



About *grief*

A PUBLICATION OF
HOSPICE OF THE WESTERN RESERVE

FALL 2022

Misguided "Ground Rules" of Grief

By Laurie Mason, LISW-S, ACHP-SW

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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.

The death of someone close can lead us to expect and often receive wonderful support from the people in our lives. Sometimes however, grieving people discover that society has established "ground rules" that are not helpful in their grief journey. Some of these misguided notions include:

1. Life should return to normal shortly after the funeral.

Grieving people often receive great support just after the loss, during the funeral and in the days immediately following. As friends return to their own lives, they may expect that you should as well. In reality, the first weeks after the death of a loved one are just the start of the grief journey.

2. You must get rid of belongings right away.

Well-meaning family and friends may try to "help" by quickly going through the deceased's belongings and packing them up to be discarded, feeling these will only add to your grief. In reality, the familiar belongings of a loved one can bring great comfort to the person who is grieving.

3. Men should not cry but women must.

Society often places restrictions and expectations on the way a person should grieve. Many men have been taught not to cry and to be strong. Therefore, a man who openly weeps may be perceived as "weak." Women who do not show tears may be seen as "cold." We know that there is no right or wrong way to grieve, regardless of gender. How you express your grief is as personal as the loss itself.

4. Some losses are more valid than others.

Society often places hierarchical value on different types of loss. The loss of a pet may be seen as less meaningful than that of a sister. The death of a distant grandparent may be perceived as less important than that of a close friend. Consequently, many grievers are disenfranchised because society doesn't recognize their loss as significant. The reality is that grief is not a competition, and every person has the right to grieve.

5. Widows/Widowers must give up their couple friends because they feel uncomfortable around you.

Sometimes a death can be a harsh reminder of your own mortality. Because of this, couple friends may consciously or unconsciously avoid the surviving spouse of a friend who has died. This can be very hurtful to the grieving person who needs their support now more than ever.

6. You have exactly one year to get over this.

The world around us is moving faster than ever, and it can be difficult for friends and family to understand why someone is "still" grieving after a year. Unfortunately, there is no magic in reaching that milestone and there is no timeline for grief. The nature of your grief journey lies in your relationship with the person who died, your own style of coping, the support you have around you, and many other factors. Your grief is as individual as the loss you have experienced.

Grief is a personal journey that can't be directed by others. It is ok for you to feel how you feel, regardless of the "rules" imposed by society. If you are supporting someone who is grieving, start by just being present and available without judgment. This may be the best gift you have to offer.

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Go green! If you would like your copy of About Grief emailed to you, please send your email address to Karen Hatfield at khatfield@hospicewr.org.

FROM THE EDITOR

"Tell me about your wife (daughter, son, husband, friend, partner, grandma...)"

This simple sentence has led to some of the most wonderful conversations I've ever had. In life and in my work, I love to know peoples' stories. Funny stories, love stories, mundane stories...stories of sadness and grief. The quote below that I chose for this edition of About Grief reminded me of this. It reminded me that at the heart of any grief journey is the story of someone who was irreplaceable in the lives of the people who loved them. This is one of the reasons grief is so hard. It's also why telling your story, sharing memories and talking about what made your loved one special to you can be so healing.

I encourage you to find the time and space to tell your story. Talk about the person who died and what their presence in the world meant to you. What are you handling well and what are you struggling with? In addition to talking with family and friends, consider joining one of our many support groups scheduled for the fall season. We continue to offer a mix of in-person and virtual groups, and we welcome new members at any time. We would love to hear your story.



Karen L. Hatfield

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"We meet no ordinary people in our lives."

- C.S. Lewis



Life Without Our Parents

By JoDee Coulter, MT-BC, CT

As I work tirelessly to refinish an old piece of furniture, I am reminded of my father.

He was a man who loved to work on projects of this sort, always building, painting, and helping others. It's a bittersweet reminder to look around my home and wish he was here so I could ask his advice. On days when I try sewing (not my strength!), I think, "I wish I could call my mother to ask for help." If I were helpless enough, she might even do the work for me! Today, I have no one to call, no one to give me directions or guidance. I am, as some might say, an orphaned adult.

Our parents are the first voices we know, the first touch we feel, the first relationship we learn from in our lives. It is not surprising to me when I hear how hurt, lonely, and lost adults sometimes become after the death of their parents. In our society, it is expected that we will outlive our parents. As a result, our grief is often disenfranchised or overlooked. But it is a loss like no other.

