Mindfulness is a buzzword these days but what is it and how does it relate to grief? Mindfulness is the practice of purposely focusing your attention on the present moment and accepting it without judgment. For many people, grief can be both physically and mentally exhausting, and practicing mindfulness has been shown to improve both mental and physical health.

Mindfulness can ease your physical symptoms of grief, help calm your mind, regulate difficult emotions and improve your ability to focus on the present. It can increase compassion toward yourself and others and help make meaning of the loss.

There are many ways to practice mindfulness. All are a form of meditation. Some folks learn to meditate on their own by following instructions in books or recordings and others benefit from the support of an instructor or group. It takes practice to become comfortable with these techniques. If one method doesn’t work for you, try another.

The goal of any mindfulness practice is to achieve an alert state of focused relaxation by paying attention to thoughts and sensations without judgment. Accept whatever arises in your awareness at each moment. Above all, mindfulness involves being kind and forgiving toward yourself.

Grief is a powerful emotion and can be overwhelming. Mindfulness can help navigate the vast feelings of grief. You may find that you can allow the grief to rise up, observe it, hold it intentionally in awareness and notice that grief ebbs—and flows.

We are here with comfort, hope and healing.

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

“Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.”

– Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D, Wherever You Go, There You Are
Misguided Ground Rules of Grief

By Laurie Mason, MSSA, LISW-S

When someone we love dies, we expect—and often receive—wonderful support. However, many grieving people discover misguided “grief ground rules” which society seems to place upon them.

One unwritten ground rule: **Life should return to normal shortly after the funeral.** Grieving people often receive caring support just after the death, during the funeral and for some days thereafter. However, friends and relatives begin to return to their lives, forgetting that the grieving person’s life will never be “normal” again. Mrs. S was very close to her mother who died. At first, her family and friends were quite supportive. They prepared food and brought it to the house. Her husband took over some of the household chores. However, after about a month, her friends stopped calling. She felt sad to think they might have forgotten her. Her husband returned to their previous routine, and expected his wife to do so as well. He would become irritated with her for not doing things around the house as she had before her mother had died.

Another unwritten ground rule: **Widows/widowers must voluntarily give up associating with their couple friends.** Sometimes the death of someone close to you can be a reminder of your own mortality. Because of this, couple friends of a widow or widower may avoid the surviving spouse. This is often very hurtful to the grieving person who really needs their support more than ever. Mrs. J’s husband died and for a few weeks the couples with whom she and her husband socialized were supportive. However, after a few months, she was no longer invited to the regular gatherings with her couple friends. When she asked about this, she was told that her friends did not want her to feel uncomfortable being together with them without her husband. Mrs. J. realized it was her friends who were uncomfortable with her presence.

As a family member or friend of someone who has suffered a loss, avoid these false “ground rules” which harm more than help. Since everyone’s grief journey is personal, it is best to support the bereaved in whatever way is most helpful to him or her. If you don’t know how, ask. Make sure the support is something you can be comfortable giving. Recognize your own limitations, and don’t promise things you can’t deliver. Just being present and available may be the best gift you can offer a grieving person.

“The sorry truth is you can walk your feet to blisters, walk til kingdom-com, and you never will outpace your grief.”

–Sue Monk Kidd, *The Invention of Wings*
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 our tribute page online at tributes.hospicewr.org.

Ask Dr. Bob

Robert Ballantine, MSW, DCC, D.MIN., LISW-S

Dr. Bob,

My husband recently died and winter is quickly approaching. He did something to the cars to get them ready for the cold. I don’t know what to do with anti-freeze. What type of battery does the car take? The house is so quiet. Why cook when it is only me? Nothing is the same!

– Ms. Not Adjusting Well

Dear Ms. Not Adjusting Well,

The number of changes that occur after a death can be overwhelming. William Worden in his book, Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy, identifies four tasks that he feels a person needs to go through on their grief journey. What you are experiencing is task number three, “adjust to an environment which the deceased is missing”. This can be the most difficult task in one’s grief journey. You not only lose the individual, but, all of the roles and responsibilities that were undertaken by the deceased. For many, this can create a major learning curve as you attempt to take on those new roles, especially when our mind can barely function anyway.

When a spouse or partner dies, the atmosphere in the home can change drastically. I visited a client who was living alone after his wife died. Though this visit was nearly twenty years ago, I remember it as if it was yesterday. At one point he looked at me and said, “Bob, the silence is deafening.” I remarked, “It must be hard not having any conversations with your wife.” He replied, “Oh, Bob, it’s so much more than that. You don’t hear a pot or pan rattle in the kitchen…or a sneeze…or anything. The silence is deafening.”

