Could This Be Grief?

By Margaret D. Bossaller, MA, MSW, LSW

“I have so much to do, but I can’t focus on anything.”
“T’m just so irritable and on edge these days.”
“My stomach always feels unsettled.”
“I find myself snapping at everyone. Even when I know they don’t deserve it.”
“I just can’t seem to rest.”

DO ANY OF THESE EXPERIENCES SOUND FAMILIAR? If so, they may be part of your grief response.

Grief impacts people in every aspect of their lives. We feel the effects of grief emotionally, physically, cognitively, behaviorally, spiritually and socially. But it can be easy to forget the impact of grief as time passes and the demands of life require us to shift our attention. This is especially true when grief crops up in areas we might not associate with the person who died. For example, we might not connect irritability with traffic and other drivers on our daily commute to the grief we feel after a parent or spouse has died. Or we might fail to recognize that we find ourselves getting more anxious when we go out of town, because we have been so accustomed to needing to be available to provide care for the person who died.

Throughout your grief journey it can be important to ask yourself, “could this be grief?” When you experience emotions that seem out of proportion to the events that triggered them, this can be a good time to consider the role that grief is playing in your response. When you notice yourself engaging in behaviors that are new or different for you, or avoiding activities that you typically

see “Could This…” on page 7
“Grieving is a necessary passage and a difficult transition to finally letting go of sorrow - it is not a permanent rest stop.”

— DODINSKY

or children, the month of September is full of excitement. There is the first day of school, the smell of new crayons, new clothes, new lunch boxes and the like.

For others, the time is a bit more nostalgic as they see children at the bus stop and notice holiday decorations popping up in store aisles. Many remember and look back at days gone by. Shorter days and longer nights are close at hand.

The bright falling leaves remind us summer is coming to an end. Fall’s transformations are apparent as we can see the trees change with color and movement. The transition from summer to autumn is amazing and undeniable. There are also transitions in grief that may be more difficult to notice but are equally amazing.

Autumn leaves scatter in the wind to the ground and the branches are left empty. People in grief often feel this emptiness in every level of their being. The empty chair at the dinner table, the unheard laughter at a corny joke, and the lack of touch and intimacy are reminders of our loved one’s absence.

Transitions in grief often feel like a place of uncertainty, where you have left one familiar circumstance but have not quite arrived at the other. This in-between place can be both scary and exiting as you learn new skills, question old beliefs, try new things and explore a “new normal.”

During this life transition, people experience a wide array of feelings from fear, loneliness and anger to guilt, shock and relief. No two people grieve the same way. Be kind to yourself and give yourself permission to grieve.

It takes great strength to lean in and face these feelings of loss. They may leave us feeling exhausted, but ultimately, clearer about what brings meaning and purpose to the present.

With comfort, hope and healing,

Diane Snyder Cowan, MA, MT-BC, CHPCA
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**ADULT RETREAT**

**Healing and Well-Being Through the Heart of a Horse**

Join us for a day of healing and well-being through the compassionate heart of the horse and calming beauty of nature.

**Saturday, October 12, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

Pebble Ledge Ranch
9725 Cedar Road, Novelty

Register today! Please call 216.486.6838 to register by October 1.
A MILLION Questions!
Every One is Worth Asking

When someone you love dies, there seem to be a million questions and so few answers.

Parents, teachers, counselors, friends and family are all there to offer support and listen to the questions, but sometimes they don’t have clear answers. And, no, you are not crazy for asking the questions—they are an important part of your journey through grief. Here are some questions you may have:

- Why did this happen?
- Will I die?
- Will someone else I love die too?
- Will mom/dad ever stop being sad?
- Where is my loved one now?
- Why did this happen?
- Will the hurting ever stop?
- Will I die?
- Can I still play and have fun?
- Was the death my fault?

