

About Grief

HOLIDAY GRIEVING *as a Family*

By *Monica Coreman, MA, PCC-S*

We are all inundated with the holiday drama – tv ads, holiday music on the radio, store displays and holiday parties. It can be so overwhelming when you are grieving a loved one at this time. Even more stressful can be navigating grief as a family during this time of year.

Everyone grieves a little differently. Maybe mom frequently cries, feels sad and wants to talk about the loss. Or dad tries to be stoic, not talk about it, and can't even look at pictures yet. The teen in the family just wants to be left alone, but is struggling with schoolwork and the feeling of apathy. The youngest child vacillates between feeling sad and missing the loved one and acting like nothing happened and wanting to play with friends. Don't despair; just as we react in individual ways, there are many ways to honor each family member's grief.

Rituals during the holiday can help a family honor the loved one who has died. Some families light a candle and keep it on the table while they have the holiday meal. Others will light it early in the day, saying a prayer or sharing special memories of their

loved one. Sometimes families cook their loved one's favorite food, set a place at the holiday table for their deceased loved one, put a picture of him or her on the table, or have everyone share a special memory about the person during the meal. All of these are ways to acknowledge the elephant in the room at holiday time: that a special person has died and life isn't the same anymore. Visiting the cemetery around the holidays is another way to connect the family in their grief. Remember, though, that while it is comforting for many people, others find going to the cemetery triggers such intense feelings that they can't make the trip. Don't force them; give them time and honor their grief process.

Sometimes staying home for the holidays after a loved one dies is too intense. Some families have found it is helpful to get away. This can lessen the difficulty of the first holiday. Taking a little vacation from grief and the holiday traditions can be the break that is needed. Often families change some of their holiday traditions or begin new ones. This can also help ease the pain.

Remember that everyone in the family has a right to grieve in his or her own way. Support one another, but respect individual grief needs. Holidays and grief are difficult at best, but when a family is able to acknowledge their feelings during this time, the heavy burden of loss can be lessened.

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HOSPICE
OF THE
WESTERN
RESERVE

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss
Bereavement Center



Diane Snyder Cowan, MA, MT-BC

From the Editor

In this issue of *About Grief*, you will find articles to help you manage the holidays. We want to offer a variety of suggestions which will support and guide you as you navigate the jolly jingle of multi-mass media marketing during a time in which your deceased loved one is noticeably absent.

One option is to develop a personal holiday plan. Here are some tips to help you get started:

- Try to predict what the most difficult parts of the holiday season will be.
- Identify your support people (those with whom you feel comfortable sharing your grief).
- Think about people and situations that are challenging.
- Consider what words would be most helpful for you to hear.

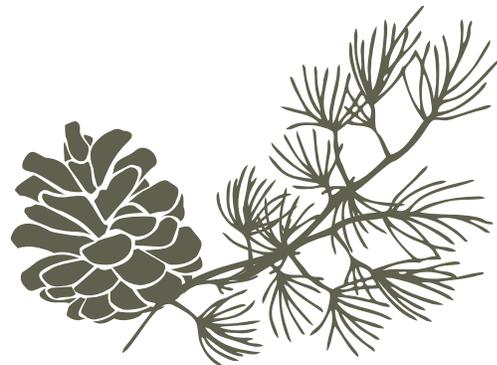
Reflect on how you celebrated the holidays prior to your loss? What traditions might you want to include in the upcoming holiday? I know one woman who continues to make her beloved aunt's cranberry relish at Thanksgiving although no one will eat it. Another woman decorates her Christmas tree with her deceased mother's costume jewelry. Another lights a Menorah for each of her deceased family members. These women have found ways to honor their loved ones and carry on their legacies.

As you look through the newsletter, be open to new ideas and ways to manage your grief. Please also consider joining one of our groups or calling us for individual counseling.

Wishing you comfort, hope and peace in the coming year.

Diane Snyder Cowan

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Visit The Bereavement Center's Blog at:
hospicewr.org/bereavement-center-blog

“Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire: it is the time for home.”

- Edith Sitwell



The Holiday SEASON

April Ratcliffe, LSW

It seems as though we just put away our holiday decorations and retailers are already preparing for the upcoming season. There is always an urgency to draw our attention to purchasing gifts, decorating and planning. Because you have experienced the death of a loved one, you may not be in the mood.

