

EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE



Northwest Victim Services May 2026 Newsletter

My name is Naomi Rivera. I am 16 years old. Three years ago my older brother, Neko Rivera, became a victim of gun violence. He was only 15 years old when he was killed. Me and my brother were extremely close from the day I was born. I don't remember a day where he wasn't there. He was very loving, protective, and always there for me.

I was in the car when I got the call. I immediately broke down. I couldn't understand what I was being told. It felt like my whole world had been flipped upside down. I never got to see him again or say goodbye. I knew I had to stay strong for my mom, but mentally, I wasn't there.

For a long time, everything felt unreal. The house felt so empty. I remember having so much guilt because I felt like I didn't spend as much time with him as I could. I was scared to move forward or feel happiness without him here. All I could feel was sadness and loneliness. Even when I had so many people saying they're here for me, I felt alone. I didn't know how to process my emotions, so I just pushed them away and tried to deal with everything on my own. I saw how everything was taking a toll on my mom and I didn't know how to truly be there for her.

School became very difficult for me but in some ways, it was also an outlet for me. I could escape for a little through writing and socializing. But at the same time, it was hard because it was one of the last places he had been. I was later invited to join my school's grief group for a couple weeks. I was able to learn a lot of coping mechanisms and what grief was overall.

Even though my brother is no longer here, his presence is still a part of me. Through everything I've been through, especially learning how to cope, I've started to understand my emotions instead of hiding them. Healing is not something that happens overnight, and there are still days where my heart feels heavy, but moving forward doesn't mean forgetting him. I can carry his love with me wherever I go and keep going. He will always be a part of my life and the woman I will later become.



EMOTIONALLY ROBBED

It's been three years since my son Neko was shot and killed. He was 15. I also have a daughter who was 13 at the time. That day, a huge part of us died too. I was so emotionally selfish. In hindsight, I was not there for my daughter as I should've been. She must've felt so alone and lost. Naomi is very independent, but it wasn't fair to her that she grieved alone a lot of days. I am an emotionally detached person. I am only used to being alone. When Neko's death happened I was in my room a lot. Never did I think to check on my daughter. The strong young lady she is, still helped me with encouraging words, cooking, and just sitting beside me. We rarely talked in the days where Neko's death was fresh.

Today, I'm trying to be the best Mom I can to one of the most special young lady's I know. I will never forget how she was there for me. I am glad to have the opportunity to write this so that I can reflect on how I treated my daughter when she probably needed me the most. I was always a fair mother when it came to parenting for two kids. Just because one has past away doesn't mean I don't have the capacity or ability to keep loving. Our bond has strengthened over this tragedy. I thought I had her back before, but I have it more than ever now. I choose to LIVE for her everyday.





A FAMILY FOREVER CHANGED!



Family and God

Hopes for my future is to be at peace and to continue to build relationships.

call friends with family, music, play games, laughing, going out

I've gotten closer with my mom more than anyone. I've learned that I'm not alone.

My mom has helped me a lot, as well as a lot of my family. Music has also helped me cope with everything.

Things I want people to know is that

It's been pretty hard everyday since it's just me and my mom now. I still can't really believe everything that *My feelings* happend.

My family, love, positivity, success

11/8/07-3/13/23 #15 LOVE YOU

Always Stay HUMBLE & KIND

I MISS YOU

Love You to the MOON & back

Wings

LONG LIVE NEKO JUAN RIVERA

ALWAYS IN OUR HEARTS LLN* 2026/04/30 02:46

THE MOON REPRESENTS MY HEART 235

I might never understand completely how you feel But I am here, if you need me.

childhood home

the beginning

through the process

lack of confidence

frustration cannot hear what is being said

More restrained

I miss you

Don't you worry.

RESOURCES



**Philly
HopeLine**

A service of Uplift Center for Grieving Children

833-PHL-HOPE
(833-745-4673)

PHLHope@UpliftPhilly.org

Uplift's Philly HopeLine is a free, confidential helpline staffed by Master's degree-level clinicians. The Philly HopeLine is open to all youth, caregivers, schools, and service providers in the Philadelphia region.

Call if you'd like to:

- Sign up for grief groups
- Receive emotional or grief support
- Identify community resources
- Get on the list for an in-school grief group
- Make a referral of a youth or family
- Request a training

Service Hours

Monday – Thursday, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Interpretation service is available for more than 100 languages.

Youth and caregivers who prefer to email may reach out via **PHLHope@UpliftPhilly.org**. (If you are part of an organization, please call to make a referral.)

The Philly HopeLine is closed on all federal holidays and Uplift office closure dates. Please check our social media for our closing schedule. Messages left during closures are promptly returned by Uplift clinicians.

About Uplift

Uplift Center for Grieving Children offers free **therapeutic grief groups** led by Master's-level clinicians who provide trauma-responsive and healing-centered support. Groups allow youth and families to express their grief through non-judgmental discussions, creative activities, grounding techniques, and other forms of therapeutic support. **All grief services are free for youth and families**, regardless of immigration status, and do not require insurance.

Our Mission

Uplift Center for Grieving Children helps children grieving a death to heal and grow through their grief while strengthening families, communities and professionals' understanding of how best to respond to their needs.

How To Sign Up

Use Uplift's **Philly HopeLine** as a connection point to sign up for grief groups, receive emotional or grief support, and connect with community resources.

Service providers who wish to make a referral: please call **833-PHL-HOPE** to speak with an Uplift clinician.

Uplift Center for Grieving Children

Office: 267-437-3123

Philly HopeLine: 833-745-4673

    @upliftcenter

www.UpliftPhilly.org

**Healing-Centered
Services for
Children, Teens
and Caregivers**



GRIEF SERVICES

AND PHILLY HOPELINE

Support Groups

Find strength in community.

OVA support groups offer a safe, confidential space for individuals impacted by trauma to share, connect, and heal.

Guided by our social worker, each session includes supportive conversation, grounding techniques, and resources to help you navigate your healing journey.

You are not alone.



*Groups offered
virtually*

For more information:

Contact OVA and ask to speak with our social worker

800-563-6399
ra-ovainfo@pa.gov

Sessions are held once a week for 8 weeks.



pennsylvania
OFFICE OF VICTIM ADVOCATE



TIPLINE

215-546-TIPS (8477)

Contact the Crime Commission

If you have a tip about an unsolved crime, please use our Tipline at 215-546-TIPS (8477). If your tip helps solve a crime, you might be eligible for a cash reward.

The Tipline Program

Our TIPLINE program has been used by many companies, from large corporations like Rite-Aid, 7-Eleven, McDonald's, Wawa and Citizens Bank to mom-and-pop stores. Our program works so well because of the anonymity of the callers, and is enhanced by cash rewards offered in most instances.

We operate the Tipline (215-546-TIPS) 24 hours a day, seven days a week with live, trained operators. We don't use answering machines or voicemail, ever. When you call the Tipline, you can rest assured that you will talk to a live person, not a machine with a hundred options. You will never get a busy signal.

Our operators are trained to help YOU!

<https://crimecommission.org/index.html>



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Northwestvictimservices.org