

# About Grief

## Give Yourself Permission to Grieve

By Diana Battles, MSW, LISW

Early in their journey through grief, most people will experience varying degrees of numbness. Commonly, within four to seven months following the death of a loved one, the numbness begins to lift and emotions flood in. Relief, sorrow, anger, guilt, loneliness and regret may emerge. Unfortunately, at the time when one begins to feel engulfed in confusing and powerful emotions, friends and family may urge: "It's been weeks or months, aren't you over it yet? Time to pull yourself together and get on with your life." Comments like these imply that unless they jump back into life fairly soon after the death, something is wrong. Many bereaved people are angered and shocked that others could be so insensitive to their physical, emotional and social upheaval after the death of their loved one.

If only close ones realized that, generally, it takes eighteen to twenty-four months to find new stability after the death of a family member. And time is not all that is needed to regain equilibrium and perspective. If you have suffered loss, you need to give yourself permission to experience and express the emotions of grief in healthy ways. With the passage of time, you will be able to find your balance once again.

Each person's style of grieving is unique. Pay attention to what your own body and soul are leading you to do:

- Cry when you need to cry. A good cry can release stress. Let go of the bottled up tears that you hold inside: unshed tears can cause your head and stomach to hurt. Scientific studies have found tears of sorrow contain certain chemicals that are natural pain relievers.
- It's OK to laugh. Humor is a good stress reliever - and it's not disrespectful to the person who has died. They would want you to enjoy life's laughter.
- If you need time alone, take it. Some people prefer to weep privately or need their own space to reflect.
- If you need extra sleep, indulge yourself. The emotions of grief are draining.
- If you are angry, find healthy outlets. Beat a pillow, scream in the shower, exercise vigorously, participate in sports, work at physical labor or pound nails.
- Address guilty feelings head on. Guilt can immobilize. If you cannot sort through these feelings with a trusted friend, consider finding a counselor to help you.

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Volume 24 | Number 2 | Summer 2014

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**HOSPICE**  
OF THE  
**WESTERN**  
**RESERVE**

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss  
Bereavement Center



Diane Snyder Cowan, MA, MT-BC, CHPCA



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Visit our Online Discussion Groups at:

[hospicewr.org/discussions/grief](https://www.hospicewr.org/discussions/grief)

Visit The Bereavement Center's Blog at: [hospicewr.org/bereavement-center-blog](https://www.hospicewr.org/bereavement-center-blog)



## From the Editor

As bereavement professionals, we are often asked to talk about the “stages of grief” and when will grief end. The truth is that when you experience the death of a loved one or have a significant loss, you never get back to normal. There is a new normal. Over time one learns how to live with the loss. Finding ways to remember and maintain an enduring connection with the deceased is one way to manage. Grief evolves and changes over time. It doesn't happen in orderly stages and one doesn't get over it.

Initially the rawness of grief can be overwhelming and many people report feeling like they are on a rollercoaster of emotions. Countless factors can trigger a grief reaction and it might feel like life will never settle down. But it will.

Consider grief as a rock with very jagged edges. The rock, so pointy and rough to the touch, could easily break your skin. If you put it in your pocket, you would be very aware of it and it might even tear a hole in the fabric of your pocket. If you were to continue to carry the rock and occasionally hold it in your hand, in time its edges would soften. In your pocket it would serve as a reminder of your loved one, but its presence wouldn't be as painful. Grief softens over time. It does not disappear. It is a gift that your loved one's memories remain forever in your heart.

Whether you are newly bereaved or well into your grief journey, be kind to yourself this summer. Perhaps you may want to go rock collecting and find that one special rock to carry in your pocket.

We are here with comfort, hope and healing.

Diane Snyder Cowan, MA, MT-BC, CHPCA  
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When the heart grieves over what it has lost,  
the spirit rejoices over what it has left.

—Sufi Epigram

## Give Yourself Permission to Grieve

*Continued from page 1.*

Recognize that there is not one right way to express emotions. Others may do it differently than you do. One caution: use ways that are not destructive or harmful to you or to others.

Pay attention to your feelings. Give them healthy expression. Powerful emotions don't just go away. If you bury them, they may fester, emerging at unexpected times. And it takes more emotional energy to hold feelings inside than to express and deal with them.

Talk to someone who will listen without judging. It might be a friend, clergy person, someone who has experienced a similar loss or who is farther along on their journey of grief, a support group or a counselor. A family member could help, but remember he or she is hurting, too, in a different way, and may not be able to provide the unbiased, non-judgmental listening you need.

Repeat your story as often as you need to. Much emotion can be remembered and expressed in retelling the story of your loved one's life and death.