Who do you share your joys and frustrations with now? Who is there to throw ideas at? All the conversations about what you want to accomplish together are now dreams of the past that will never happen. And you are right…cooking for one is not the same as cooking for someone you love. Even going to the grocery store can be difficult. You pick up your loved one’s favorite food, then remember they’re not here. The tears form in your eyes as you place the item back on the shelf.

Coming home to an empty house can be very difficult. Many people have a difficult time being in the house during certain times of the day or certain days of the week. Sorting out the deceased’s belongings is emotionally difficult. There is no time frame for this to be completed. Every item of the deceased has a story behind it which can trigger memories. There will be adjustments, adjustments, and more adjustments, as task three can be a very difficult time in one’s grief journey.

Finding support during this time can make this task more manageable. Family, friends and support groups all can help you find your way. And remember, the Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center of Hospice of the Western Reserve is here to help. You are not alone.
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

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 & bereaved.
**Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.**
Fee: $40/month or $12 Drop-in (sliding scale fee available)

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.

Ashtabula Office
**Mondays, October 20 – November 24, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.**
Susan Hamme 440.997.6619
The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
**Wednesdays, October 8 – November 12, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.**
Diana Battles 216.486.6364

Lakeshore Campus
**Mondays, September 22 – October 27, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.**
Tensie Holland 216.383.3741

Lakewood Office
**Mondays, September 15 – October 20, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.**
Judy Beckman 216.383.2222 ext. 1114

Mentor Office
**Tuesdays, September 23 – October 28, 12:30 to 2:00 p.m.**
Lisa Florjancic 216.383.2222 ext. 1052

**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
**4th Tuesday of the month, 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.**
JoDee Coulter 216.383.2222 ext. 1301

GRIEF 102
A four-week workshop for those who have completed a previous grief group or who have done other grief work and would like to explore additional options for coping. The workshop will include relaxation skills, art, and music ideas for coping, journaling, and other tools. Please register by Thursday, October 30.

Lakewood Office
**Mondays, November 3 – November 24, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.**
Judy Beckman 216.383.2222 ext. 1114
WOMENS WORKSHOP
For women whose significant other, partner, spouse has died.
Lakewood Office
Tuesday, September 16, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Judy Beckman 216.383.2222 ext. 1114

AN INTRODUCTION TO MINDFUL GRIEVING
Participants will learn basic mindfulness techniques as they relate to grief and loss. Please wear loose clothing as meditation and breathing techniques will be taught and practiced. *Grieving Mindfully: A Compassionate and Spiritual Guide to Coping with Loss* by Sameer Kumar will be referenced. Light refreshments provided.

Cleveland Heights Library
2345 Lee Road, Cleveland Heights, 44118
Wednesday, October 8, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.
Mary Murphy 216.454.0399

TO BE KNOWN: AN INFANT LOSS SUPPORT GROUP “New”
A seven-week group for parents who missed the opportunity to know their child due to death in utero or within the first year of life. Join us to “Be Known” with others who can share in your sorrow, questioning and healing. Registration required by September 3.

Cuyahoga Public Library
Groups will rotate between Parma-Snow and Parma Heights Branch
Wednesdays, September 10 & 24; October 8 & 22; November 5 & 19; December 10.
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Mindy Stewart 216.383.2222 ext. 1874

BRIDGES OF COURAGE
A retreat for teens ages 14 to 17 that have experienced the death of a loved one. Share your story with other teens who understand the courage it takes to face the changes brought on by the loss of someone special. Engage in activities that will help you remember and honor your loved one.

Lakeshore Campus
Saturday, October 11, 4:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Dominique Butler 216.486.6287

Ashtabula Office
Saturday, November 8, 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Susan Hamme 440.997.6619

ADULT RETREAT:
*Healing and Well Being Through the Heart of the Horse*
Join us for a day of healing and well being through the compassionate heart of the horse and the calming beauty of nature. To register call Lesley Dials at 216.486.6702.

Pebble Ledge Ranch
9796 Cedar Road, Novelty, OH 44072
Saturday, October 11, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Spousal Loss Groups
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
*Animal Plaques*
Kids (ages 6 and up), bring an adult along to create an animal plaque that represents a quality that reminds you of your loved one. Either bring a photo of an animal or let Mollie know what your animal is when you register and she will print it for you. Light refreshments provided.

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
Tuesday, November 11, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
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.

ART FOR RELAXATION
Relax-O-Doodles
Doodling is usually done while your mind is concentrating on something else like talking on the phone or daydreaming. In this workshop, you will create a “conscious” doodle as a meditative practice to give your mind a rest from your grief.