When our remaining parent dies, we lose many things, such as the stories of our past, our childhood home, our counselor and trusted advisor, our first protectors and caregivers. We also lose our title of "child" or maybe our own role as a caregiver. We may burden ourselves with guilt for the care we gave. Could I have done more? Did I make the right choices? These are all normal responses to the loss of our parents. We may also find strength and courage to try new things and face our future without them by our side.

If we had a strained relationship with one or both of our parents, we may struggle with letting go of past hurts and unresolved conflict. If this is the case for you, take some time to write about it or seek support to help you process and heal.

How can we find peace and start to move forward? In his book, *The Orphaned Adult, Understanding and Coping with Grief and Change After the death of Our Parents*, author Alexander Levy uses humor and compassion to share how life changes after such significant loss. He encourages the reader to not rush. The death of your second parent may trigger feelings you felt or avoided when your first parent died. Perhaps you were busy supporting or caring for your surviving parent, getting sidetracked from your own grief. When it feels right, consider seeking support, either from friends, a professional, or both. Allow yourself time to rest and to heal, as grief takes a lot of energy. Seek assistance to help with legal matters. This is a time when relationships between siblings can either be strengthened or fractured, and if you're an only child, you may feel overwhelmed and uncertain. Find a non-involved third party to assist you.

Moving through this world without our parents is different from anything else we will experience. Be patient with yourself and those around you. Remember all that you have learned from your parents and continue their legacy through the stories you tell and the way you live your life.



DAVID SIMPSON HOSPICE HOUSE



AMES FAMILY HOSPICE HOUSE



MEDINA INPATIENT HOSPICE UNIT

THE VISTA WALK AND TRIBUTE WALKS

Remember Your Loved One

THE GARDENS AT AMES FAMILY HOSPICE HOUSE, DAVID SIMPSON HOSPICE HOUSE AND THE MEDINA INPATIENT HOSPICE UNIT offer beautiful outdoor spaces for meditation and reflection. Whether it is with a paver or a stone bench, when you dedicate an outdoor tribute to your loved one, 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.

Support Groups

FALL 2022

Unless otherwise noted, our support groups are open to anyone who has had a loved one die. Groups are subject to change.

Community Support Groups and Activities

All groups require advance registration, and the number of participants is limited. Participants of in-person groups will be asked to maintain distance within the meeting space and to refrain from attending if you are not feeling well. 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 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

Circle of Hope IN PERSON

SERIES An educational grief support group. Registration required no later than a week prior to start date.

Lakeshore Campus

Wednesdays, September 21 to October 12

Hannah Adams

hadams@hospicewr.org
216.383.3741

Hope and Healing IN PERSON

MONTHLY An ongoing monthly support group for older adults grieving the loss of a loved one.

Thursdays, September 15, October 20, November 17
10 to 11 a.m.

Grafton-Midview Public Library

983 Main Street, Grafton, OH 44044
Call to register 440.926.3317

Parents Together IN PERSON

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

Lakeshore Campus

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

Elisha Evanko

eevanko@hospicewr.org
440.414.1731

Parent Loss

MONTHLY A virtual support group for adults adjusting to life after the death of one or both parents.

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

Susan Hamme

shamme@hospicewr.org
440.596.3582

Millennial Grief

MONTHLY A virtual support group for adults ages 25 to 40 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

Overdose Loss

MONTHLY A virtual group for adults managing grief after an overdose death.

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

Elisha Evanko

eevanko@hospicewr.org
440.414.1731

Spousal/Partner Loss

New Journey

MONTHLY A virtual support group 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 Tuesday of the month
6 to 7 p.m.

JoDee Coulter

jcoulter@hospicewr.org
330.662.4240

Horizons IN PERSON

For older adults who have experienced the death of a spouse, partner or significant other.

Lakeshore Campus

Third Thursday of the month
10:30 a.m. to noon

Carrie Johnson

crjohnson@hospicewr.org
216.486.6331

COVID-19 Loss

MONTHLY A virtual group for adults who have experienced the death of a loved one due to COVID-19. *Prior completion of a COVID loss or Circle of Hope series is encouraged but not required.*

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

Susan Hamme

shamme@hospicewr.org
440.596.3582

Year of Firsts

MONTHLY This virtual group for adults will provide a space to prepare for and process important "firsts" after a death – from your first trip to the store to birthdays, holidays, anniversaries and more. *Registration required no later than a week prior to group date.*

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

Kelly DiTurno

kditurno@hospicewr.org
440.414.1737

Aliento a Tu Duelo **EN PERSONA** (Encouragement To Your Grief)

MENSUAL Grupo mensual de apoyo en Español para adultos que han vivido la muerte de un ser querido. *Es necesario registrarse antes de cada grupo. Por favor, llamar o enviar un email al facilitador de el grupo.*

West Campus

Segundo jueves del mes
6 para 7 p.m.

