



A PUBLICATION OF  
HOSPICE OF THE WESTERN RESERVE

# About *grief*

SPRING 2023

## Spring: Right Around the Corner

By Lisa M. Florjancic MA, LSW, CGP

### IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 Spring: Right Around the Corner
- 2 From the Editor
- 3 Creativity Heals
- 4 Support Groups
- 6 Healing Arts Workshops
- 7 A Child's View
- 8 Book Review

### STAY IN TOUCH

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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.

On a road that I travel frequently, there is a business that has a sign out front. At the beginning of December, the sign displays a countdown to spring. During the long, drab, cold winter months, that countdown seems like an eternity. I sometimes think to myself, "spring is never going to get here."

Eventually, I notice little changes outside that remind me spring is coming: the snow begins to melt, plants begin to grow, flowers begin to bloom, more animals are moving around outside, and the days start to get longer. This change is slow, but seeing the little changes brings promise that spring is right around the corner.

Just like the seasons, grief is a natural process. At the beginning of our grief walk, things can be overwhelming, and the "waves of grief" may crash down frequently. Our concentration seems short, our decision-making skills may not be as sharp as they normally are, and our energy level is low. Even simple interactions with

people may feel difficult when we are grieving. Trying to find our "new normal" seems like an impossible task. It's easy to wonder if things will ever change for the better.

Over time – little by little – we may notice changes that let us know we are moving to a different season in our grief. Our thoughts seem clearer, we have more energy, our ability to concentrate improves, and hopefully, engaging with the people around us feels a bit easier. Just as winter changes into spring, changes in our grief can bring us hope and more strength as we face each new day.

If only grief had a sign like the business I mentioned earlier – to count us down to a time when we are no longer grieving! Unfortunately, we know that isn't the way this works. Grief introduces us to a season of our life that is nearly impossible to prepare for – one that takes time, attention, and support. Be patient with yourself and know that we are here to help.



# About *grief*

a publication from



**WESTERN  
RESERVE  
GRIEF SERVICES**

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Go green! If you would like your copy  
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## FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to our spring edition of About Grief. I hope you'll enjoy the articles from our team as well as several new groups that we're excited to offer.

The other day I described grief as being a "uniquely common" experience, which seemed to make no sense and perfect sense all at the same time. Grief is universal. Talk to anyone in any culture in the world, and you'll find that people everywhere know what it is to grieve. We even have a list of "common grief reactions" that we share with grieverers to help them better understand all the things they are thinking and feeling in the face of their individual loss. Having this knowledge doesn't take away the pain, but it can offer some reassurance that the things that feel out of control in this moment can be named and are not a sign that we are going crazy.

While grief may be a universal human experience, it is also an intensely personal one. Your grief is your own. It is unique to you. There is no singular "right" way to grieve. Your grief experience depends on a seemingly endless number of things – your relationship with the person who died, your strengths, your struggles, what kind of support you do (or do not) have, how your loved one died, how busy you are, how much time you have to rest, and so on. With so many variables it seems unlikely that anyone else in the world can understand what you're going through. And truly, no one else can understand exactly or walk this road in your place, because...your grief is your own.

As you navigate your own unique grief journey, I hope that you can spend time in the company of others who allow space for your thoughts and feelings without judgment. Those who understand grief will know the value in being present and listening without expectations. Take comfort in those connections and know that we are also here with continued support.



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**Grieving doesn't make you imperfect.  
It makes you *human*.  
~Sarah Dessen**



# Creativity Heals

By Mollie Borgione, ATR-BC, LPC, CT

I am privileged to facilitate The *Healing Arts* program for Western Reserve Grief Services. The program consists of virtual as well as in-person art therapy workshops for anyone in the community who is grieving the death of a beloved someone. See this quarter's *Healing Arts* offerings in the subsequent pages of this newsletter.

Creative expression, whether through visual arts, music, theater, storytelling, or dance, can help release emotion and process grief. Grief is not only deep sadness, but any and all feelings grievers have as they try to grasp the reality of the death of their loved ones. These may include difficult emotions such as anger, frustration, fear, hopelessness, guilt, a lack of purpose, and shame. The bereaved may also experience "unexpected" emotions regarding their loss such as relief, joy, gratitude, or deep peace. It is important to remind yourself that whatever feelings you have are **acceptable**, even though you may think otherwise! You must allow yourself the time, space, and non-judgmental mindset to address them. Creative expression can facilitate this process.

There is something about the creative process that connects us with ourselves more deeply, whether we are grieving or not. It enables us to calm our minds, tap an inner healer that helps us sort through our emotions, and releases them through the creation of something new. This new creation has a voice which speaks to us and is a vehicle by which we can speak our truth to others. When the creative process is shared, connection is made with others who are

also grieving, letting us know we are not alone in our pain.