Westlake Center for Community Services
29694 Center Ridge Road, Westlake, 44145
Tuesday, October 7, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Warrensville Heights Office
Wednesday, October 15, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
Thursday, October 23, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

SONG AND MEMORY COLLAGE
Is there a song that evokes memories of your loved one? How would you represent the song and the memories visually? A music therapist will co-facilitate this workshop. We will print the lyrics of your song. You may bring copies of photos to incorporate into your collage. A line from each participant’s special song will also contribute to a group song collage that will commemorate the event. Please submit your song title and artist when you register.

Warrensville Heights Office
Wednesday, November 12, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
Thursday, November 20, 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.
Ames Family Hospice House – Art Studio
Monthly – 4th Wednesday of the month, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

LGBT ART THERAPY EVENT
Imbedded Memory Frames
This event is for members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender Community who have experienced the death of a loved one. If possible, please bring small mementoes that represent good memories about your loved one.
The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
Tuesday October 28, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Dear Kids,

There may be times after the death of your special person that you feel alone. Perhaps your loved one was someone you would talk to when you were sad or upset. It is important to express your thoughts and feelings during your grief and it is helpful to talk about your memories of your special person. It can be scary at first, but family members and friends are great people to talk to. Animals will also listen to you.

During our *Riding Through Grief* horse camp, kids talked to horses about their difficult thoughts, feelings and memories of their special person. The horses at Fieldstone Farm TRC were great listeners. They did not judge what was said to them. The horses stood beside the kids, walked with them and carried them while the kids talked to them.

Sharing your thoughts, feelings and memories with a pet dog, cat, guinea pig, bird, fish or horse can be helpful when you are missing the person who died. You may find it beneficial just being in the presence of your pet while thinking of your special person.

Don’t be afraid to talk to others. There are family members, friends and animals around you, ready to listen.

Lesley Dials, LISW

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**Save the Date**

**MEMORY WREATHS**  
Remember your loved one by decorating a grapevine wreath, symbolizing unbroken life and love, with personal and seasonal symbols, as well as wishes, memories and prayers.

**Westlake Center for Community Services**  
29694 Center Ridge Road, Westlake, 44145  
Tuesday, December 9, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

**Warrensvoice Heights Office**  
Wednesday, December 10, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

**The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center**  
Thursday, December 11, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

**HOLIDAY FAMILY NIGHT**  
Join us for a special evening using art to memorialize your loved ones during the holiday season. Materials and light refreshments provided.

**The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center**  
Thursday, December 4, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.  
RSVP by November 28  
Felicia Dunlop 216.486.6335

**Ashtabula Office**  
Monday, December 15, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.  
Susan Hamme 440.997.6619

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**CHILDREN’S Bereavement Camp**

**Together We Can**

Our sixteenth annual *Together We Can* bereavement day camp was a great success! Over fifty children gathered to spend three days sharing laughter and tears, honoring loved ones, and learning ways to express feelings and cope with their grief. Most importantly, they had a great time and met others who have also experienced a loss. We would like to thank the many paid and unpaid staff who committed their time and talents to make this a great event, as well as the numerous individuals who contributed funds to purchase supplies and provide camper scholarships.

We acknowledge significant support from The Conway Family Foundation, The Christ Child Society of the Western Reserve, Energizer–Westlake facility, Stuart and Associates, and Miklus Florists. In addition, we’d like to thank an anonymous donor for the generous gift of Vermont teddy bears, and the Knitters of the Herb Society of America for their time and materials to knit clothing for the bears. Your support for our camp is priceless!
Grieving Mindfully: A Compassionate and Spiritual Guide to Coping with Loss
By Sameet Kumar, PhD.

This is a well organized, well informed guide to approaching the state of grief with mindful awareness. The author, a practicing Buddhist and a psychologist who works with cancer patients and their caregivers in Florida, has organized this 153-page book to convey instruction on how to practice mindfulness. He describes the types of loss, the varying types of grief, and how a practice of mindfulness allows us to recognize our spiritual, emotional, relational and cognitive transformation during a time of what might seem permanent despair.

Grieving people are anxious to judge their feelings and see how they have “progressed” in the grief journey, Dr. Kumar relates. They want to know when “it” will be over. He reminds us that our feeling states are impermanent, as is life. And “acceptance” means that we can accept our loss and our grief with compassion and a non-judgmental nature. Above all, Dr. Kumar counsels that love is the foundation of grief.

This book is a helpful companion for anyone on grief’s spiral staircase.