE

CANCER SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR WOMEN

A FREE seven-week support program providing WOMEN experiencing cancer with useful skills and information.

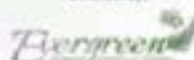
Learn strategies to help with:

- The emotional impact of having cancer
- The physical impact of the disease and treatments
- Coping with expectations
- Intimacy and relationships
- Reinforcing your inner strength
- Finances and other practical concerns

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

For more information on C-Care Support Program or any other Evergreen Program, or to register for an upcoming group:
Call - 416-499-2335
Email - info@evgcares.org

Offered by:



5762 Highway 7 East, Suite 201
Markham, ON L3P 1A8

POWERFUL TOOLS

FOR CAREGIVERS

A FREE 6-WEEK WORKSHOP FOR CAREGIVERS

Offered by
 Evergreen

Topics covered include:

- Taking care of you
- Identifying and reducing personal stress
- Communicating feelings, needs, and concerns
- Communicating in challenging situations
- Learning from our emotions
- Mastering caregiving decisions

"After taking this class, I am a more confident caregiver. Having tools to resolve problems is a definite advantage in becoming a happier, wiser and healthier me...and a healthier us!"

Registration Required

For more information on Tools for Caregivers or any other Evergreen Program, or to register for an upcoming group:
Call - 416-499-2335
Email - info@evgcares.org



Call for start dates!



Help support others just like Nadia!



Diagnosed at a time when her husband was working outside the province, Nadia found that she needed extra support to help her through her difficult treatments.

After her doctor referred her to Evergreen's Living Room Program, she found all the support she needed each week from the caring volunteers and staff.

"I felt a sense of community and met a lot of people. There is medication and doctors but there is also keeping your spirits up and finding out what else is happening in life. Evergreen makes the whole process easier"

Your donation will help ensure that programs such as the Living Room are available in the future for people like Nadia.

Evergreen provides community based supportive services to individuals and their families in Markham, Stouffville, and Thornhill, who are living with life-threatening illness or coping with the death of a loved one.

Become a Donor Today!

YES! Yes! I would like to support programs such as the Living Room at Evergreen.

Select your donation level:

\$50 \$100 \$200 Other \$ _____

PLEASE PRINT

This donation is made in memory of, or in honour of (please check which one): _____ (Name)

Name and Address of person to notify, if a notification of this gift is needed

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Credit Card Number: _____ Expiry: _____

We accept Visa, MasterCard and American Express cards or cheques payable to "Evergreen Hospice".
Tax receipts will be issued for donations of \$20 or more.

Signature: _____

