



About *grief*

A PUBLICATION OF
HOSPICE OF THE WESTERN RESERVE

WINTER 2022 - 23

Seasons of Grief

By Susan Hamme, LSW, CHP-SW

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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.

Every season of the year brings about a new season of grieving. At the onset of each new season, we talk about the symbolism of that season, special factors that can impact our grief, and ways to cope. Take spring for example. Spring can bring with it the overwhelming pressure to have new energy and enthusiasm. Summer brings the expectation of days packed with cookouts, vacations, and activity. Then fall eases in, along with dipping temperatures, beautiful colors, and shorter days. Then comes winter. Many grieving people dread winter. Shorter days, longer stretches of night, and holiday expectations exist all around us. When the "joyful" season of the year hits, and we are not joyful, we may feel even more out of place in a world that kept on spinning when our loved one died. This winter, I invite you to look at things a little bit differently.

Let's focus on the shorter days, longer nights, snow, and gray skies. They imply a dampening of sound and a slower pace, which might match the internal pace and energy feel when we are grieving. This is the silver lining of winter that is often overshadowed by the fear of the darkness and the holidays. Winter can give us permission to slow down, and validation for feeling a bit "gray" ourselves. For the first time since a loss, your grieving heart may feel in sync with the actual weather outside.

How do we plan for this new season of grieving? We do our best to lean into the possibilities as well as the challenges. It can be easier in some ways to anticipate the challenges we have to plan for – crowds, gatherings, gift-giving, etc. Take a year off

from some traditions that may be too painful to face. Say "if I'm feeling up to it" in response to invitations from those around you. There are many resources and tips for setting limits and navigating the challenges.

Identifying opportunities related to this season of grieving might be trickier. Consider winter conditions a chance to spend time taking care of yourself. Allow your mind and body to rest while you wrap up in blankets on the sofa with a mug of hot tea or cocoa. Do you remember the unexpected freedom of snow days during school? Allow yourself a bit of that feeling, even if just for a few hours. What would it be like to simply watch the snow fall or the clouds roll by? Let your thoughts come and go without judgment. Are they sad, hopeful, peaceful? When the busyness of the world is too much, this can be what our grieving hearts are craving. Time to just be. To sit with the quiet, in the newness of our world. Time to adjust to how our home feels and how our lives look now. Smiles and tears are both okay. Take deep breaths and calm your thoughts. Even in our grief it is possible to have moments of true peace. The silence outside after a heavy snow is for me, one of the most peaceful silences. It is like the world has paused to acknowledge me, my thoughts, and my feelings. How badly we may long for that when we feel so very isolated and alone in our loss.

As this new season sets in, look toward those times that it is too cold to leave the house with a fresh perspective and acceptance of the quiet gifts of the season.

About grief

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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

Welcome to our winter edition of About Grief. In this issue you'll find great articles written by our team, as well as several new support groups that I hope you'll consider checking out.

I recently talked to a woman whose husband of almost 50 years had died. We discussed many of the "normal" things grieving people go through, like difficulty sleeping at night, learning to take on tasks that used to be handled by the other person, loneliness, and unrealistic expectations of other people for her to be "over it already." It was a serious conversation about the very real struggles she is facing without the love of her life beside her. Then out of nowhere, she cracked a wickedly funny joke about her situation that took me by complete surprise and had us laughing together for almost a full minute! Hearing her laughter through the phone made my day and prompted me later to look up some information about humor in grief. Some things to consider:



- ◆ Laughter can relieve physical pain and emotional stress by lowering cortisol levels and increasing production of "feel good" chemicals in the brain
- ◆ Nervous laughter is an involuntary mechanism to help us perceive serious situations as less threatening. While it can happen at inconvenient times, it is not usually a sign that someone is being disrespectful
- ◆ Humor (sometimes gallows or "dark" humor) can help people bond together in the face of a common struggle, increasing our feeling that it can be overcome
- ◆ Allow the person who is grieving to initiate humor on their own terms. For example, if I make light of my own situation, it can help me cope. If YOU make a joke, it may be hurtful to me.
- ◆ Sharing great memories and funny stories of the person who died can help us connect with others and heal while we are grieving.

Everyone's grief journey is unique. In the midst of the sadness and challenges grief brings, I hope that you will also find moments to laugh and feel at peace. Know that we are here with continued support.

Karen Hatfield, MMT, MT-BC, CHPCA
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***"There's a time to cry, time to be spent in serious reflection,
and time to laugh - all are healing."
Eleanor Haley; What's Your Grief***

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 that are 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:

Be honest about 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.

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?

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, a collection of recipes or letters.

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.