Keeping a journal or writing letters to your loved one about your feelings can be therapeutic. A journal can serve as a tool to store and sort out thoughts and feelings. Entries can help you measure progress as you look back to see where you were emotionally at earlier points. The creative arts such as dance, music, drama, poetry and painting can offer healing outlets for emotional expression.

It is a challenge to give yourself permission to grieve in our fast paced culture, which wants you to "get over it" in a short amount of time. However, if you take the time you need to express your emotions, you will come to find new perspective, growth and healing.

## Grants Sustain Our School Crisis Response Program

We are very grateful and happy to announce that The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center has received continued grant funding of its School Crisis Response Program from the **Ridgecliff Foundation** (\$25,000) and the **Pentair Foundation** (\$1,325) in 2014. Both foundations have provided annual support since 2007, enabling the experienced counselors of Hospice of the Western Reserve to respond to students and staff when death-related crises occur in Northeast Ohio's school communities.

In the period of 2007 through 2013, counselors provided 150 immediate on-site responses in the aftermath of suicides, shootings, accidental deaths, unexpected sudden deaths, and anticipated deaths due to serious illness. Each crisis response is carefully planned in coordination with the school's staff, to fit the specific needs of the impacted school community.

We're grateful for this continued support, which allows our team of trained counselors to provide immediate, on-site support for administrators, staff, students and parents in collaboration with school crisis response team members.

The school crisis response team helps the students develop a normalized view of the grief process, find appropriate ways to express their feelings, and memorialize the deceased. After the initial response, many schools invite the counselors back to lead follow-up activities such as grief support groups and classroom presentations.

The bereavement center's School Crisis Response Program supplements the programs and resources already available in schools. We offer proactive consultation services, and presentations on the grief responses of children and adolescents for teachers and school staff. More information is available at [hospicewr.org/grief-loss](http://hospicewr.org/grief-loss), or by phone at 216.486.6838.



## The Vista Walk and Tribute Walks

### *Remember Your Loved One*

The gardens at David Simpson Hospice House and Ames Family Hospice House offer beautiful outdoor spaces for meditation and reflection. We invite you to add your own memory to the Vista Walk on the eastside or to the Tribute Walk in Westlake by purchasing a paving brick and writing your own personal dedication. For more information, please call the Development Team at 855.475.0245 or visit [hospicewr.org/tributes](http://hospicewr.org/tributes).



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## SUMMER 2014 *Community Support Groups & Activities*

### MASSAGE THERAPY

#### *Providing Comfort Through Touch*

Stress is a normal part of life. As you move along grief's journey, you may face many challenges. Massage therapy is a tool useful in helping to cope with stress, anxiety and fatigue. To schedule an appointment, call Felicia Dunlop at 216.486.6335. All appointments will be held at The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center.

Basic Fees: \$25 for 30 minutes \$50 for 60 minutes

### YOGA MATTERS

Give yourself the gift of time and attention. The practice of Yoga helps you tune into yourself and take care of your physical, emotional and spiritual needs. Classes held at Hospice of the Western Reserve Lakeshore Campus. For more information please call 216.486.6838.

On-going Yoga Class designed for caregivers & bereaved.

**Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.**

Fee: \$40/month or \$12 Drop-in (sliding scale fee available)

## Bereavement Support Groups

*Unless otherwise noted, our support groups are open to anyone who has had a loved one die. Groups are subject to change. Call to verify time and location.*

## Adult Support Groups

### CIRCLE OF HOPE SERIES

A six-week educational support group **for adults who have had a loved one die**. Registration is required. Please call the facilitator listed below for more information or to register.

**The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center  
Wednesdays, June 25 – July 30, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.**

Diana Battles 216.486.6364

#### **Lakeshore Campus**

**Mondays, September 22 – October 27, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.**

Tensie Holland 216.383.3741

*FALL GROUP dates and locations to be announced.*



### CIRCLE OF HOPE:

#### *Art Therapy Edition*

No previous art experience necessary.

**The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss  
Bereavement Center**

**Wednesdays, July 23 – August 27, 10:00 to noon.**

Mollie Postotnik 216.486.6544 or mpostotnik@hospicewr.org.

### HOPE & HEALING

An on-going monthly support group **for grieving adults**. Registration is not required. Please call facilitator for more information.

#### **Lakeshore Campus**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.**

April Ratcliffe 216.383.3782

#### **Mentor Office**

**1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month, 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.**

Lisa Florjancic 216.383.2222 ext. 1052

#### **Warrensville Heights Office**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month, 2:30 to 4:00 p.m.**

Vicki Jackson 216.383.2222 ext. 1197

### PARENT LOSS

A monthly support group for adults adjusting to life after the death of a parent.