Healing from the death of your special person is a long journey. As you walk along the path you may find answers that will comfort you. Creating a memory journal can allow you to ask some of your difficult questions, help you to say goodbye and recall important memories to hold onto forever. Here are some ways to begin:

Write a letter to your loved one describing important times you spent together. Or, write a goodbye letter, telling your loved one how much they mean to you and describing your life since they died.

Draw a picture of what you are feeling. Or, use a camera to take pictures of places and things that remind you of your special person.

Write a poem using the letters of your loved one’s name to begin each new line of the poem.

Write in your journal about how you felt following the death of your loved one. Add entries every few days or weeks to see how your feelings change.

Create a page that lists the loving people who remain in your life to support you.

Choose special readings and photographs of you and your loved one to put in the journal.

Draw a mandala describing the many feelings you experience each day. A mandala is a large circle with special marks inside to represent your feelings, such as a sad face or a smiley face, a stick figure jumping or lying down, a face with tears or two stick figures hugging.

When you have filled your journal and it feels complete, work on the cover. Do you want to paint it, paste a special photograph of your loved one or make a collage of pictures and words cut out from magazines? Create a cover that represents your relationship with your loved one. Pick a special place to keep your journal.

Most of all, remember:

Every question is worth asking. Ask for what you need. Know that you are loved. And good things WILL happen again.

A Special Thanks

Grief Services in Lake County
The United Way of Lake County
Grief Services for Schools
Ridgecliff Foundation
Wenk Family Charitable Foundation

Together We Can and Riding Through Grief
Conway Family Foundation
Leonard Krieger Fund of the Cleveland Foundation
Christ Child Society of the Western Reserve
The Goldner Family

The Healing Arts Program in Cuyahoga County
Cuyahoga Arts & Culture
Bereavement Support Groups

Unless otherwise noted, our support groups are open to anyone who has had a loved one die. Groups are subject to change. Please call to verify time and location.

The Aftermath: Grief & the Conflicted Relationship

SPECIAL This is a four-week series exploring the feelings of grief due to a conflicted relationship. Registration is required.

Lakeshore Campus
Monday, October 7 – 28, 6 to 7:30 p.m.
Register by October 1
Tensie Holland 216.383.3741

Circle of Hope

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

Ashtabula Office
Wednesdays, October 30 – November 27, 10 to 11:30 a.m.
Susan Hamme 440.596.3582

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
Thursdays, December 9 – 12, 6 to 7:30 p.m.
Shawn Eigenbrode 216.486.6364

The Robertson Bereavement Center
Thursdays, December 9 – 12, 6 to 7:30 p.m.
JoDee Coulter 330.662.4240

Solon
Advent Lutheran Church
5525 Harper Road, Solon
Thursdays, October 10 – November 14, 6:30 to 8 p.m.
Margaret Bossaller 330.241.6282

West Campus
Mondays, September 16 – October 21, 6:30 to 8 p.m.
Judy Beckman 440.414.1731

Circle of Hope

Art Therapy Edition

SERIES Six-week art and educational support group for adults who have had a loved one die.

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
Wednesdays, October 23 – November 27, 10 a.m. to Noon
Mollie Borgione 216.486.6544 or mborgione@hospicewr.org

Restoring Hope: When a Loved One Dies From an Overdose

SERIES Six-week group for those adults who have had a loved one die from an overdose. Registration is required.

The LCADA Way
Avon Lake Wellness Center
525 Avon Belden Road, Suite 1, Avon Lake
Thursdays, October 17 – November 21, 6:30 to 8 p.m.
Register by October 11
Judy Beckman 440.414.1731

Hope & Healing

MONTHLY An on-going monthly support group for grieving adults. Registration is not required. Please call facilitator for more information.

