



About *grief*

A PUBLICATION OF HOSPICE OF THE WESTERN RESERVE

FALL 2021

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OUR MISSION

Hospice of the Western Reserve provides palliative and end-of-life care, caregiver support, and bereavement services throughout Northern Ohio.

In celebration of the individual worth of each life, we strive to relieve suffering, enhance comfort, promote quality of life, foster choice in end-of-life care, and support effective grieving.

Facing and Embracing Grief

By Judy Beckman, MA, LSW, CT

"Tears are liquid love."

- Heidi Barham
 Spiritual Care Coordinator,
 Hospice of the Western Reserve



James Baldwin says that "You cannot fix what you will not face." In bereavement, we often tell people that we cannot "fix" their grief. There is no magic wand to make the pain disappear. However, if we think of fixing as repairing or mending, we can say that grief "work" can help us to mend or repair our broken hearts. By facing our loss, we can begin the process of learning to live with pain and sadness we are experiencing. We can also learn to correct some of the old notions of grief and loss that many of us were brought up with, such as there being a time frame for grief, that we need to "get over" or "move on" from grief, that "time heals all wounds," or that some feelings in grief are unacceptable. Part of facing grief is letting go of these and other ingrained myths. Instead, it is more helpful to understand that grief is unique to each of us, we will experience myriad feelings. By working on our grief over time, it will soften. We also need to learn tools and skills that allow us to navigate a new universe without our loved ones.

As we face and embrace our grief, we can begin repairing our broken hearts. One truth about grief is that we will always carry the scars of our loss. However, facing, confronting and working through it will allow us to begin the process of adjusting and integrating it in our lives.

Working on our grief allows us to let our feelings in – whatever they may be. As John Bradshaw says, "We cannot heal what we cannot feel." Many of us were brought up to believe that we must avoid any feelings that create distress, including deep sadness, anger and guilt. We often treat these feelings as if they are our enemies, when, in fact, they are just a few of the many feelings that human beings experience. By facing our grief, we learn to let these distressing feelings come and go rather than thinking we will be "stuck" in any one of them forever.

Grief professionals often talk about "opening the door to grief." By allowing grief in, we are facing it and learning how to live with our feelings. Certainly, no one wants to be in pain. However, by allowing the pain in and reminding ourselves that the reason we hurt is because we love, our grief is much more likely to soften, and our broken hearts to heal.

We do not need to experience all the feelings all at once. Our natural defense mechanisms allow us to dose ourselves in small ways with feelings associated with loss. In doing so, we can develop strategies that enable us to manage uncomfortable feelings. As we develop more tools, feelings can be less daunting. A good toolbox provides reminders that all feelings are "okay" and that it is within our power to express them and make them more manageable.

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About grief

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Go green! If you would like your copy
of About Grief emailed to you, please
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FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to fall! School is back in session, temperatures are starting to dip and the gorgeous colors of the changing leaves are starting to emerge. It's a time of year that subtly tells us to pay attention to the beauty around us and to create opportunities and spaces for our own comfort. What brings you comfort during this season? An added scarf or favorite sweater? Listening to the crunch of the leaves on your daily walk? A hot mug of cider as you enjoy a brilliant sunset?



Autumn also symbolizes the need and opportunity to let go – of the warmth of summer, or the colorful leaves when they finally fall and are swept away. It shows us that there can be great beauty in change – in our surroundings and ourselves. Take time to notice what is different for you this season. If you are newly grieving, your changes and feelings may still be very raw and overwhelming. It may be difficult to imagine a time that you will feel any different from the way you feel today. And that is okay. Each of us walks this path at our own pace. If you are further along in your grief journey, what feels different for you than it did several months or a year ago? Have you found new sources of comfort and support? Or strength within yourself that wasn't obvious to you in the past? In either case, be open to noticing and celebrating even small changes over time.

Please know we are here to offer support and resources as you move through your grief. We are excited to reintroduce several in-person support groups in addition to the virtual groups people have found helpful during the past year. A complete list of all our support groups can be found in this newsletter and on our website.

Be gentle with yourself and those around you.