It can be comforting to be with others whom you do not know well, but with whom you share a common bond of grief. Sometimes, it is difficult to share your real feelings and thoughts with family members or friends because you may all be suffering the same loss. You might hold back your tears or anxiety because you do not want to upset them, and they do the same. This tentativeness can rob you of opportunities to heal. When you attend a Healing Arts workshop (or any of our grief support groups), you can open doors to new possibilities for healing, such as:

1. ***Camaraderie with others who understand.***  
You make connections with people who are also grieving and with whom you can be authentic.
2. ***Personal creative choices and reflection.***  
You choose how much effort and meaning you want to put into your art.
3. ***Share at a level with which you are comfortable.***  
No one is compelled to share.
4. ***Form new self-realizations.***  
You may learn about yourself and your own reactions by hearing someone else's experience.
5. ***Opportunities to receive and give support.***  
Learn how to receive support and be a witness to others in their grief.

**I hope you will join us at a Healing Arts workshop soon.**

**The Healing Arts program provides grieving people with a creative outlet for their grief and is open to the community. The program is made possible by a project support grant from Cuyahoga Arts and Culture.**



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](https://hospicewr.org/tribute)** to learn more.



# Support Groups

SPRING 2023

*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 support group for adults who have had a loved one die. Registration is required no later than a week prior to start date.

#### Ashtabula office

Five Tuesdays, May 2 through May 30  
10 to 11:30 a.m.

#### Susan Hamme

shamme@hospicewr.org  
440.596.3582

#### East Campus

Four Thursdays, March 23 through April 13  
6 to 7 p.m.

#### Lisa Florjancic

lflorjancic@hospicewr.org  
440.853.5365

#### West Campus

Four Wednesdays, May 10 through May 31  
10:30 a.m. to noon

#### Karelys Ortiz Santiago

kortizsantiago@hospicewr.org  
440.414.1740

### Hope and Healing **IN PERSON**

**MONTHLY** An ongoing monthly support group for grieving adults.

#### For older adults

Third Thursday of each month  
10 to 11 a.m.

#### Grafton-Midview Public Library

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

### Parents Together

**MONTHLY** For parents who have experienced the death of an adult child. This group can be joined virtually or in person.

#### Lakeshore Campus

Second Tuesday of each 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 each month  
6 to 7 p.m.

#### Elisha Evanko

eevanko@hospicewr.org  
440.414.1731

### Millennial Grief

**MONTHLY** A virtual group for adults ages 25 to 40 grieving the death of a parent or parent figure.

Second Wednesday of each 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 each month  
6 to 7 p.m.

#### Elisha Evanko

eevanko@hospicewr.org  
440.414.1731



## Spousal/Partner Loss

### New Journey

**MONTHLY** A group for adults of any age who have experienced the death of a spouse, partner or significant other.

#### VIRTUAL

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

[thebereavementcenter@hospicewr.org](mailto:thebereavementcenter@hospicewr.org)  
216.486.6838

#### VIRTUAL

Third Tuesday of each month  
6 to 7 p.m.

**JoDee Coulter**

[jcoulter@hospicewr.org](mailto:jcoulter@hospicewr.org)  
330.662.4240

#### IN PERSON

##### West Campus

Second Tuesday of each month  
2 to 3:30 p.m.

**Carrie Johnson**

[crjohnson@hospicewr.org](mailto:crjohnson@hospicewr.org)  
216.486.6331

### Horizons **IN PERSON**

**MONTHLY** For adults in later life who have experienced the death of a spouse, partner or significant other.

##### Lakeshore Campus

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

**Carrie Johnson**

[crjohnson@hospicewr.org](mailto:crjohnson@hospicewr.org)  
216.486.6331

### Grief In The First Year **IN PERSON**

**MONTHLY** This group is for adults navigating the important "firsts" in the year following a death. *Registration is required no later than a week prior to group date.*

##### Lakeshore Campus

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

**Kelly DiTurno**

[kditurno@hospicewr.org](mailto:kditurno@hospicewr.org)  
440.414.1737

### Grief In The Second Year

#### IN PERSON

A year has passed, and you may wonder why you're still struggling with grief. This group will explore the second year of grief, including why it can be more challenging than we expect, and ways to cope.

##### The Robertson Bereavement Center

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

**JoDee Coulter**

330.662.4240  
*Call to register.*

### Grief: Man to Man **IN PERSON**

For men who have experienced the death of a loved one. Join us for coffee and conversation around common grief reactions, suggestions for managing grief, and resources in the community.

##### The Robertson Bereavement Center

Saturday, March 18  
8 to 9:30 a.m.

#### OR

Thursday, March 30  
6 to 7:30 p.m.