#### **Lakewood Office**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.**

Judy Beckman 216.383.2222 ext. 1114

### PARENTS TOGETHER

A monthly support group for parents who have experienced the death of an adult child.

#### **Warrensville Heights Office**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month, 2:30 to 4:00 p.m.**

Vicki Jackson 216.383.2222 ext. 1197

### HOPEFUL HEARTS

A monthly grief support group for anyone age 60 and over who has experienced the death of someone special in the past two years.

#### **Holy Spirit Family Center**

410 Lear Road, Avon Lake

**4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month, 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.**

JoDee Coulter 216.383.2222 ext. 1301

### GRIEF 102

A six-week workshop for those who have completed a previous grief group or who have done other grief work and would like to explore additional options for coping. The workshop will include relaxation skills, art, and music ideas for coping, journaling, and other tools. Please register by Thursday, June 26.

#### **Lakewood Office**

**Mondays, June 30 – August 4, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.**

Judy Beckman 216.383.2222 ext. 1114

### WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE:

#### *Navigating The Major Obstacles of Grief*

A two week session centered around identifying the big emotions of grief and reactions that can be challenging to navigate. Learn effective and healthy strategies for coping as you journey through your grief.

#### **Ashtabula Office**

**Wednesdays, August 20 and August 27, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.**

Susan Hamme 440.997.6619

## **GRIEF: THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT!**

Bring your smart phones and/or tablets to see what free mobile applications (apps) and online resources are available for learning about grief and loss. Spend some time exploring what is out there and how to put mobile devices to good use. Please note that Hospice of the Western Reserve does not provide devices or accounts for this program.

### **Madison Library**

6111 Middle Ridge Road, Madison, Ohio 44047

**Wednesday, June 25, 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.**

Lisa Florjancic 216.383.2222 ext. 1052

### **Ashtabula Office**

**Wednesday, July 16, 4:00 to 5:30 p.m.**

Susan Hamme 440.997.6619

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## **Spousal Loss Groups**

### **NEW BEGINNINGS**

A monthly support group **for young widows and widowers** (ages 55 and younger). This group is open-ended and on-going. Registration is not required.

#### **Westlake**

**St. John Medical Center, Westshore Professional Building**

29160 Center Ridge Road, Suite R

**2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.**

JoDee Coulter 216.383.2222 ext. 1301

### **NEW JOURNEY**

A support group **for widows and widowers of any age**, adjusting to life without their spouse. This group is open ended and on-going. Registration is not required.

**The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.**

Diana Battles 216.486.6364

### **HORIZONS**

A monthly support group **for the older adult widow and widower**. This group is open ended and on-going.

#### **Mayfield Village Baptist Church**

6500 Highland Road, Mayfield

**2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month, 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.**

Kathryn Harrison Brown 216.486.6331

#### **Lorain County Community College**

Spitzer Conference Center, Room 113

**(Call for new August location)**

**1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the month, 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**

Laurie Mason 216.383.2222 ext. 1359

## **Healing Arts Workshops, Summer 2014**

Funded in part by residents of Cuyahoga County through Cuyahoga Arts & Culture



Healing Arts Workshops provide grieving people with a creative outlet for their grief and are open to the community. No art experience is necessary. **Call Mollie Postotnik at 216.486.6544 or email her at [mpostotnik@hospicewr.org](mailto:mpostotnik@hospicewr.org) to register no later than four days in advance of workshop date. Suggested \$5.00 donation for supplies.**



### **KIDZ ART: LOVE BEADS**

Kids (ages 6 and up), bring an adult along to create a necklace in remembrance of your loved one! If you like, you can bring a one inch square photo of your loved one to put into the frame. Light refreshments provided.

#### **Westlake Center for Community Services**

29694 Center Ridge Road, Westlake, 44145

**Tuesday, June 10, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.**

#### **The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center**

**Tuesday, June 24, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.**



### **KIDZ ART: MY ROCK**

Kids (ages 6 and up), bring an adult along to create a rock to remind you of your loved one! Decorate your rock with paint, images or words. You may bring a large flat unpolished rock (about the size of your hand or smaller), or pick one when you get to the workshop. Light refreshments provided.

#### **Westlake Center for Community Services**

29694 Center Ridge Road, Westlake, 44145

**Tuesday, August 12, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**

#### **The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center**

**Wednesday, August 13, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**



### **MONTHLY SCRAPBOOK NIGHT**

Remember that scrapbook of your loved one(s) that you never got around to finishing? No matter where you are in the process or if you haven't yet begun, come join us! Bring your photos (copies of originals is recommended), handwritten notes, poetry, etc. Scrapbooks and some embellishments provided.