The word 'holiday' implies a time of celebration, gatherings or worship. How can you celebrate when experiencing so much pain? Pain from anger, despair, loneliness, guilt, isolation, sadness, being overwhelmed, or frightened to name a few. The thought of celebrating during the holidays is often too much for some. How do you celebrate when your loved one is gone?

J. William Worden has developed four grief tasks which he feels are essential to adjusting to a loss.

- The first task is to *accept the reality of the loss*. The holidays can be very demanding for anyone. You may feel that you are not up to it, and find it difficult to focus. Your loved one will not return to help out. Who is going to do all the cooking, the house work, the shopping, wrap the gifts, decorate, pay bills? What about the children, the grandchildren? Worden stresses: do what you can, if and when you are able. Ask for help if needed. Life has changed. It is fractured. Give yourself time to heal.
- The second task is to *work through the pain of grief*. Allow yourself personal time. Share your feelings with someone who is a good listener. Attend support groups or self help groups. Exercise or go for a walk. Pray or meditate. Reflect. Write in a journal. Scream out if need be. Cry when you feel like crying.

Expressing emotions releases tension and stress. Maybe this year you will only do half of what you normally would. Do not push yourself. Those who truly love you will understand.

- The third task is to *adjust to the environment from which the person is missing*. Your loss may change the tone of what is normally a festive atmosphere. This could be an opportunity to begin new traditions or blend some of the old with the new. Someone else may now carve the turkey or sit at the head of the table. Take this time to honor your loved one. Share memories. This may be the first time memories of your loved one are shared since the funeral or memorial service.
- The fourth task is to *find an enduring connection with the deceased in the midst of moving on*. To move on with your life does not mean that you forget your loved one. Memories help you stay connected. With time, the pain eases. Eventually, you can participate in social gatherings and feel a certain level of healing. New relationships

will form and you can find yourself experiencing new adventures. Remember: there is no quick fix. No magic wand. What helps one person may not help another. If you find that nothing seems to ease the pain, consider professional help.

As the holidays approach, be patient with yourself and try to minimize stress. If you need to excuse yourself from a gathering, do so without guilt. Reach out to family and friends for support. Do what works for you during the holiday season.

The thought of celebrating during the holidays is often too much for some. How do you celebrate when your loved one is gone?



**HOSPICE
OF THE
WESTERN
RESERVE**

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss
Bereavement Center

WINTER 2012 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-Stanley 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 pm to 6:45 pm

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, February 20 – March 27, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.** Diana Battles 216.486.6364

FOR THE YOUNG ADULT (ages 18 to 29)

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center Thursdays, January 31 – March 7, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Mary Murphy 216.383.2222 ext. 1732

Lakeshore Campus

Mondays, January 28 – March 4, 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.
Tensie Holland 216.383.3741

Mentor Office

Wednesdays, February 6 – March 13, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.
Lisa Florjancic 216.383.2222 ext. 1052

Warrensville Heights Office "Group for Men"

Tuesdays, January 22 - February 26, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Mary Murphy 216.383.2222 ext. 1732

Warrensville Heights Office "Group for Women"

Tuesdays, January 22 - February 26, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.
Mary Murphy 216.383.2222 ext. 1732

St. John Medical Center, Westshore Professional Building
29160 Center Ridge Road, Suite R

Thursdays, January 24 – February 28, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.
JoDee Coulter 216.383.2222 ext. 1301

HOPE & HEALING

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

Lakeshore Campus

3rd Monday of the month, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

April Ratcliffe 216.383.3782

Mentor Office

3rd Tuesday of the month, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Lisa Florjancic 216.383.2222 ext. 1052

University Hospital, Geneva

Behm and Hospice of the Western Reserve Support Group
2nd Monday of the month, 5:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Marie DeHaas 440.997.6619

PARENT LOSS

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

Lakewood Office

2nd Tuesday of the month, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

Judy Beckman 216.383.2222 ext. 1114

PARENTS TOGETHER

A support group for parents coping with the death of an adult child. Registration is required.

Warrensville Heights Office

Thursdays, February 7 – February 28, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.

Vicki Jackson 216.383.2222 ext. 1197

WOMEN'S WORKSHOP

A bereavement workshop for women who have lost a partner/spouse. Come for support, discussion, and coping tools. Light refreshments served.