Karen L. Hatfield

Karen Hatfield, MMT, MT-BC, CHPCA
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*“Autumn is a second spring
when every leaf is a flower.”*

-Albert Camus



Some ideas to help you as you learn to face and embrace the feelings of grief:

Practice slow, deep breathing to aid healing. When we are upset, we may forget to breathe, which increases stress. Practice taking slow, deep breaths whether you feel stressed or not. The more you practice, the more this tool will help when you need it.

Practice being present. This is what Buddhists refer to as mindfulness. Healing is aided when we are fully present and in the moment with thoughts and feelings. Breath work can help us to become more present.

Feel your feelings. Be open to any and all feelings, including those that are distressing. Being present to all our feelings helps us learn that we will not stay stuck in any one forever. Journaling, talking, creating art and exercising are just a few tools to help us manage uncomfortable feelings.

Practice self generosity, patience, compassion and forgiveness. Accepting and forgiving our own imperfections can help us be more open to extending these ideas to others.

Nurture your body with rest, gentle exercise and good nutrition.

Celebrate small accomplishments - getting up, taking a shower, etc. Recognize that after a major loss it can take enormous energy to carry out even the most routine activities.

Loss is painful and our hearts are broken because we love. There is no one right way to grieve, but through grief work and patience with ourselves, we can learn to live in our new reality. You do not have to walk alone with your pain. Remember: we are here with resources and support.

An Unexpected Outcome of Grief

The last thing people expect to hear when they are in the depths of grief is that some good may come of it. But many bereaved people, once the intense early months go by, begin to recognize positive changes in themselves that they credit to their grief. This in no way dismisses the pain and distress of loss. This is post traumatic growth. Tedeschi and Calhoun define this growth as "positive psychological change experienced as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life circumstances."

Think of your own experiences. Many people learn they are stronger than they thought. Coping skills developed during previous experiences are helping them travel through their grief. You may feel more confident about facing the future and less vulnerable than before about using support.



Initially you may have been overwhelmed by the circumstances of your loss – the unfairness, anger over medical care, the person's suffering, limitations created by COVID-19. Gradually the details of the last months may fade as you struggle to make some sense of the loss. You may have a different view about the fragility of life. This may involve rethinking religious or spiritual concepts about purpose and your perspective about life's challenges. You may find a new appreciation for books or religious texts that can help to reframe your loss, or begin practicing yoga or meditation to help you move in a new direction.

Many bereaved report that they have a new sensitivity to others. A man who had enjoyed good fortune his entire life until the tragic loss of a child said he felt he had lived in a bubble without awareness of others' suffering. Now he finds himself looking at the people around him and imagines that each one may be weighted down by their own burden. Over time, instead of looking at just his own devastation, he used the experience to understand more about the human condition.

Many people notice a renewed commitment to maintaining social connections and appreciating time spent with loved ones. You may notice a shift in your priorities and values.

When children are born, we watch with fascination and wonder as they reach various milestones and seemingly change before our eyes. As adults, we focus less on positive growth and development in ourselves, but while it is certainly a slower process, it does happen. Let us each hope that out of hardship, we can find new meaning and that our grief does not define us but enables us to better ourselves.

THE VISTA WALK AND TRIBUTE WALKS

Remember Your Loved One

THE GARDENS AT AMES FAMILY HOSPICE HOUSE AND DAVID SIMPSON HOSPICE HOUSE offer beautiful outdoor spaces for meditation and reflection. When you dedicate an outdoor tribute to your loved one with a paver or stone bench, you are helping us create an atmosphere of care and healing. Contact us at 855.475.0245 or visit hospicewr.org/tribute to learn more.



AMES FAMILY HOSPICE HOUSE



DAVID SIMPSON HOSPICE HOUSE

Support Groups

FALL 2021

Community Support Groups and Activities

We are happy to offer a mix of in-person and virtual groups at this time. All groups require advance registration, and the number of participants is limited. Participants of in-person groups will be asked to maintain distance and to wear a face covering within the meeting space. Virtual groups will be offered via Microsoft Teams. For more information or to register for a group, please call or email the facilitator listed for that group.