**The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center**

**1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**



### REMINISCENCE BOXES

These Reminiscence Boxes are inspired by Joseph Cornell's boxes of assembled artifacts. Participants will line a wooden cigar box with photos, fabric or paper and assemble small mementoes and objects inside it such as keys, marbles, jewelry, natural objects, thimbles, buttons, coins, and any other meaningful items that remind you of your loved one(s).

#### **Warrensville Heights Office**

**Wednesday, July 16, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**

#### **Westlake Center for Community Services**

29694 Center Ridge Road, Westlake, 44145

**Tuesday, July 22, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**

#### **The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center**

**Thursday, July 31, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**



### FABRIC AND FEELINGS

A group where participants use fabric techniques such as quilting (sometimes involving clothing from loved ones) or photo transfer to create quilts, pillows, dolls and other types of lasting memories. Sewing expertise is not necessary.

#### **The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center**

**Weekly - Thursdays, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.**

Mollie Postotnik 216.486.6544

#### **Ames Family Hospice House - Art Studio**

**Monthly - 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**

Mollie Postotnik 216.486.6544



### ART FOR RELAXATION

#### *Landscapes of the Heart*

Painting a natural landscape can sometimes help reveal one's emotional landscape. Come and paint a scene from our grounds on the lake if weather permits at our Lakeshore campus to express mood and feeling. If you attend either one of the workshops in Warrensville or Westlake, you can paint from a stock photograph or bring your own.

**The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center**  
**Thursday, August 14, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**

#### **Westlake Center for Community Services**

29694 Center Ridge Road, Westlake, 44145

**Tuesday, August 19, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**

#### **Warrensville Heights Office**

**Wednesday, August 20, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**



### LGBT ART THERAPY EVENT

#### *Grief Story Collage*

This event is for members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender Community who have experienced the death of a loved one. This small collage is unlike any you have done before. It is surprising what you can convey about the story of your relationship with just a few images and a photo of your loved one. Please bring copies of a few original photos. Magazine images will be provided.

#### **The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center**

**Tuesday, July 29, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**

## *Save the Date*



### STEPPING STONES

Make a cement stepping stone to commemorate a loved one. Small stones, tiles, glass beads and personal mementoes may be embedded. Names and dates can be stamped. May be used in your garden (if you polyurethane it after it dries) or can be displayed indoors.

#### **Warrensville Heights Office**

**Wednesday, September 10, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**

#### **Westlake Center for Community Services**

29694 Center Ridge Road, Westlake, 44145

**Tuesday, September 16, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**

#### **The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center**

**Thursday, September 18, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**

## HOSPICE OF THE WESTERN RESERVE OFFICE LOCATIONS

#### **DAVID SIMPSON HOSPICE HOUSE AND LAKESHORE CAMPUS**

300 East 185th Street  
Cleveland, OH 44119-1330  
216.383.2222 or 800.707.8922

#### **THE ELISABETH SEVERANCE PRENTISS BEREAVEMENT CENTER**

216.486.6838

#### **AMES FAMILY HOSPICE HOUSE**

30080 Hospice Way  
Westlake, Ohio 44145-1077  
440.414.7349 or 835.281.5727

#### **ASHTABULA OFFICE**

1166 Lake Avenue  
Ashtabula, OH 44004-2930  
440.997.6619

#### **HEADQUARTERS**

17876 St. Clair Avenue  
Cleveland, OH 44110  
216.383.2222 or 800.707.8922

#### **LAKELWOOD OFFICE**

14601 Detroit Avenue, Suite 100  
Lakewood, OH 44107-4212  
216.227.9048

#### **LORAIN COUNTY OFFICE**

2173 N. Ridge Road E., Suite H  
Lorain, OH 44055-3400  
440.787.2080

#### **MENTOR OFFICE**

5786 Heisley Road  
Mentor, OH 44060-1830  
440.951.8692

#### **SUMMIT OFFICE**

150 Springside Drive, Suite 235-B  
Fairlawn, OH 44334  
330.800.2240

#### **WARRENSVILLE HEIGHTS OFFICE**

4670 Richmond Road, Suite 200  
Warrensville Hts, OH 44128-5978  
216.454.0399

#### **WESTLAKE OFFICE**

29101 Health Campus Drive  
Building 2, Suite 400  
Westlake, OH 44145-5268  
440.892.6680

[hospicewr.org](http://hospicewr.org)

# A Child's VIEW

Dear Kids,

The weather is warming up in Cleveland and hopefully we will not see snow for a long time. When you have lost someone however, you may not feel much summer in your heart. You feel that so much has been lost, and for a while that is all you can think of. There is good news: we are able to hold memories in our hearts. As you allow yourself to recall and keep memories close, you may slowly sense the power of healing. You may even be able to find happiness again. Memories can inspire, guide and help to make the world better.

