I Am No Longer The Caregiver…

By Kathryn Harrison Brown, MA, PC

Perhaps for days, months, or years, you have provided care for your sick loved one who has now died. While you were the caregiver your routine may have changed considerably: you adjusted your work schedule, rescheduled your own appointments, restructured childcare provisions, neglected your own health concerns, or just had no time for yourself, period. And now that your loved one is deceased, what do you do with this new found time?

Right after the death, you may need to do nothing. Your life has been busy and chaotic and you just need to breathe. The sense of relief some people feel after the death can be twofold: the struggle your loved one endured is over; and if we’re honest, there is relief for yourself. Although caregiving is rewarding, it is also physically, emotionally, and spiritually exhausting. But there is no reason to feel guilty if you feel this sense of relief.

And right when you think you cannot do anything else for a while, you may be forced to return to work after your bereavement time is over. Or you may be faced with seeking employment for the first time in a while due to financial issues. You may also need this time to take care of health matters you put on hold while caring for your loved one. Some people may schedule a much-needed vacation and focus on getting some well deserved relaxation.

Some families are so appreciative of the care their loved one received at a facility that they choose to volunteer there. Others choose to volunteer at hospice if the person was there. While this is a great idea, please allow yourself time to do your own grief work before you try to help others. If you don’t, the client’s needs could get lost in your own desire/need to share your story.

Perhaps you’ve wanted to take a class that is of interest to you but you haven’t had time because of your responsibilities. Some colleges offer classes for audit or for senior citizens and this is a great way to learn something new you’ve wanted to know more about. There are also special lectures on various topics that may benefit you, held at community centers.

So, think of the things you said you would do if you only had the time. Now you have it, even though most people say they would gladly assume the caregiver role again if they only had their loved one back. Unfortunately, that choice is not ours to make. Whatever you choose, focus on taking good care of yourself. Treat yourself as you would a friend who has been through what you have. Your love and caring made a difference in the life of the loved one for whom you cared. Now, give some of this back to yourself.
Just when we think that the bleakness of winter will never leave, we begin to spot snowdrops, crocuses and daffodils. Spring slowly unveils itself. We know that in just a few weeks the flower beds will start to bloom, the trees will be full of new buds and the birds will return to our yards. Spring is a time that many folks think about gardens. Whether you are a master gardener or someone who putters around the flower beds, gardening can be a helpful tool for working through your grief and loss. Working with the earth is a great way to connect with nature, expend energy in a positive way, and create something beautiful.

A remembrance garden is a wonderful tribute for a deceased loved one. It’s an undertaking that can be done individually or by the whole family. The garden becomes a quiet, relaxing retreat, a space for reflection and remembering. If you don’t have space for a garden, you can be creative and place plants on a deck, porch patio, balcony or steps.

Here are a few ideas to get you started:
1. Decide on your budget. This will determine the size and type of garden decor. It can be as small as one bush or tree or as big as a baseball field.
2. Choose plants that are suited to your area. If your area is shady, pick plants that are hardy in the shade. Your local gardening/landscape supplier will be helpful in selecting appropriate plants.
3. Choose plants that have special meaning to your loved one, or that have colors or scents that evoke memories. Certain plants have certain meanings. For example, forget-me-nots stand for memories, rosemary means remembrance, and daisies suggest innocence.

There are many parallels between grief and gardening. We can learn to take care of ourselves as we take care of our gardens. We gain insight from planting, watering, pruning and watching plants grow. The gardener waits for the beauty of the bloom; the grieving anticipates the return of the beautiful memories. As one bereaved person exclaimed… “With gardening, there is always next year. There is always hope.”

We continue to be here with comfort, hope and healing.

Diane Snyder Cowan, MA, MT-BC, CHPCA
216.486.6312
dscowan@hospicewr.org

“Everything that slows us down and forces patience, everything that sets us back into the slow circles of nature is a help. Gardening is an instrument of grace.”
—Mary Sarton
Grief is Hard Work
By Mollie Postotnik, MA, ATR, PC

Grief can be exhausting. You may not have the energy to do the things you did prior to the death of your loved one. At times it may seem that losing them is more than you can bear. You may feel that life will never be enjoyable again. You may question what “normal” is. You might feel that you are the only one who has ever felt like this. Perhaps you notice changes in your eating and/or drinking habits. Maybe you are having problems sleeping or are sleeping much more than usual. You may wonder if there is something wrong with you.