Karelys Ortiz Santiago

kortizsantiago@hospicewr.org
440.414.1740

Grief 101

This one-hour class is for adults 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 required no later than four days prior to the group.*

East Campus **IN PERSON**

Thursday, September 22
6 to 7 p.m.

OR

East Campus **IN PERSON**

Thursday, October 13
11 a.m. to noon

OR

Virtual

Thursday, November 10
6 to 7 p.m.

Lisa Florjancic

lflorjancic@hospicewr.org
440.853.5365

Holiday Events

Coping with Grief During the Holidays **IN PERSON**

A supportive discussion for adults facing the holidays after a death.

Lakeshore Campus

Wednesday, November 16
6:30 to 8 p.m.

Register by November 14

Carrie Johnson

cjohnson@hospicewr.org
216.486.6331

Grief and the Holidays (for families) **IN PERSON**

Join us for an evening to remember and honor our loved ones during the holiday season. Light refreshments will be provided. Registration required no later than one week prior to the event.

The Robertson Bereavement Center

Wednesday, December 7
6 to 7:30 p.m.

JoDee Coulter

jcoulter@hospicewr.org
330.662.4240

OR

Ashtabula office

Tuesday, December 13
6 to 7:30 p.m.

Susan Hamme

shamme@hospicewr.org
440.596.3582



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419.557.7070

TIFFIN OFFICE

181 E. Perry Street
Tiffin, OH 44883
419.447.4040

WEST CAMPUS

22730 Fairview Center Drive
Fairview Park, OH 44126
216.227.9048



Healing Arts Workshops FALL 2022

Healing Arts Workshops provide grieving people with a creative outlet for their grief and are open to the community. No art experience is necessary. **WORKSHOPS WILL BE OFFERED IN BOTH VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON FORMATS.**

For virtual groups - once registered, you will receive an email invitation that includes a link to join via Microsoft Teams at the time of the group. Each virtual workshop consists of two to six weekly sessions, a week apart. Discussion of the theme and instructions will be provided at the first session. You will complete your artwork during the week for you to share and discuss during the following session. You will be provided with art supplies that are new and yours to keep.

There is a suggested \$5.00 donation for supplies. If you wish to help allay supply and shipping costs, you may donate to the Healing Arts Program at the in-person workshops or go to hospicewr.org and click on [Donate Now](#).

Call Mollie Borgione at 216.486.6544 or email mborgione@hospicewr.org to register 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.



PET GRIEF: GARDEN MEMORY STONE

Our companion animals play important roles in our lives. When they die, our grief is often intense. In this two-session workshop, participants will have the opportunity to share memories of their beloved pets and create a garden stone to honor them.

IN PERSON

West Campus

BOTH Tuesdays:

November 1 and 8

6:30 to 8 p.m.



ART FOR RELAXATION: MINING FOR IMAGES

Watercolors on wet paper naturally run and spread, blending into each other, and creating unintended patterns. Just as one might see images in cloud formations, attendees will see what they can find as they "mine for images" in their watercolors.

VIRTUAL

BOTH Wednesdays:

October 12 and 19

6 to 7:30 p.m.

IN PERSON

West Campus

ONE NIGHT ONLY:

Tuesday, October 18

6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

IN PERSON

**The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss
Bereavement Center**

ONE NIGHT ONLY:

Thursday, October 13

6:30 to 8:30 p.m.



GIVING HAND, GRATEFUL HAND

Our hands give and receive. Our hands cared for our loved ones and received back their love and gratitude. Make an air-dry clay tracing of your own hands and paint them to represent what you give and what you receive.

VIRTUAL

BOTH Wednesdays:

November 9 and 16

6 to 7:30 p.m.

IN PERSON

West Campus

BOTH Tuesdays

November 15 and 22

6:30 to 8 p.m.

IN PERSON

**The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss
Bereavement Center**

BOTH Thursdays:

November 10 and 17

6:30 to 8 p.m.



