



About *grief*

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HOSPICE OF THE WESTERN RESERVE

WINTER 2021-22

The Gift of Self-Care

By Shawn Eigenbrode
MSW, LSW, GC-C

The year 2021 brought many challenges. If you experienced the death of a loved in the past year or more – whatever the circumstances or timeline – you may still be healing from that loss. The death of your loved one may have triggered related losses – your roles, routines, purpose or self-identity. Separately, you may have endured other significant losses, such as relationships, employment, opportunities or security. If you feel depleted, please know that you are not alone.

During times of loss and uncertainty, it's especially important to take care of yourself, even as you care for others. Grief and stress take a very real toll on the body, mind and spirit. Seasonal demands and special occasions often add to that burden. Although you may have little control over the external events and people affecting your bereavement, you do have control over your own daily self-care.

Self-care is simply the practice of promoting one's own health and well-being. Any personal choice or action that supports your well-being can be considered self-care. It encompasses your most basic needs as well as your greater enrichment. If you are a longtime caregiver, a habitual people-pleaser, or a chronic workaholic, you may have greater difficulty prioritizing your own needs. But your well-being matters, and it deserves your attention. **Self-care is neither selfish nor self-indulgent; it is self-preservation.**

Self-care is essential to healing and adaptation. While it doesn't need to be time-consuming or costly, self-care does

require some self-awareness and self-discipline. Briefly reflect on these four domains of your well-being, and some of the everyday choices you make for yourself within them:

1. **Biological** – your nutrition, hydration, sleep, exercise, medical care
2. **Psychological** – your knowledge, thought processes; emotional expression, coping strategies
3. **Social** – the interpersonal company you keep, your support systems
4. **Spiritual** – your sources of higher meaning, purpose and unity

In which domains are you deprived or struggling? What might provide relief? Which of the choices mentioned here can you control? Where could you make improvements? Even small changes may yield benefits to your well-being; sustained changes often lead to bigger changes and greater benefits. Again, you are deserving of your own attention and effort!

The gift of self-care is available to you anytime, anywhere. It takes the form of personalized comfort, nurturing and sustenance. It can help make most burdens, including bereavement, more bearable. Although no one can predict the challenges ahead, you can better meet the demands of the coming year by fostering your innate resilience. The new year offers a timely opportunity to prioritize self-care, helping you to be a greater asset to yourself and to the important others in your life. **Remember, empty lanterns provide no light. Self-care is fuel – allowing your light to shine and endure.**

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STAY IN TOUCH

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 Western Reserve
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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.

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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

It's hard to believe winter is upon us again. Shorter days, dropping temperatures and the increasing buzz of the holiday season are all around us. For some, this is a welcome change and a season to look forward to. For others, not so much. When you're grieving, the hustle and bustle may be overwhelming, expectations are high, and it can be difficult to share how you're feeling about it all without sounding like a bit of a grinch. It can be helpful to simply acknowledge that things are different this year and that some days may be harder than others. Take a break when you need to without any guilt, and allow yourself to truly notice and appreciate even small moments of beauty and joy when they happen. This simple act may help you to find more balance as you continue your grief journey.



At the time of this printing, we continue to offer grief support groups virtually. If you have not previously attended a group, I encourage you to give it a try. We hope to re-introduce in-person groups in the coming months. For calendar and group format updates and for other resources, please visit our website at hospicewr.org or the Western Reserve Grief Services Facebook page.

Over the coming months, we wish for peace in your hearts and peace in the world. Please know that we are here with continued care and support.

Be gentle with yourself and those around you.

Karen Hatfield, MMT, MT-BC, CHPCA
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*Kindness is like snow.
It beautifies everything it covers.
- Kahlil Gibran*



New Year *Resolutions*

By Diane Snyder Cowan, MA, MT-BC, CHPCA

Many people think about making resolutions in the New Year. Lose weight, eat better, exercise more and spend less are common examples of resolutions long forgotten by the first of February. For those grieving a death, resolutions may be the farthest thing from the mind. Perhaps your resolution might be adjusting to the absence of your loved one. Adjusting to the loss includes making meaning of the changes that have happened as a result of the death. Here are some considerations:

- 1** *Be honest with your feelings.* Others might expect you to be "over it" at three or six months post-death, but there is no calendar for grief. Find a place, a way or a person with whom you can express your grief feelings.



- 2** *Do something that feels good.* This can be spending time with people you like, finding a hobby that provides an outlet for your creative energy or an escape from the day-to-day. Doing something often builds self-esteem through a sense of accomplishment. Take a walk or hike, make art, journal, listen to music, be with others.

- 3** *Talk about your deceased loved one.* Say his or her name out loud. Find ways to honor or include him or her at holidays and special occasions. Create a remembrance project such as a scrapbook, photo album or a collection of recipes or letters.

four

- 4** *Give yourself permission to change.* Life is different now. Consider what you have lost, what you have left and what you are going to do now. What is becoming of the person you used to be and who are you now? What lessons or self-discoveries have you learned?

- 5** | *Continue your loved one's legacy.* Think about what was important to the person who died. There are ways you can transform your grief into a legacy of love. Share stories about your beloved with younger generations. Contribute to a charity or attend an event in honor of your special person. Bake or cook those special recipes. Listen to their favorite music. ▶▶



As you search to find meaning in loss and adjust to changes in your life, you may begin to make some sense of what has happened. You may find a bridge that connects the past with the future in a way that makes sense to you.