Just know that you are not alone in these experiences! These are just a few common grief reactions and they will eventually pass as you actively participate in your grief process. What does that mean? It means that you will need to experience your grief physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually, as a holistic process. Change comes with loss. Depending on the role of your loved one in your life and the nature of your relationship, the circumstances of your life may change radically after your loss. Physical activities like gardening, lifting weights, running, taking long walks, yoga, and other types of movement help in negotiating through the feelings and to relieve stress.

Emotionally and mentally, you may find it helpful to talk to others who have also experienced the death of a loved one. People who have been there understand more deeply where you are. Sometimes people say things that are not helpful to those who are grieving. It’s important to remember that, as a grieving person, you have a right to your feelings, no matter what anyone else thinks. Everyone grieves differently and for varying lengths of time. You need supportive people around you that will give you the space to grieve and allow you to express your feelings of sadness, anger, guilt, and even joy as you work through the grieving process. You may also need time to process your feelings on an inner level. There are a variety of ways of doing this: listening to soothing or inspirational music, journaling, writing poetry, meditating, or working with your hands to create art.

Spiritually, your ideas of how life works may have been damaged by the loss of your loved one. Many people question their beliefs after the death of a loved one. You may not know what to believe anymore. You may no longer feel that you have a purpose. Talking these things over with your priest, rabbi, minister, spiritual advisor or counselor, or your best friend will help you sort things out. Spending time communing with nature or in places or spaces where you feel a spiritual connection is also beneficial.

Give yourself the opportunities to grieve on all levels. Information on the many support groups offered by the Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center can be found in the center of this publication.

The Vista Walk and Tribute Walks
Remember Your Loved One

The gardens at David Simpson Hospice House and Ames Family Hospice House offer beautiful outdoor spaces for meditation and reflection. We invite you to add your own memory to the Vista Walk on the eastside or to the Tribute Walk in Westlake by purchasing a paving brick and writing your own personal dedication. For more information, please call the Development Team at 855.475.0245 or visit hospicewr.org/tributes.
**MASSAGE THERAPY**  
*Providing Comfort Through Touch*

Stress is a normal part of life. As you move along grief’s journey, you may face many challenges. Massage therapy is a tool useful in helping to cope with stress, anxiety and fatigue. To schedule an appointment, call Felicia Dunlop at 216.486.6335. All appointments will be held at The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center.

Basic Fees:  $25 for 30 minutes  $50 for 60 minutes

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**YOGA MATTERS**

Give yourself the gift of time and attention. The practice of Yoga helps you tune into yourself and take care of your physical, emotional and spiritual needs. Classes held at Hospice of the Western Reserve Lakeshore Campus. For more information please call 216.486.6838.

On-going Yoga Class designed for caregivers and bereaved.  
**Wednesdays, 5:30 to 6:45 p.m.**
Fee: $40/month or $12 Drop-in (sliding scale fee available)

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**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. Call to verify time and location.*

**Adult Support Groups**

**CIRCLE OF HOPE SERIES**

A six-week educational support group for adults who have had a loved one die. Registration is required. Please call the facilitator listed below for more information or to register.

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center  
**Wednesdays, March 26 – April 30, 10:00 to 11:30 am.**
Diana Battles 216.486.6364

Lakeshore Campus  
**Mondays, May 5 – June 16, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.**  
(No group on May 26)  
Tensie Holland 216.383.3741

Lakewood Office  
**Mondays, April 7 – May 12, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.**  
Judy Beckman 216.383.2222 ext. 1114

Mentor Office  
**Tuesdays, April 8 – May 13, 12:30 to 2:00 p.m.**  
Lisa Florjancic 216.383.2222 ext. 1052

Warrensville Heights Office  
**Tuesdays, April 8 – May 13, 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.**  
Mary Murphy 216.454.0399

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**HOPE & HEALING**

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

**Lakeshore Campus**
**3rd Monday of the month, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.**
April Ratcliffe 216.383.3782

**Mentor Office**
**2nd Tuesday of the month, 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.**
Lisa Florjancic 216.383.2222 ext. 1052

**Warrensville Heights Office**
**3rd Thursday of the month, 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. Or 2nd Tuesday of the month, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.**
Vicki Jackson 216.383.2222 ext. 1197

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**BRANCHES OF HOPE**

This series is for those who have experienced the death of both parents. This group will help you move forward while honoring your parents’ memory and identifying their gifts to you. Registration is required.

**Ashtabula Office**
**Thursdays, April 24 – May 15, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.**
Susan Hamme 440.997.6619

**Westlake**
St. John Medical Center, Community Outreach  
29160 Center Ridge Drive, Suite R, Group room D  
**Tuesdays, April 1 – April 15, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.**
JoDee Coulter 216.383.2222 ext. 1301

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**PARENT LOSS**

A monthly support group for adults adjusting to life after the death of a parent.