**Anthony Burwell**

[aburwell@hospicewr.org](mailto:aburwell@hospicewr.org)  
330.662.4245

### Aliento a Tu Duelo

*(Encouragement To Your Grief)*

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 a 7 p.m.

**Karelys Ortiz Santiago**

[kortizsantiago@hospicewr.org](mailto:kortizsantiago@hospicewr.org)  
440.414.1740



**HOSPICE OF THE  
WESTERN RESERVE**

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300 East 185th Street  
Cleveland, OH 44119-1330  
216.486.6838

#### THE ROBERTSON BEREAVEMENT CENTER

5075 Windfall Road  
Medina, OH 44256  
330.725.1900

#### AMES FAMILY HOSPICE HOUSE

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

#### ASHTABULA OFFICE

1166 Lake Avenue  
Ashtabula, OH 44004-2930  
440.997.6619

#### DAVID SIMPSON HOSPICE HOUSE AND LAKESHORE CAMPUS

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

#### HEADQUARTERS

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

#### LORAIN COUNTY OFFICE

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 SPRING 2023

Healing Arts Workshops provide grieving people with a creative outlet for their grief and are open to the community. No art experience is needed, and supplies will be provided. **Please note virtual or in-person format for each group.**

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. With a few exceptions, each workshop consists of two sessions, a week apart. At the first session, a theme or topic is introduced, and we have a discussion. You will be given instructions to complete the art assignment during the week using the supplies that have been provided. During the second session we will share artwork and talk about the creative process.

There is a suggested \$5 donation for supplies. If you wish to help allay supply and shipping costs, you may make a donation to the Healing Arts Program. To do so, go to [hospicewr.org](https://hospicewr.org) and click on **Donate Now**.

Call Mollie Borgione at **216.486.6544** or email at [mborgione@hospicewr.org](mailto:mborgione@hospicewr.org) to register no later than two weeks in advance of a virtual workshop start date or one week in advance of an in-person start date.



## ART FOR RELAXATION: MOVEMENT, MUSIC, MONTAGE

Grief affects us physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Join us for an experience on all four levels, using gentle movement, music therapy, and art therapy. No matter what your physical or artistic ability, you will be able to easily participate.

### **IN PERSON**

**West Campus**

Tuesday, April 18  
6:30 to 8:30 p.m.



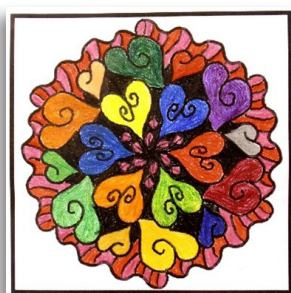
## CIRCLE OF HOPE: ART THERAPY EDITION

A six-week art and educational support group for adults.

### **IN PERSON**

**The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center**

Wednesdays, April 19 to May 24  
10 to 11:30 a.m.



## ART FOR RELAXATION: YOUR TRUE COLORS

Do you have a favorite color? Are you known to others by the colors you like to wear? Have these things changed in your grief? Participants will spend a relaxing time coloring their choice of coloring pages which will be provided, but bring your own if you'd like!

### **VIRTUAL**

Both Wednesdays, April 12 and 19  
6 to 7:30 p.m.

### **IN PERSON**

**The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center**

Both Wednesdays, May 17 and 24  
6:30 to 8 p.m.



## MEMORIES IN A JAR

Remember catching fireflies in a jar as a kid? In this workshop, participants will decorate a jar and write down memories on colored strips of paper to fill the jar. A string of LED lights will add a warm glow to your jar of memories.

### **VIRTUAL**

Both Wednesdays  
May 10 and 17  
6 to 7:30 p.m.

### **IN PERSON**

**The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center**

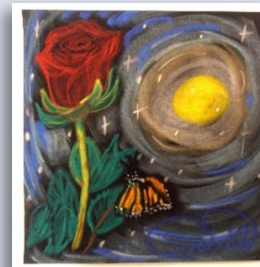
Both Thursdays, May 11 and 18  
6:30 to 8 p.m.

### **IN PERSON**

**West Campus**

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

## **SAVE THE DATE**



## PAINTING ON VELOUR

Does a certain flower, tree, animal or landscape bring you comfort and peace or remind you of your loved one? Bring your own image or choose one and use soft pastels to "paint" a picture on velour paper. The velour surface holds the color so that the pastel dust is kept to a minimum.

### **VIRTUAL**

Both Wednesdays  
June 14 and 21  
6 to 7:30 p.m.

### **IN PERSON**

**West Campus**

Tuesday, June 13  
6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

### **IN PERSON**

**The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center**

Thursday, June 15  
6:30 to 8:30 p.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.