Grief support groups can provide a valuable space to talk with others who have experienced similar losses. Sometimes, more than one attempt may be necessary to find the group that best meets your needs. Please do not be discouraged; it's okay to experiment. Regardless of your loss or coping style, remember that you are not alone, and you need not grieve alone.

Grief support groups provide:

- A safe place to express emotions
- A place to "tell your story"
- Education about grief and loss
- Normalization and validation of your grief experience
- Opportunities to learn new roles, ways to problem-solve and cope with situations
- New friendships
- A chance to laugh

VIRTUAL SUPPORT GROUPS

Hope and Healing

MONTHLY An ongoing monthly support group for grieving adults

First Monday of the month
6 to 7:30 p.m.

Kelly DiTurno
kditurno@hospicewr.org
440.414.1737

Parents Together

MONTHLY For parents who have experienced the death of an adult child

Second Tuesday of the month
6 to 7:30 p.m.

Shawn Eigenbrode
seigenbrode@hospicewr.org
216.486.6364

Parent Loss

MONTHLY For adults adjusting to life after the death of one or both parents

Second Monday of the month
6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Judy Beckman
jbeckman@hospicewr.org
440.414.1731

Millennial Grief

MONTHLY For adults ages 24 – 39 grieving the death of a parent or parent figure

Second Wednesday of the month
6 to 7:30 p.m.

Kelly DiTurno
kditurno@hospicewr.org
440.414.1737

Child Loss

Virtual and in-person attendance available.

MONTHLY Parents who have experienced the death of a child age 20 or younger are invited to join us for an opportunity to find support and feel community with others who experienced similar losses

Third Wednesday of the month
6 to 7 p.m.

Jonathan Cahill
jcahill@hospicewr.org
216.389.0704

Healing the Heart

MONTHLY Grief after an overdose death

First Tuesday of the month
6 to 7:30 p.m.

Shawn Eigenbrode
seigenbrode@hospicewr.org
216.486.6364

New Journey

MONTHLY For adults of any age who have experienced the death of a spouse, partner or significant other

First Wednesday of the month
6 to 7:30 p.m.

Vanessa Smylie
vsmylie@hospicewr.org
216.763.6441

OR

Third Wednesday of the month
1 to 2 p.m.

JoDee Coulter
jcoulter@hospicewr.org
330.662.4240

Women's Group

MONTHLY A workshop for women who have lost their partner, significant other or spouse

Second Tuesday of the month
6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Judy Beckman
jbeckman@hospicewr.org
440.414.1731

COVID-19 Loss

MONTHLY This group is for adults who have experienced the death of a loved one from COVID-19 and who have previously attended a COVID-19 Loss or Circle of Hope series.

First Tuesday of the month
6 to 7:30 p.m.

Susan Hamme
shamme@hospicewr.org
440.596.3582

Grief 101

This one-hour class is for those who have experienced the death of a loved one in the past six months. Learn about signs and symptoms of grief as well as helpful strategies. Registration is required.

Wednesday, October 13
3 to 4 p.m.
Register by October 8

Lisa Florjancic
lflorjancic@hospicewr.org
440.853.5365

Grief vs. Depression

Many normal grief reactions may seem like characteristics of depression, but grief and depression are very different. This one-hour class will discuss the differences between normal grief and depression, as well as characteristics and causes of complicated grief.

Tuesday, October 19
6 to 7 p.m.

Laurie Mason
lmason@hospicewr.org
440.787.2099



IN-PERSON SUPPORT GROUPS

Child Loss

MONTHLY Parents who have experienced the death of a child age 20 or younger are invited to join us for an opportunity to find support and feel community with others who have experienced similar losses. Virtual attendance is also available.

Lakeshore Campus

Third Wednesday of the month
6 to 7 p.m.

Jonathan Cahill
jcahill@hospicewr.org
216.389.0704

Circle of Hope Series

An educational support group for adults who have had a loved one die. Please call the facilitator listed below for more information. Registration is required no later than a week prior to start date.

The Robertson Bereavement Center

Thursdays, October 14 to November 18
6 to 7:30 p.m.

JoDee Coulter
jcoulter@hospicewr.org
330.662.4240

OR

West Campus

Wednesdays, September 29 to November 3
6:30 to 8 p.m.