Lakeshore Campus
Third Tuesday of the month <NEW DAY>
6 to 7:30 p.m.
April Ratcliffe 216.383.3782

The Robertson Bereavement Center
Second Tuesday of the month, 3 to 4 p.m.
JoDee Coulter 330.662.4240

East Side
Mentor Public Library
8215 Mentor Avenue, Mentor
First Tuesday of the month <NEW DAY>
10 to 11 a.m.
Lisa Florjancic 440.853.5365

Portage County
United Church of Christ
1400 E. Main Street, Kent
Second Tuesday of the month, 1 to 2:30 p.m.
Margaret Bossaller 330.241.6282

Parent Loss

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

West Campus
Second Tuesday of the month, 6:30 to 8 p.m.
Judy Beckman 440.414.1731

Parents Together

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

Lakeshore Campus
Second Wednesday of the month, 2:30 to 4 p.m.
Shawn Eigenbrode 216.486.6364

Hopeful Hearts

MONTHLY For anyone age 60 and over who has experienced the death of someone special in the past two years.

Avon Lake
Holy Spirit Parish Center
410 Lear Road, Avon Lake
Fourth Tuesday of the month, 1 to 2:30 p.m.
Mary Ellen Jordan 440.414.1737

Child Loss

NEW For parents who’ve experienced the death of a child aged 18 or younger. This is an opportunity to focus on your grief, find support, and feel community with those who have experienced similar loss. Please call to register.

West Campus
First Wednesday of the month, 6 to 7:30 p.m.
Elizabeth Mason 440.414.6781 or emason@hospicewr.org

Women’s Workshop

SPECIAL A periodic workshop for women who have lost their partner, significant other or spouse. Please call for date and to register.

Panera Bread
19705 Center Ridge Road, Rocky River
6 to 8 p.m.
Judy Beckman 440.414.1731
### Coloring for Comfort  **SPECIAL**
Join us for an evening of coloring for comfort overlooking the lake.

**Lakeshore Campus**  
Thursday, October 10, 6 to 7:30 p.m.  
Register by September 30  
Lisa Florjancic 440.853.5364

### Journaling Group  **NEW**  **SERIES**
Combine the benefits of a support group with the coping method of journaling in this six-week support group. Anyone who has experienced the death of a loved one is welcome to join. Please bring a notebook and pen! Please call to register.

**West Campus**  
Thursdays, September 19 – October 24  
1 to 2:30 p.m.  
Elizabeth Mason 440.414.6781 or emason@hospicewr.org

### Book Discussion  **NEW**  **SERIES**
Over the course of three weeks the group will discuss The Year of Magical Thinking by Joan Didion. Please call to register and bring your own copy of the book.

**West Campus**  
Thursdays, October 3 – 17, 6:30 to 8 p.m.  
Mary Ellen Jordan 440.414.1737

### Grief 101  **SPECIAL**
This one-hour class is for those who have experienced the death of a loved one in the past six months. Learn about signs and symptoms of grief as well as helpful strategies. Registration is required.

**Ashtabula Office**  
Thursday, October 24, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.  
Register by October 18  
Susan Hamme 440.596.3582

**East Campus**  
Thursday, October 10, 3 to 4 p.m.  
Register by October 7  
Lisa Florjancic 440.853.5364

### Rainbow Bridge Walk 2019  **Pet Memorial**  **SPECIAL**
Animals hold a special place in our hearts. It’s natural to grieve when these treasured friends die. You may bring your current pet on a non-retractable leash. To register or submit a photo for the online tribute visit rainbowbridgewalk.com.

**Sunday, September 15**  
Buckeye Woods Park  
6335 Wedgewood Road (St. Rte 162)  
Medina, OH  
Registration starts 12:30 p.m.  
Ceremony begins at 1 p.m.

### Hope for the Holidays  **SPECIAL**
An adult bereavement group providing techniques, dialogue and support for those grieving through the holiday season. Registration is required.

**East Campus**  
Thursday, November 21, 5 to 6 p.m.  
Register by November 18  
Lisa Florjancic 440.853.5365

### Family Movie Night  **SPECIAL**
Please join us for a viewing and short discussion of the movie Up. Pizza and snacks will be provided. The movie will start at 6:15 p.m., please arrive early enough to grab food and get settled in.