Lakewood Office

Call for upcoming group dates

Judy Beckman 216.383.2222 ext. 1114

BEREAVEMENT AND RECOVERY

A 4 week support group exclusively for those in recovery from an addiction who have experienced the loss of a loved one and would feel more comfortable with others who are in recovery. Register by Thursday, January 10, 2013.

Requirements: At least 6 months or more in recovery. Able to commit to all 8 sessions.

Lakewood Office

Tuesdays, January 15 – February 5, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Judy Beckman 216.383.2222 ext. 1114

HOPEFUL HEARTS

A monthly grief support 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

3rd Tuesday of the month, 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.

JoDee Coulter 216.383.2222 ext. 1301

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

2nd Wednesday of the month, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

JoDee Coulter 216.383.2222 ext. 1301

Warrensville Heights Office

2nd Monday of the month, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

Vicki Jackson 216.383.2222 ext. 1197

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

2nd Thursday of the month, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.

Diana Battles 216.486.6364

Ashtabula Office

2nd Thursday of the month, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

Marie DeHaas 440.997.6619

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

2nd 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

1st Friday of the month, 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Laurie Mason 216.383.2222 ext. 1359

Children & Family Support Groups

S.T.A.R.S. (Supporting Tears, Anger, Remembrance & Sadness)

A six-week support group for grieving children ages 6-12. While the children are meeting, there is an adult support group to assist parents and family members in dealing with their own grief. The groups are free and open to the public. Registration is required.

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
Thursdays, January 17 – February 21, 2013, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Colleen Thompson 216.486.6316

HELPING HANDS/HEALING HEARTS

A monthly support group for children ages 6-13 and adults, who have experienced the death of a loved one. While the adults are meeting, there is a co-existing support group for the children. Registration is not required.

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center

3rd Tuesday of each month, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Colleen Thompson 216.486.6316

FABRIC AND FEELINGS

A weekly 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

Thursdays, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Mollie Postotnik 216.486.6544

STORIES OVER COFFEE

One way to honor our loved ones is to share memories of them and consider what they have taught us. Join us in a casual atmosphere and share your stories over a warm drink. Registration is required.

Ames Family Hospice House

Wednesday, January 23 and February 6, 2013

10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Susan Lakin 440.414.7367



HOLIDAY FAMILY NIGHT

Join us for a special evening using art to memorialize your loved ones during the holiday season. Materials and light refreshments provided. To register call Felicia Dunlop-Stanley at 216.486.6335.

Lakeshore Campus

Monday, December 10, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.



Westlake Center for Community Services

29694 Center Ridge Road, Westlake, 44145

Tuesday, December 11, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.



HOLIDAY WORKSHOP

Come for support and comfort during the holiday season while enjoying a cup of coffee and holiday treats. We will make a simple memento to honor your loved one and discuss ways to manage the stress of the holidays while dealing with loss.

Register by Thursday, December 6.

Lakewood Office

Wednesday, December 12, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Judy Beckman 216.383.2222 ext. 1114



Healing Arts Workshops, *Winter 2012*

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



PAINTING THE LIGHT

Paint a candle to commemorate your loved one. Combining acrylic paint and painting adhesion medium, make a beautiful design on the surface of the candle itself. If you wish, you may bring your own plain white pillar candle (not in glass) or use ours. A candlelight ceremony will complete the evening.

**Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
Thursday, January 10, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**

**Warrensville Heights Office
Wednesday, January 16, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**

**Westlake Center for Community Services
29694 Center Ridge Road, Westlake, 44145
Tuesday, January 22, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**



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, February 13, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**

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

**Westlake Center for Community Services
29694 Center Ridge Road, Westlake, 44145
Tuesday, February 19, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**

SAVE THE DATE



ART FOR RELAXATION: Drawing Out Your Soul: Touch Drawing

Relax and enjoy accessing the imagery of your soul as you use this unique printmaking process. The first week, we will create the prints and “mine” for images. The second week, we will add color. The focus will be on the creative process.

**Westlake Center for Community Services
29694 Center Ridge Road, Westlake, 44145
BOTH Tuesdays, March 12 and 19, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**

**Warrensville Heights Office
BOTH Wednesdays, March 13 and 20, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**

**Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
BOTH Thursdays, March 14 and 21, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**



CIRCLE OF HOPE: Art Therapy Edition

**The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss
Bereavement Center Art Therapy Studio**

**Six consecutive Wednesdays
January 9 - February 13, 10:00 a.m. to noon.**



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.

**Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
First Thursday of the month, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**



LGBT ART THERAPY GROUP

This group is for members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender Community. Whether you have lost a partner or other family member, you are welcome in this group. Your loved one need not have been a patient of the Hospice of the Western Reserve. We explore a variety of art media and techniques.

**Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
Last Tuesday of the month, 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

LAKESIDE 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 A-100
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

A Child's View

Andy Getz, LISW-S, Pediatric Bereavement Coordinator

If you are reading this, you may recently have lost someone you love. You may clearly remember the moment you heard that your loved one had died. You may remember where you were and who you were with, or you may be able to recall very little about that moment. It has probably been a stormy time, filled with many overwhelming feelings like anger, sadness, worry and fear. You may have held feelings in your body and experienced stomach aches, headaches or tiredness. The world may feel topsy turvy, filled with questions like "Why did this have to happen?" or "How will things ever be OK again?" But, grief like the seasons, does change.

As we watched the fall leaves change color, we became aware that change is all around us. The leaves turned and fell, the trees became bare, but soon spring will emerge with its beautiful blossoms and leaves. Some change is painful, like the loss of a loved one. With time and help and hope we can emerge from it to find beauty in the world and in our lives.

In the coming months, remember to take care of your hurt and heartache at the loss you have endured. Allow time to slowly get used to your suffering by paying attention to what you are feeling and what will comfort you. Know that you can:

- Talk about and express your feelings to someone you trust
- Ask for comfort and hugs when you need it



- Write down your thoughts and memories
- Spend time with friends engaging in activities you enjoy
- Move your body: run, jump and play
- Eat healthy food
- Get enough sleep
- Create memories of your loved one (make a scrapbook, plant a tree, organize a fundraiser)

Slowly, as you flow through the seasons, you will sense change within you. You will hold your loved one in your heart forever, the stories and memories you shared are a part of you. The pain of missing will gradually soften. Just as the snow will melt and green buds will appear for spring, notice the healing within you, how time has allowed you to grieve. The seasons will continue to turn and life will present opportunities and challenges. May time and the grief journey allow you to grasp the beauty that surrounds you and is within you. May the stormy skies become gentler as you attend to your sorrow and embrace the joyful life that awaits you.



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 our tribute page online at tributes.hospicewr.org.



The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss
Bereavement Center

300 East 185th Street
Cleveland, OH 44119-1330

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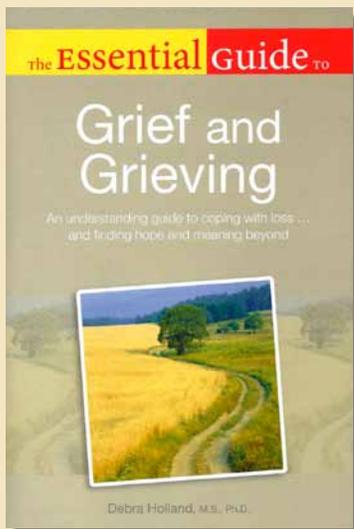
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The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center is a community-based grief support program that provides services throughout Northern Ohio. We offer support to anyone who has experienced a loss due to death.



The Essential Guide To Grief and Grieving By Debra Holland, M.S., Ph. D.

“My wish is that this book gives you hope that you’ll eventually recover from your grief.” author Debra Holland states at the beginning of the book. *The Essential Guide to Grief and Grieving* helps grieving persons understand the grief process, their emotions and reactions. It also helps people who are supporting grieving individuals.

This book is divided into 4 sections:

1. Loss and Grief
2. Bereavement – (which examines specific losses one may encounter in life)
3. Loss in Other Life Circumstances
4. Recovery

Each of the sections has very detailed chapters which provide definitions, describe emotions, tell stories and describe reactions to loss.

Ms. Holland does a nice job explaining the grief journey or walk. She adds “side-bar boxes” throughout the book listing survival strategies, cautions and concerns, definitions and typical expressions of grief. At the end of each chapter, there are “Essential Takeaways,” which are bullet points summarizing the chapter. *The Essential Guide to Grief and Grieving* is very easy to understand and an informative book to read. It covers many situations and leaves the reader with a better understanding of grief.

Book review

By Lisa Florjancic, MA, LSW