Judy Beckman
jbeckman@hospicewr.org
440.414.1731

Grief 101

This one-hour class is for those who have experienced the death of a loved one in the past six months. Learn about signs and symptoms of grief as well as helpful strategies. Registration is required.

East Campus

Wednesday, September 15
6:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Register by September 10

Lisa Florjancic
lflorjancic@hospicewr.org
440.853.5365

Kids Hope

A grief group for children 6-12 years old who have experienced a death in the last year.

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center

Thursday, October 14
6 to 7 p.m.
Register by October 11

Jocelyn Boyd
jboyd@hospicewr.org
216.486.6331



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

EAST CAMPUS

34900 Chardon Road, Suite 105
Willoughby Hills, OH 44094
440.951.8692

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

HMC HOSPICE OF MEDINA COUNTY

5075 Windfall Road
Medina, OH 44256
330.722.4771

WEST CAMPUS

22730 Fairview Center Drive
Fairview Park, OH 44126
216.227.9048

Healing Arts Workshops FALL 2021

Healing Arts Workshops provide grieving people with a creative outlet for their grief and are open to the community. No art experience is necessary. *Please note that some workshops will be offered virtually and some in person.* Check the details of each workshop for virtual or in-person format.

There is a suggested \$5 donation for supplies. If you wish to make a donation to the Western Reserve Grief Services, go to hospicewr.org and click "Donate Now" to find out how.

For information or to register, contact Mollie Borgione at [216.486.6544](tel:216.486.6544) or mborgione@hospicewr.org no later than two weeks in advance of a virtual workshop start date and one week in advance of an in-person workshop start date.



WEAVING HOPE

Life is often described as a tapestry, the various threads weaving in and out just as people enter into our lives for a time, and then are gone. Participants will express their feelings with watercolors, cut the piece into strips, then weave them into a background. Yarn, ribbon or decorative string may also be incorporated into the piece.

VIRTUAL

Wednesdays, October 13 and 20
6 to 7:30 p.m.

IN PERSON

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center

Thursdays, October 14 and 21
6:30 to 8 p.m.

OR

West Campus

Tuesdays, October 19 and 26
6:30 to 8 p.m.

KIDS ART: SMALL BOOKS, BIG STORIES

The loss of a loved one can be a big story in the life of a child. In this virtual workshop, kids can make a small book to remember the times spent with their loved one. Photos, notes and other two-dimensional items can also be incorporated.

For kids age 6 and older. Please ensure that an adult is available in the home for the duration of this workshop.

VIRTUAL

Tuesdays, November 2 and 9
6 to 7:30 p.m.

ART FOR RELAXATION: GRATITUDE BOWLS

November is our traditional month for giving thanks. At this workshop, fashion and paint an air-dry clay bowl in which you can place little notes of gratitude, prayers or memories for the gifts you have been given.

VIRTUAL

Wednesdays, November 10 and 17
6 to 7:30 pm

IN PERSON

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center

Thursdays, November 11 and 18,
6:30 to 8 p.m.

OR

West Campus

Tuesdays, November 16 and 23
6:30 to 8 p.m.

FABRIC AND FEELINGS

A monthly group where participants gather with others who are grieving and create all things fabric, sharing both their grief experiences and fabric arts knowledge with each other. Attendees can create lasting memories of their loved one using pieces of their clothing, or make pillows, quilts, crochet, knit, etc. No sewing expertise necessary. *Registration is required.*

IN PERSON

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center

Third Thursday of each month
2 to 4 p.m.

CIRCLE OF HOPE: ART THERAPY EDITION

A six-week art and educational support class for adults who have had a loved one die.



VIRTUAL

Wednesdays, October 20 –
November 24
10 to 11:30 a.m.

SAVE THE DATE

HOLIDAY FAMILY NIGHT: ONE OF A KIND

It is said that no two snowflakes are alike, just as there will never be anyone exactly like your loved one. What made your loved one unique? Bring family members or come by yourself to join us in making snowflakes to usher in winter.

IN PERSON

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center

Thursday, December 9, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

OR

West Campus

Tuesday, December 14, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.