I would like to share a real-life story that illustrates the power of memory. Recently the coach of the Bishop McGuinness High School basketball team in North Carolina was preparing his team for a game against their arch rivals. The coach asked the players to sign a basketball with the names of those to whom they dedicated their game. One team member, Spencer, signed the name of his good friend Josh who had recently died of cancer. Fast forward to the final two seconds of the game.

With his team behind by one point, Spencer had one last shot in the closing seconds. Believe it or not, Spencer took a shot from beyond half court and it went in. His team won the game. Spencer shared with his teammates how the memory of his beloved friend had inspired him. Memories can inspire us to try harder, be kinder, be more aware of the feelings of others and make the world a better place.

Some of you may be inspired to work harder in school or reach out to a friend who is struggling. Others may want to raise money for a special cause, train harder in a sport or donate to those in need. You may want to plant a tree in memory of your loved one to add beauty to the world. Each of you will have a different way to transform the sadness you feel. You cannot change what happened, but you can move forward in your life in ways that honor your loved one. May those efforts help you allow the warmth of summer into your heart.

Warm Regards,  
Andy Getz, LISW-S

## CHILDREN'S BEREAVEMENT CAMPS

### Riding Through Grief

This camp is offered in collaboration with Fieldstone Farm Therapeutic Riding Center and is for children ages 8-12 who have experienced the death of a loved one. Through riding and working with horses, campers explore grief issues supported by trained counselors.

**June 23 - June 27**

**9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

**OR**

**July 28 - August 1**

**9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

## Together. We Can

A 3-day bereavement day camp for children ages 6-14 who have experienced the death of a loved one. Camp is expressive in nature and led by experienced facilitators in art, music, play and nature activities.

**August 5 - 7**

**9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

**Red Oak Camp, Kirtland, Ohio**

*(Transportation available from 3 convenient locations)*

**For more information or to register,  
please contact the bereavement  
center at 216.486.6838 or email  
thebereavementcenter@hospicewr.org**



The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss  
Bereavement Center

300 East 185th Street  
Cleveland, OH 44119-1330

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DSCowan@HospiceWR.org*



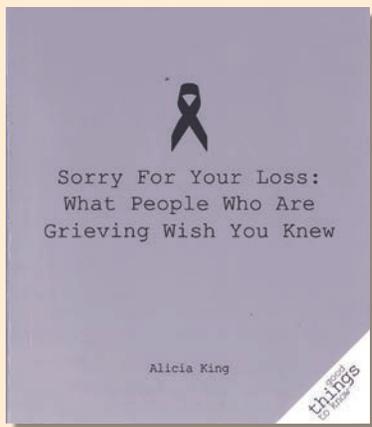
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**The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center** is a community-based grief support program that provides services throughout Northern Ohio. We offer support to anyone who has experienced a loss due to death.



## *Sorry For Your Loss: What People Who Are Grieving Wish You Knew* By Alicia King

Alicia King's *Sorry For Your Loss: What People Who are Grieving Wish You Knew* is a simple and breathtakingly honest look at how the response people have to loss can affect the grieving person. King gathers the information from her own experience as well as from others who have lived with losses. She describes those things that people who are grieving often think but feel they cannot say. And she describes the efforts made to provide comfort which have helped, as well as those which have hurt.

In this easy-to-read book, the author offers many useful tips to make us feel less helpless and uncomfortable when trying to support those we love who are grieving. For instance, often people just don't know what to do or say. That can lead us to avoid showing that we care, or to making some well-intentioned mistakes. Nearly all of the individuals interviewed mentioned that when they were grieving they simply wanted someone to be there and someone to listen. For the person trying to help, it is comforting to know that those who grieve are not looking to us to "fix" anything.

This book also is a great resource for those who are grieving themselves. It is written with elements of humor and stories of experiences to which many of us can relate. It emphasizes how many of those less than helpful things that loved ones have said very likely came from a caring place. The chapters also include discussions about the stages of grief, the warning signs of complicated grief, and suggestions for ways to pay tribute to the deceased. Throughout the book the message is clear: give the grieving person permission to be honest and direct about what he or she truly needs; and give those who want to help a framework for doing just that.

# Book review

By Susan Hamme, LSW