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 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](tel:855.475.0245) or visit hospicewr.org/tribute to learn more.

Support Groups

WINTER 2022 - 23

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.

Bay Village Library Meeting Room B-North

27400 Wolf Road, Bay Village, OH 44140
Tuesdays, January 17 to February 7
6 to 7:30 p.m.

Amy Boyd-Kirksey
a Boyd-kirksey@hospicewr.org
216.409.8014

Lakeshore Campus

Wednesdays, January 18 to February 8
10 to 11:30 a.m.

Hannah Adams
hadams@hospicewr.org
216.383.3741

The Robertson Bereavement Center

Thursdays, February 9 to March 16
6 to 7:30 p.m.

JoDee Coulter
jcoulter@hospicewr.org
330.662.4240

Conneaut Public Library (Spousal/Partner loss)

304 Buffalo Street, Conneaut, OH 44030
Tuesdays, January 10 to January 31

Susan Hamme
440.596.3582
shamme@hospicewr.org

Hope and Healing IN PERSON

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

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

Sibling Loss IN PERSON

A two-week support group for adults who have experienced the death of a sibling.

East Campus

Thursdays, January 19 and 26
6 to 7 p.m.
Register by January 12

Lisa Florjancic
lflorjancic@hospicewr.org
440.853.5365

Parents Together IN PERSON

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

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.

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 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 7:30 p.m.

Elisha Evanko
eevanko@hospicewr.org
440.414.1731

Spousal/Partner Loss

New Journey

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

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

Vanessa Smylie
216.763.6441
vsmylie@hospicewr.org

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

JoDee Coulter
330.662.4240
jcoulter@hospicewr.org

West Campus IN PERSON

Second Tuesday of each month
2 to 3:30pm

Carrie Johnson
216.486.6331
crjohnson@hospicewr.org

Horizons IN PERSON

For older adults 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
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 each month
6 to 7 p.m.

Susan Hamme

shamme@hospicewr.org
440.596.3582

Year of Firsts **IN PERSON**

MONTHLY This 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.*

Lakeshore Campus

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

Kelly DiTurno

kdiurno@hospicewr.org
440.414.1737

Grief in the Second Year **IN PERSON**

A year has passed, and you may be wondering 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, beginning in January
6 to 7:30 p.m.

JoDee Coulter

jcoulter@hospicewr.org
330.662.4240

Grupos de apoyo en español

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 a 7 p.m.

Karelys Ortiz Santiago

kortizsantiago@hospicewr.org
440.414.1740

Círculo de Esperanza

Un grupo educativo de apoyo para el duelo de cuatro semanas. Es necesario registrarse. *Por favor, llamar o enviar un email al facilitador de el grupo para más información sobre la localización.*

Miércoles, 15 de febrero al 8 de marzo
4:30 p.m. a 6 p.m.

Karelys Ortiz Santiago

kortizsantiago@hospicewr.org
440.414.1740

Holiday Events

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

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

Lakeshore Campus

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

Register by November 14

Carrie Johnson

crjohnson@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

Tuesday, December 6
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



AMES FAMILY HOSPICE HOUSE

30080 Hospice Way
Westlake, Ohio 44145
440.414.7349 or 835.281.5727

ASHTABULA OFFICE

1166 Lake Avenue
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440.787.2080

NORWALK OFFICE

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Medina, OH 44256
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Sandusky, OH 44870
419.625.5269

STEIN INPATIENT HOSPICE UNIT

1912 Hayes Avenue, Third Floor
Sandusky, OH 44870
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

SAVE THE DATE

ART FOR RELAXATION: MY PERSONAL SYMBOL

Could you sum up your strengths, talents, dreams, and personality in a word? How about a symbol? (Think of the multi-media artist, Prince.) After surviving life's challenges and finding your way through the grief of losing a loved one, what symbol could comfort, strengthen, and inspire you?



VIRTUAL

BOTH Wednesdays
March 8 and 15
6 to 7:30 p.m.

IN PERSON

West Campus
BOTH Tuesdays
March 14 and 21
6:30 to 8 p.m.

IN PERSON

**The Elisabeth Severance
Prentiss Bereavement Center**
BOTH Tuesdays
March 9 and 16
6:30 to 8 p.m.

Healing Arts Workshops WINTER 2022 - 23

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: MEMORY COLLAGE

Our companion animals play important roles in our lives. When they die, our grief is often intense. In this virtual two-session workshop, create a photo collage in honor of your pet(s).

VIRTUAL

West Campus

BOTH Wednesdays:

March 22 and 29

6 to 7:30 p.m.