**West Campus**  
Wednesday, October 16, 6 to 8:30 p.m.  
Register by October 11  
Mary Ellen Jordan 440.414.1737

### Spousal/Partner Loss
Monthly support groups for adults who have experienced the death of a spouse, partner, or significant other. Groups are open-ended and on-going. Registration is not required.

### New Beginnings  **MONTHLY**
For adults in middle life.

**Ashtabula Office**  
Thursday, October 24, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.  
Register by October 18  
Susan Hamme 440.596.3582

**East Campus**  
Thursday, October 10, 3 to 4 p.m.  
Register by October 7  
Lisa Florjancic 440.853.5364

### Horizons  **MONTHLY**
For adults in late life.

**Mayfield Village Baptist Church**  
6500 Highland Road, Mayfield  
Second Tuesday of the month, 1 to 2:30 p.m.  
Kathryn Harrison Brown 216.486.6331

### New Journey  **MONTHLY**
For adults of any age.

**Ashtabula**  
St. Paul’s Lutheran Church  
89 East Satin Street, Jefferson  
First Thursday of the month, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.  
Susan Hamme 440.596.3582

**The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center**  
Fourth Thursday of the month, 10 to 11:30 a.m.  
Kathryn Harrison Brown 216.486.6331

### Yoga Matters  **ONGOING**
Give yourself the gift of time and attention. Yoga helps you tune into yourself and take care of your physical, emotional and spiritual needs. Designed for caregivers and bereaved. Please call 216.486.6838.

**Lakeshore Campus**  
Wednesdays, 5:30 to 6:45 p.m.  
Fee: $40/month or $12 Drop-in (sliding scale fee available)
Healing Arts Workshops FALL 2019

Healing Arts Workshops provide grieving people with a creative outlet for their grief and are open to the community. No art experience is necessary. Please call Mollie Borgione at 216.486.6544 or email at mborgione@hospicewr.org to register no later than four days in advance of workshop date. Suggested $5.00 donation for supplies.

Autumn Leaves
What autumn memories do you have of your loved one? Using shapes of real leaves, you’ll create autumn leaves out of paper clay and paint them with watercolors.

Christ Episcopal Church
3445 Warrensville Center Rd, Shaker Heights
Wednesday, September 11, 6 to 8 p.m.
Please note the time.

West Campus
Tuesday, September 17, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
Thursday, September 19, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Art and Music for Relaxation: Day of the Dead
We’ll explore the traditional Mexican and Latin American celebration of Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead). Participants will decorate a small skull (as a representation of the traditional sugar skulls) in memory of loved ones. The skulls will be placed around a traditional altar and attendees will have an opportunity to share memories.

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
Thursday, November 7, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

 Fabric and Feelings
ON-GOING A group where participants use fabric techniques such as quilting (sometimes with clothing from loved ones) or photo transfer to create quilts, pillows, dolls and other types of lasting memories. Sewing expertise is not necessary.

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
Weekly – Thursdays, 2 to 4 p.m.

Kids Art: Memory Tree
We make memories with our loved ones by playing with them, listening to their stories, and learning through experiences with them. What memories do you have of your loved one in the fall? Create a tree of memories that you can hang in your room. Children ages 6+ are invited to bring family members along for this workshop. Light refreshments provided.

West Campus
Tuesday, November 5, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
Tuesday, November 12, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Mandala Plates
At the first session, participants will create their own mandala design and paint both sides of a bisque (unglazed china) dinner plate. The plates will be kiln-fired during the week so we can use them for our potluck meal at the second session, which will be devoted to sharing stories. Bring a favorite food to share.