Keep Calm and Carry On? Not So Fast!

By Jonathan Cahill, MDiv

Hi, kids! I see a lot of t-shirts, posters and memes with the phrase "Keep Calm and Carry On." You've probably seen them too. The message is clear - when times are hard, keep your emotions in check and keep moving on.

Sometimes this is useful advice. The message comes from a 1939 poster that the British government produced to boost the morale of its country's people. A war was coming, and it was a scary time. Showing calm and a determination to carry on gave people a common goal and helped to promote unity during a very trying time.

But there are times in our grief when we need to do more than just "keep calm and carry on." When waves of sadness, anger or guilt crash into us, our brain, heart and body may feel out of sorts - not calm at all. And that's okay. The thoughts and emotions that come with grief can be intense. They speak to the strength of the love you had for the person who died. Life is different without them, and it isn't really possible to carry on as if nothing has happened. So what do we do?

Instead of trying to simply keep calm and carry on through grief, let yourself feel everything that bubbles up, even if it is messy. If you need to yell, let out a nice scream - into a pillow is always good. If you need to cry, grab a box of tissues and let the tears flow. If you have pent up energy that needs a



place to go, punch a pillow or throw water balloons against the sidewalk with a shout and watch them burst (remember to pick up the pieces when you're all finished). These actions give us a way to express what we're feeling rather than trying to keep it inside. You or the people in your life might have some other ideas, too. And always remember to let someone know if you have feelings that seem overwhelming or too much to handle on your own.

You have the right to feel your pain and to give it a voice. Doing that can help soften your grief, and when you've gotten out some of those BIG feelings, you may feel again like you really can "keep calm and carry on."

A Special Thanks

Sometimes on the grief journey we receive support from people we never meet. For example, we might find comfort in the inspiring words of an author, or by leaning on a tree someone planted many years ago. In the same way, grants and donations make it possible for Hospice of the Western Reserve to offer support to those who are grieving. We are grateful for the generous gifts that allow us to offer engaging grief activities and new experiences for children and adults in the communities we serve.

300 East 185th Street
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Serving the Northern Ohio
counties of Ashtabula, Cuyahoga,
Geauga, Lake, Lorain, Medina,
Portage, Stark and Summit.

800.707.8922 | hospicewr.org



If you do not speak English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call 216.383.6688.

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Western Reserve Grief Services 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.

BOOK REVIEW

365 Days of Understanding Your Grief: Daily Readings for Finding Hope and Healing Your Heart

by Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D

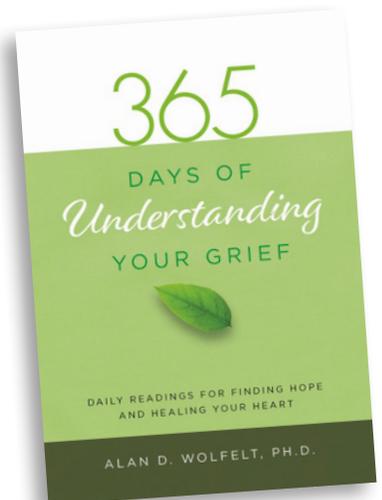
By Lisa Florjancic, MA, LSW

Dr. Alan Wolfelt is the founder and director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition in Colorado. He has worked with numerous bereaved people, "companioning" them on their grief journey. He is also an educator, providing guidance to many professional and informal caregivers as they help others who have experienced loss.

In *365 Days of Understanding Your Grief*, Wolfelt recognizes that you work on your grief every day you are grieving. This pocket-sized book is meant to guide you on your grief walk. Wolfelt suggests reading each day's guidance writing at the beginning of your day. He notes, "It will help set the tone for your day and serve as a reminder that your grief, while painful, is a normal, necessary part of your love for the person that died." Included in the book are 10 Touchstones for Healing Your

Heart, designed to "let you know that you are on the right path." Each day also has a reflection at the end of the page, to reflect and remind you to take care of yourself.

This helpful book is easy to read and offers hope as you move forward on your grief walk. If you are interested in any other publications or looking for more information on Dr. Wolfelt's work, visit www.centerforloss.com.



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