**Lakewood Office**
**2nd Tuesday of the month, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.**
Judy Beckman 216.383.2222 ext. 1114

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**PARENTS TOGETHER**

A four week group for parents who have experienced the death of an adult child. Register by April 28.

**Lakewood Office**
**Thursdays, May 1 – May 22, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.**
Judy Beckman 216.383.2222 ext. 1114
**PARENTS TOGETHER “Monthly”**
A monthly support group for parents who have experienced the death of an adult child.

Warrensville Heights Office
2nd Thursday of the month, 2:30 to 4:00 p.m.
Vicki Jackson 216.383.2222 ext. 1197

**HOPEFUL HEARTS**
A monthly grief support group for anyone age 60 and over who has experienced the death of someone special in the past two years.

Holy Spirit Family Center
410 Lear Road, Avon Lake
4th Tuesday of the month, 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.
JoDee Coulter 216.383.2222 ext. 1301

**Spousal Loss Groups**

**MINI CIRCLE OF HOPE**
FOR SPOUSAL LOSS
A four week support group for spouses, partners or significant others ages 55 and older. Registration is required.

Ashtabula Office
Thursdays, March 20 – April 10, 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Susan Hamme 440.997.6619

**Workshop**

**WOMEN’S WORKSHOP**
For women who have lost a partner, significant other, or spouse. Come for discussion, support and education. Light refreshments will be provided. Registration is required.

Lakewood Office
Tuesday, April 15, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Judy Beckman 216.383.2222 ext. 1114

**NEW BEGINNINGS**
A monthly support group for young widows and widowers (ages 55 and younger). This group is open-ended and on-going. Registration is not required.

Westlake
St. John Medical Center, Westshore Professional Building
29160 Center Ridge Road, Suite R
2nd Wednesday of the month, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.
JoDee Coulter 216.383.2222 ext. 1301

**NEW JOURNEY**
A support group for widows and widowers of any age, adjusting to life without their spouse. This group is open ended and on-going. Registration is not required.

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
2nd Thursday of the month, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.
Diana Battles 216.486.6364

**HORIZONS**
A monthly support group for the older adult widow and widower. This group is open ended and on-going.

Mayfield Village Baptist Church
6500 Highland Road, Mayfield
2nd Tuesday of the month, 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.
Kathryn Harrison Brown 216.486.6331

Lorain County Community College
Spitzer Conference Center, Room 113
1st Friday of the month, 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Laurie Mason 216.383.2222 ext. 1359

**Children & Family Support Groups**

**KIDZ ART: FRAMES OF LOVE**
Kids (ages 6 and up), bring an adult along for an evening painting and decorating a wood frame in remembrance of your loved one! Bring a story of you and your loved one to share. Refreshments provided.

Westlake Center for Community Services
29694 Center Ridge Road, Westlake, 44145
Tuesday, March 11, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
Wednesday, March 19, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

**Mother’s Day Tea**
For those who have experienced the death of their mother or mother figure, please join us for a Mother’s Day tea where we will honor the memory of those relationships. Call Felicia Dunlop at 216.486.6335 to register by April 25.

Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
Saturday, May 3, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

**Healing Arts Workshops, Spring 2014**

Funded in part by residents of Cuyahoga County through Cuyahoga Arts & Culture

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

*Healing Arts Workshops Continued on Page 6 >>*
ART FOR RELAXATION: KIRIGAMI
Kirigami is a variation on Origami, the Japanese art of paper-folding. Kirigami involves cutting concentric paper circles in interesting ways, then curling and manipulating the paper and the cut out parts to make an intricate 3-D paper sculpture. It looks complicated, but is simple to make. The focus will be on the creative process.

Warrensville Heights Office
Wednesday, March 12, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Westlake Center for Community Services
29694 Center Ridge Road, Westlake, 44145
Tuesday, March 18, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
Thursday, March 20, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

FLOWERS OF HOPE
In hopeful anticipation of “May flowers,” participants will use soft pastels to “paint” a flower close up ala Georgia O’Keeffe on velour paper. The velour surface holds the color so that the pastel dust is kept to a minimum. If you are doubting your ability to draw a flower, don’t worry—you will be pleasantly surprised at the result!

Westlake Center for Community Services
29694 Center Ridge Road, Westlake, 44145
Tuesday, April 8, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Warrensville Heights Office
Wednesday, April 9, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
Thursday, April 10, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

WHISPERS IN THE WIND
The tinkling of wind chimes can be like the voice of a loved one whispering to us. Attend this two-part workshop to create a ceramic wind chime to honor a loved one. The first session will consist of painting clay shapes for the wind chime. At the second session, we will assemble them.