DAVID SIMPSON HOSPICE HOUSE



AMES FAMILY HOSPICE HOUSE



MEDINA HOSPICE INPATIENT CARE CENTER

THE VISTA WALK AND TRIBUTE WALKS

Remember Your Loved One

THE GARDENS AT AMES FAMILY HOSPICE HOUSE, DAVID SIMPSON HOSPICE HOUSE AND THE MEDINA HOSPICE INPATIENT CARE CENTER 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

WINTER 2021/22

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

Except where noted, support groups will continue to be offered in a virtual format. 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 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 Series

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.*

Thursdays, February 10 to March 17
6 to 7 p.m.

JoDee Coulter
jcoulter@hospicewr.org
330.662.4240

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

OR

IN PERSON

For older adults
Fourth Thursday of the month
Starting January 4, 2022
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.

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

Shawn Eigenbrode
seigenbrode@hospicewr.org
216.486.6364

Parent Loss

MONTHLY A support group 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.

Susan Hamme
shamme@hospicewr.org
440.596.3582

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

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

When possible, this group will be offered in a combined virtual and in-person format. Please contact Jonathan for in-person details.

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

Jonathan Cahill
jcahill@hospicewr.org
216.389.0704



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Medina, OH 44256
330.725.1900

AMES FAMILY HOSPICE HOUSE
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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 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 Tuesday of the month
6 to 7 p.m.

JoDee Coulter

jcoulter@hospicewr.org
330.662.4240

COVID-19 Loss

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

Susan Hamme

shamme@hospicewr.org
440.596.3582

Grief 101

This one-hour virtual 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.

In collaboration with Geauga County Public Library

February 17, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.
To register, call Erika Noark at Geauga County Public Library
440.729.4250, ext. 2576

After the Holidays: Coping with Grief

This one-hour class offers support and suggestions for moving forward in your grief after the holiday season.

Tuesday, January 11, 2022
6 to 7 p.m.

Register by Friday, January 7, 2022

Lisa Florjancic

lflorjancic@hospicewr.org
440.853.5365

Healing Arts Workshops WINTER 2021-22

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.

All workshops are virtual. Once registered, you will receive an email invitation that includes a link to join via Microsoft Teams at the time of the group. With the exception of Circle of Hope, 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, go to hospicewr.org and click on **Donate Now**.

Call Mollie Borgione at **216.486.6544** or email at mborgione@hospicewr.org to register no later than two weeks in advance of a virtual workshop start date.



SAVE THE DATE



BEACON OF 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.

Thursdays, January 13 and 20
6 to 7:30 p.m.

OR

Tuesdays, January 18 and 25
6 to 7:30 p.m.

HEART HUGS

One of the difficulties that the death of a special person brings is the absence of their physical presence. Sometimes it's helpful to have something you can hold onto in your grief. Participants will make a huggable heart-shaped pillow from fleece to remember their loved one. Fabric from your loved one's clothing may also be incorporated.

Thursdays, February 10 and 17
6 to 7:30 p.m.

OR

Tuesdays, February 15 and 22
6 to 7:30 p.m.

CIRCLE OF HOPE: ART THERAPY EDITION

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

Wednesdays: January 19 -
February 23, 2022
10 to 11:30 a.m.

Mollie Borgione
mborgione@hospicewr.org
216.486.6544

ART FOR RELAXATION: CIRCLE BOOKS

At this workshop, participants will put a circle book together. You can add photos, notes, and other two-dimensional mementos inside the folds to remember your loved one. The photos show the book when folded up and when fully opened.

Thursdays, March 10 and 17
6 to 7:30 p.m.

OR

Tuesdays, March 15 and 22
6 to 7:30 p.m.

A CHILD'S VIEW

By
Susan Hamme
LSW, CHP-SW

The holiday season can be a time of heightened emotions and increased stress for families who are grieving. Feelings of emotional unrest and just "not feeling right" can appear seemingly out of nowhere, causing us to react in ways we may not typically. Though it's not easy, adults may be able to identify what feels different and respond with coping skills and moments of self-care. This can be much more difficult for children and teens. Children and teens who are grieving may not have the ability to identify their reasons for feeling off or unsettled. While they may notice that they are more tired, irritable, or sad, they may not naturally make the connection between those feelings and the changes that have happened since their loved one died. Traditions may be different, someone special is missing from the celebration and the adults around them may also be acting differently due to their own grief.

Even when kids are not able to tell us they are not ok, we can often see it in their moods and actions. Rather than seeing behavior "problems," consider that your child may benefit from a chance to take a break or engage in something that can help them manage and express difficult feelings. One way to do this is to work together to create a "toolkit" of coping skills they can use either on their own or with your help.

- ★ Find a box or a bag for you and the child to fill with things that help them to calm down or feel better. Some ideas:
 - Play Doh or modeling clay
 - Bubbles – promotes deep breathing
 - Fidget toys
 - Coloring/drawing materials
 - A favorite book
 - Slips of paper that include things to try that do not fit in your bag or box – cuddling a pet, holding a stuffed animal, playing a game on a tablet or iPad, asking for a hug
 - Anything else that allows your child to express feelings or take a break
- ★ Talk about times or situations when your child might want to use the toolkit – feeling anxious, irritable, sad, over-stimulated or just needing a break
- ★ Give time to go to their room or another quiet space and use the items in the box, uninterrupted – shorter periods for younger kids or longer lengths of time for adolescents – checking in afterwards
- ★ Continue to add or change the items in your coping toolkit over time

Given the chance to create and use their own coping toolkit, kids often find that they feel calmer or better able to manage big emotions. They may feel like they can move on to another activity or participate more successfully in whatever else is happening in the home. Some find that they are more able to talk about what is bothering them – be it grief or any other challenging situation. And once you've helped the kids in your life create their coping toolkits – consider making one for yourself. The possibilities are endless.

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 Susan Hamme, LSW, CHP-SW

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

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

Sorry For Your Loss: What People Who Are Grieving Wish You Knew

by Alicia King

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



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