HOLIDAY FAMILY NIGHT: COMFORT BAGS

The holiday season can be difficult to negotiate when one is grieving. In this workshop, participants can decorate a canvas bag which can be used to carry items of comfort to help them cope during the holidays. Please bring an apron or wear old clothes as we will be using fabric dyes.

VIRTUAL

BOTH Wednesdays

December 7 and 14

6 to 7:30 p.m.

IN PERSON

West Campus

ONE NIGHT ONLY:

Tuesday, December 13

6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

IN PERSON

**The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss
Bereavement Center**

ONE NIGHT ONLY:

Thursday, December 8

6:30 to 8:30 p.m.



CIRCLE OF HOPE: ART THERAPY EDITION

A six-week art and educational support group for adults who have experienced the death of a loved one.

VIRTUAL

Tuesdays,

October 18 to November 22

10 to 11:30 a.m.



FABRIC AND FEELINGS

A monthly group where participants come to 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 the month, 2 to 4 p.m.

A CHILD'S VIEW

By Hannah Adams, MSW, LSW

Hi, kids! Fall is on the way. The leaves are changing colors, the days are getting shorter, and the wind is turning blustery. We often think of spring as the season of newness with the daily rain showers that bring beautiful floral growth. On the other hand, we may think fall as the season of closing as nature prepares for winter. We watch the trees release their leaves to prepare for a time of rest and recovery. After an important person in our life dies, we also need time to rest and recover. In the cycle of seasons, the harshness of fall reminds us that the regrowth of spring is just around the corner. We can see that this is true in grief as well. Just like the seasons, our grief and feelings can change over time. Experiencing the big feelings of grief can feel exhausting, and that is normal! It is important to take care of our minds and our bodies during this time. One way to do that is to use our creativity. Since the trees are giving us so many leaves of various colors, textures, and sizes, you can try to keep them fresh long into winter by preserving them. Take a nature walk to gather leaves for your project. Notice the colors – do you have a favorite? What about the textures? Some may be brittle, and others may be soft. While walking and gathering your leaves, think about the memories you have of your special person. Share these memories with a trusted adult or friend if you feel comfortable. With permission and a little bit of help, use the directions below to preserve the leaves you have gathered.

What you will need:

- ◆ Fall leaves
- ◆ An iron (get help from an adult to use the iron)
- ◆ Wax paper
- ◆ 2 Dish towels
- ◆ An ironing board or other hard surface

Directions:

- ◆ Turn the iron on a low setting with no steam
- ◆ Place one dish towel on your hard surface
- ◆ Place one piece of wax paper on the dish towel – waxy side UP
- ◆ Arrange leaves on top of the wax paper and cover with the other piece of wax paper, waxy side DOWN, facing the leaves. Leave some space between leaves if you want to cut them out later
- ◆ Cover with a dish towel
- ◆ Iron for 15-20 seconds going back and forth along the dish towel
- ◆ Let everything cool down
- ◆ Cut out the individual leaves but leave a small edge around each to maintain the wax seal
- ◆ Enjoy your preserved leaves!

Use your preserved leaves to decorate the pages of a journal or scrapbook with photos of your special person. Or attach leaves to a piece of poster board or other material to decorate your room with a spot of color for dark days.



A SPECIAL THANKS

On the grief journey, we sometimes 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 provide wonderful camp experiences to children in the communities we serve over the summer. Your support makes all the difference. **Thank you!**

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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

How To Carry What Can't Be Fixed: A Journal for Grief

By Megan Devine

By Lisa Florjancic MA, LSW

"Grief isn't a problem to be solved; it's an experience to be carried", quotes Megan Devine in this 2021 follow up book from *It's OK That You're Not OK*. In the introduction to *How to Carry What Can't Be Fixed*, the author guides you through how to navigate this journal and your grief. This book/journal is divided into 3 parts, each with its own chapters. Each chapter validates the "hard road" of the grief process and shares useful information about the grief journey. The chapters offer creative activities and journaling prompts to help the reader explore their thoughts and emotions. These activities also help the griever find ways to interact with others while grieving, as well as finding your true support system. I found it very helpful that Devine offers examples throughout to help assist those who have never had the opportunity to journal before.

How to Carry What Can't Be Fixed is a wonderful book combining journaling and a discussion of experiences of grief. Devine does a nice job talking about grief and validating possible feelings the reader may have. With its "one line" reminders to take care of yourself and a resource page at the end of the book, there is much for readers to benefit from. As the author says, "This book will encourage you to write, draw, scribble, and explore as you find ways to live alongside loss".



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