Westlake Center for Community Services
29694 Center Ridge Road, Westlake, 44145
BOTH Tuesdays, May 6 and 13, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Warrensville Heights Office
BOTH Wednesdays, May 7 and 14, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
BOTH Thursdays, May 8 and 15, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

MONTHLY SCRAPBOOK NIGHT
Remember that scrapbook of your loved one(s) that you never got around to finishing? No matter where you are in the process or if you haven’t yet begun, come join us! Bring your photos (copies of originals is recommended), handwritten notes, poetry, etc. Scrapbooks and some embellishments provided.

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
1st Thursday of the month, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

FABRIC AND FEELINGS
A group where participants use fabric techniques such as quilting (sometimes involving 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, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.
Mollie Postotnik 216.486.6544

Ames Family Hospice House – Art Studio
Monthly - 4th Wednesday of the month, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Mollie Postotnik 216.486.6544

LGBT ART THERAPY EVENT: Celebration Bowls
This event is for members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender Community who have experienced the death of a loved one.

Come celebrate the connection with your loved one! Shape, carve and paint a paper clay bowl to reflect your relationship.

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
Tuesday April 29, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Dear Kids,

Do you have a friend or loved one who was a victim of cyber bullying and attempted or completed suicide? If the answer is yes, you are not alone. It is normal to feel scared, angry or even guilty. Cyber bullying has become a major problem in the United States and throughout the world. Cyber bullying is when someone repeatedly makes fun of another person online or posts something negative about someone through social networks, email or text message. When a friend or family member dies by suicide because they were bullied, it is normal to question “why” or “what could I have done to stop them.” You may feel guilty because you read or heard the negative things that were said about the person. You may be angry at the person who died or the person who bullied them. You may feel scared or worry about someone else who is being bullied. If you are experiencing any of the feelings listed above it is important to share your thoughts with a parent, teacher, school counselor or trusted adult. Talking about your feelings can help you feel better. There are many ways to remember your loved one. You can help yourself by joining a grief support group, you can honor the person’s life by getting involved in an anti-bullying program and you can befriend someone who is being bullied. Above all, take the time to laugh and remember the good times you shared together.

It is never easy to cope with the death of a close friend or a loved one. Watch a funny movie, exercise, listen to music, write in a journal, draw pictures, and give yourself plenty of time to heal.

Warm Regards,
Dominique Butler, School Liaison

CHILDREN’S BEREAVEMENT CAMPS
For more information or to register, please contact the bereavement center at 216.486.6838 or email thebereavementcenter@hospicewr.org

Together We Can A 3-day bereavement day camp for children ages 6-14 who have experienced the death of a loved one. Camp is expressive in nature and led by experienced facilitators in art, music, play and nature activities.
August 5 – 7, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Red Oak Camp, Kirtland, Ohio

RIDING THROUGH GRIEF
This camp is offered in collaboration with Fieldstone Farm Therapeutic Riding Center and is for children ages 8-12 who have experienced the death of a loved one. Through riding and working with horses, campers explore grief issues supported by trained counselors.
June 23 - June 27, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. OR July 28 - August 1, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

TEEN RETREAT
Join us teens ages 14 to 17 that have experienced the death of a loved one in our first teen retreat. We invite you to share your experiences, make new friends, celebrate and honor the life of your loved one.
Saturday, April 12, 12:00 -4:00 p.m.
Go green! If you would like your copy of About Grief emailed to you, please send your email address to Diane Snyder Cowan at DSCowan@HospiceWR.org

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The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center 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.

Embraced by the Light
By Betty J. Eadie

“What happens after death?” “Why are we here?” These are some of the most common questions people ask. There are as many differing theories as there are beliefs and religions. Yet we still want to know.

In Embraced by the Light, Betty J. Eadie shares her near-death experience from the viewpoint of a Christian. She speaks of an “enormous energy” that encompassed her. She describes what it was like to enter “the tunnel” and who was there to greet her when she “crossed over.” She tells about the knowledge she gained, and why she believes we are here.

Through her witness, Eadie is able to come to terms with the many experiences she encounters after her near-death event. She states, “We are here for an earthly experience. All we can do is be family. All we can do is love.”

This book was given to me by the family member of a patient at Hospice of the Western Reserve. When her parents died, she felt comforted by the thoughts Eadie shared about our purpose in life and after. The book is easy to read and offers some very interesting concepts.