West Campus
Tuesday, October 15 and 22, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
MUST ATTEND BOTH TUESDAYS

Christ Episcopal Church
3445 Warrensville Center Rd, Shaker Heights
Wednesday, October 16 and 23, 6 to 8 p.m.
Please note the time.

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
Thursday, October 17 and 24, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
MUST ATTEND BOTH THURSDAYS

Holiday Family Night: Revolving Snowflakes
These six-sided paper “kaleidoscopes” are fun to make using winter scenes from greeting cards, or magazine or calendar photos. The completed piece will have four scenes to rotate through! Please bring along scenes of your own or use ours, which should be 5 x 5 inches to fit properly.

Christ Episcopal Church
3445 Warrensville Center Rd, Shaker Heights
Wednesday, December 11, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Please note the time.

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
Thursday, December 12, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

West Campus
Tuesday, December 17, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
What Does Love Have to Do With It?

By Judy Beckman, MA, LSW, CT

What DOES love have to do with it? Is love a second-hand emotion, as the Tina Turner song says? Love is at the root of our feelings when someone we love dies. The death of a loved one elicits feelings of sadness, anger, guilt and a myriad of other emotions. We yearn for the physical presence that is no longer available. Some of us wish that we were no longer present in this life—our hearts are shattered, and we fear that we will never be able to put the pieces back together. We may ask ourselves, “Is love worth it?”

While no one can answer that question for another, I believe that the memories of love can help to heal a broken heart. These memories can aid us in having a continued relationship with our loved one who has died as well as open our hearts for a more loving relationship with ourselves and others. We can even use our loving memories to enhance our lives and to create the greatest legacy of all—the legacy of love.

“What the most important thing in life is to learn how to give out love, and to let it come in.”

-MORRIE SCHWARTZ

I often must remind myself that the reason I feel immense sadness when I lose someone in my life is because I love them and have felt love from them. While we do the difficult work of grief, we can remind ourselves that the reason we are in so much pain is because we love. Sometimes, simply recognizing that love is at the root of our mourning can help lessen the intensity of the pain and sadness we experience.

We don’t stop loving someone because they have died. And yes, it does hurt to love and lose, but where would we be without love? How do we get to a place where love takes over? Many of us who work in the grief field have come to believe that there are ways to learn to live with the pain of loss so that love can once more be available to us. Some ideas are:

- Talk with others in a support group or with our friends and family.
- Create ways to honor our loved one’s life.
- Reach out to help others.
- Share our memories of love through telling our stories again and again.
- Continue to learn about the connections between love and loss.
- And remember - that what love has to do with it is EVERYTHING!
BOOK REVIEW

By JoDee Coulter, MT-BC, CT

**I Will Remember You: What to Do When Someone You Love Dies - A Guidebook Through Grief for Teens** by Laura Dower with an introduction and commentary by Elena Lister, M.D.

Experiencing the death of a loved one as a teenager can be paralyzing, as it’s a time that is already filled with powerful emotions, hormonal changes, feelings of being alone and trying to define one’s self. In *I Will Remember You*, authors Laura Dower and Elena Lister work together to create an avenue for teens to understand their unique response to loss and encourage self-expression to aid in healing.

“Think of this book as a grief map. It helps you to see the path, but it can’t tell you where to go.”

Published in 2001, *I Will Remember You* helps readers to identify loss and explore “what death means to them,” while addressing different religious and cultural considerations. The authors explore emotions and coping skills, as well as concerns related to different kinds of losses: sibling, friend, parent, pet, etc. The reader can start from the beginning or skip through to the topics that are most appropriate for them.

This book is interwoven with poetry and journal entries from teens who have experienced death as well as famous quotes of inspiration and hope. “The Doctor Is In” sections offer suggestions for coping that were helpful to Dr. Lister and her family after the death of her young daughter. “Try This” sections include journaling exercises, visualizations and other creative ways of expressing grief.

All in all, this is a wonderful book for teens and will help them realize that they are not alone on this journey.