SNUGGLE BEARS

One of the hardest parts of losing a loved one is the inability to hold them again. Create a simple bear using fleece and/or clothing from your loved one to help you feel nearer to them. Give it to a child, grandchild, or keep it for yourself! *No sewing expertise necessary.*

VIRTUAL

BOTH Wednesdays:

February 8 and 15

6 to 7:30 p.m.

IN PERSON

West Campus

BOTH Tuesdays

February 14 and 21

6:30 to 8 p.m.

IN PERSON

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center

BOTH Thursdays

February 9 and 16

6:30 to 8 p.m.



HOLDING ONTO THE LIGHT

In this workshop, participants will decorate a candle holder to remember the light that our loved ones brought into our lives. We will gather for a short candlelight ceremony at the end to honor them.

VIRTUAL

BOTH Wednesdays:

January 11 and 18

6 to 7:30 p.m.

IN PERSON

West Campus

ONE NIGHT ONLY

Tuesday, January 24

6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

IN PERSON

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center

ONE NIGHT ONLY

Thursday, January 12

6:30 to 8:30 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

Wednesdays

February 1 to March 8

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 each month, 2 to 4 p.m.

A CHILD'S VIEW

By Karelys Ortiz Santiago,
MSW, LSW

Oh, my! It's freezing!

One thing is clear as you go to school, the store, or anywhere else right now – it is CHILLY outside! Your winter coat, boots, gloves and scarf help protect you from the cold. You may also be looking forward to the holidays, winter break, and if you're lucky – a snow day here and there! Lots of things feel the same as they did last winter. But this year might feel different because you're missing someone special who has died. Your feelings of grief might have many layers – sadness, anger, confusion – that make it hard to know how to feel about the holiday season. You might wonder if it's OK to be excited about the holidays, or you might be nervous about how different things will be without your loved one. You may even feel both happy and sad at the same time. All these things are a normal part of grief when someone we love dies. It's important to share how you are feeling with a trusted friend or adult. Talking about your memories and feelings with someone else can help you feel supported and remind you that you are not alone. If you're having trouble putting your feelings into words, try sharing them through art or another creative activity, like these marshmallow feelings snowmen.

What you will need:

- ◆ Toothpicks
- ◆ Regular size marshmallows
- ◆ Different food coloring colors or edible markers

Instructions



Place two marshmallows on a toothpick, leaving enough space to add one more later



On a third marshmallow, draw a face that represents how you are feeling



Place your finished face on top of the toothpick to complete your snowman. Make as many as you'd like to show your different emotions

Try these ideas to help you share your feelings:

Ask other people to make marshmallow snowmen with you – have each person make 3 (or more!)
When everyone is finished, have each person share and describe their snowmen

- ◆ Were any of your emotions the same as someone else's? Which ones were different?
- ◆ Are there times you feel some emotions more than others?
- ◆ Here are a few ways to manage difficult emotions:
 - Talk to someone
 - Listen to music
 - Take a walk (always make sure someone knows where you are)

This year is different than last year and it's OK to feel ALL of your feelings. Take care of yourself and reach out to someone you trust if you are feeling overwhelmed. Sharing your feelings and memories of your loved one during this season are all a part of healing.

300 East 185th Street
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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 REVIEWS

By Lisa Florjancic MA, LSW

Coping with Holiday Grief: Can I Make the Holiday Season Disappear?

By Dora Carpenter and Christina Ferguson

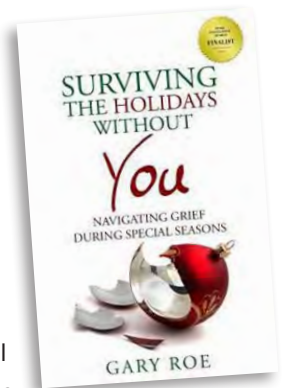
This very practical book offers suggestions for navigating your grief during the holiday season. It is a "quick-read", touching on anticipation of the holiday season, handling the holidays, remembering children who are grieving, moving forward and affirmations. A feature of the book is a "5-Step Recipe for Coping with Holiday Grief". Each step concludes with space for your own thoughts and feelings. Carpenter and Ferguson have created a book that is helpful as well as easy to read.



Surviving The Holidays Without You: Navigating Grief During the Special Seasons

By Gary Roe

According to author Gary Roe, this book, written from a Christian perspective, is intended to be "...a grief survival kit designed for the holidays." Roe breaks the book up into 8 small chapters, each ending with "Thought Questions", giving readers space to write their reflections on what they have read. I found chapters 5 (How To Make Wise Choices), and 6 (Safe People Can Keep You Sane), to be very helpful. The book concludes with additional resources that readers may find useful.



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