### **IN PERSON**

**The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center**

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



## A CHILD'S VIEW

*Hi, kids! Spring is here and it is finally time to hang up your winter coat, put your boots away, and enjoy more outdoor activities! There is nothing better than feeling the warmth of the sun after a cold winter. You may wish saying good-bye to winter could mean saying good-bye to your grief too. The change of season might make you feel more hopeful or energetic, which is great! You could also feel like your grief is more intense. There could be a lot of different reasons for this. Maybe Spring was your loved one's favorite season, or a time of the year that you took trips together? Whatever the reason is, it is okay to be sad and miss the person who has died. If springtime is hard for you, you may need to take care of yourself a little more than normal. You can do this by going for walks or a bike ride, playing with friends, drawing, writing, talking to a family member or playing a game. Another idea is to plant a flower or other plant and decorate the container with feelings or memories of your special person. Taking care of your flower as it grows can help you cope and heal. Ask an adult for some help you gather materials and get started.*

### What you will need:

- ✂ An inexpensive terra cotta pot (any size)
- ✂ Potting soil
- ✂ Seeds to plant, or a plant/flower with roots
- ✂ Markers and/or paint

### What to do:

- ✂ Using markers or paint, decorate your pot with memories, feelings, things to do when you're feeling sad, or anything else. Let that dry.
- ✂ After your artwork has dried, fill the pot about halfway with soil
- ✂ Place seeds or plant in the soil
- ✂ Cover the seeds or the roots of the plant with additional soil
- ✂ Add water as needed to keep the soil moist
- ✂ Watch your plant grow!



By Carrie Johnson, MSW, LISW-S

## SAVE THE DATE!

Together We Can  2023 Camps

Together We Can camps provide the opportunity for kids to be with others who are also grieving the death of a loved one. Camps are expressive in nature and led by experienced facilitators in art, music, play and nature activities. For more information or to receive a registration packet, please contact us at 216.486.6838.

### Five-day

### Riding Through Grief

Fieldstone Farm

16497 Snyder Road, Chagrin Falls  
9 a.m. – noon

June TBD; kids ages 8 – 12

July TBD; teens ages 13 – 17

\$75 registration per camper

In collaboration with Fieldstone Farm Therapeutic Riding Center, this camp is for children and teens who are grieving the death of a loved one. Through riding and working with horses, campers explore grief issues supported by trained counselors. Scholarships are available.

### Three-day

### Red Oak

Red Oak Camp

9057 Kirtland Chardon Road,  
Willoughby

August 8 – 10, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

\$25 registration per camper

A three-day bereavement day camp for children ages 6–13 who have experienced the death of a loved one.

Transportation is available from our Lakeshore campus.

Scholarships are available.





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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

By Elisha Evanko, MT-BC

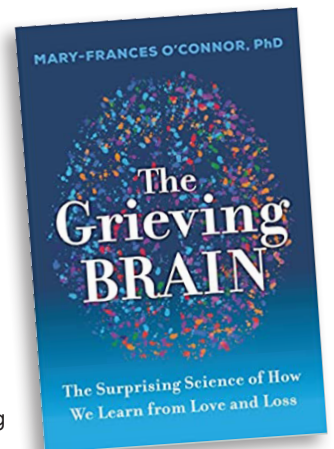
"For as long as there have been human relationships, we have struggled with the overwhelming nature of grief following the death of a loved one," states author Mary-Frances O'Connor. A neuroscientist and psychologist, O'Connor acknowledges the vast works of poets, writers, artists, psychiatrists, and various religious groups who sought to explain the what of grief - what it feels like, what challenges arise, what we can do to soothe our souls, etc. Despite this, there has been little insight into why grief has such a profound impact on our emotions and bodies. Throughout her book, O'Connor discusses research findings and real-life experiences to explore the impact of grief and loss on the nervous system and the brain. She describes how grief changes our typical thoughts and behavior. For example, researchers found that brain scans of grieving people showed the same type of brain activity associated with physical pain. This may help us understand why grief and the experience of "heartbreak" can be so painful.

*The Grieving Brain* also describes the influence of our loved ones' physical presence in how we store memories of the

## *The Grieving Brain: The Surprising Science of How We Learn from Love and Loss*

by Mary-Frances O'Connor, PhD

world; with loss, our brain must come to terms with a world where our loved one is absent. *The Grieving Brain* reminds us that we are not in conscious control of the changes we experience in our bodies after a major loss and provides reassurance that there is no right or wrong way to grieve. When we understand how grief impacts our brains and bodies, we may learn that we are not inadequate or broken - we are physically and neurologically healing and learning. As the author states to close the book, "Once you have experienced deep grieving, you walk through a doorway... and here you are on the other side, with knowledge about yourself and a marvelous brain that you can utilize to build and navigate a new world."



*Books reviewed by our team can be found at your local library or purchased online or from local bookstores.*