



About *grief*

A PUBLICATION OF HOSPICE OF THE WESTERN RESERVE

WINTER 2020-2021

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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.



If Only I Had...

By Mary Murphy, M.Ed., LPC

"Monday mourning quarterbacking" – a phrase coined by Dr. Kenneth Doka – is our tendency to review the relationship after a loved one's death based upon the decisions made during their illness. Doing this without considering pressures we were faced with at the time can lead us to question whether what we did was right, or whether things could have been different had we made different choices.

First, examine the thought. Is it rational? Did you do your best under the circumstances – not knowing what you now know, but what you knew then? If you did your best, practice self-compassion. If you fell short in some way, practice self-compassion AND reflect on how you may do things differently in the future if faced with similar choices.

"The beauty of life is, while we cannot undo what is done, we can see it, understand it, learn from it and change so that every new moment is spent not in regret, guilt, fear or anger but in wisdom, understanding and love."
 ~ Jennifer Edwards

Thoughts of "what if" and "shoulda, coulda, woulda" tumble about in our grieving minds. Could I have noticed symptoms earlier? Should I have urged another round of treatment? Maybe I could have flown in more often to visit, or changed jobs to be more available? Was I estranged from the person who died? Did I lose my temper or drown my feelings rather than face them?

Sometimes, people express feeling "guilty" after a loved one's death. Here's something to think about: guilt implies intentional harm and seldom leads to change. Perhaps a more accurate word to consider is "regret," which is more reflective and can encourage learning and growth. No matter how we define these feelings, what can we do when these troubling thoughts persist?

Here are some other ways to manage feelings of guilt and regret:

- Write a letter to the deceased to ask for, receive or offer forgiveness
- Repair important relationships when possible
- Express love
- Be present to those who are living
- Make a charitable donation
- Be mindful of your thoughts, actions and feelings in the here and now. Do they help or harm you?
- Consider talking with a professional or joining a grief support group

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**WESTERN
RESERVE
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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

One kind word can warm three winter months

- Japanese Proverb



What a year 2020 has been! Much like grief itself, the reality brought about by COVID-19 has been life-changing and, at times, overwhelming. The moment we start to feel like we understand the "rules" and have a handle on things, something else changes and we're challenged to adapt once again. For those who have experienced the death of a loved one during this time, assumptions about being together "at the end," grieving, memorials and supporting one another may have been shattered by the pandemic's restrictions. Very little of the past year has gone according to our plans.

As we enter the winter months, face the approaching holidays and continue our co-existence with COVID-19, I encourage you to be gentle with yourself. Give yourself a break from the hustle and bustle. Take time to notice moments of joy and beauty when they happen – no matter how small. Try one new thing that can offer connection with another person or a moment of peace and restoration. Bundle up for a walk or sit outside to breathe in the crisp air and listen to the quiet of the winter. Try connecting through technology or take a break from it if you've had enough by the end of the day. The choice is yours.

We continue to offer virtual grief support groups. While we miss being together in person, we are happy we can support you in this way. If you haven't attended one and are interested, I encourage you to take a look at the different available groups. It might be helpful to try something new. We look forward to welcoming new members in the coming weeks.

Wishing you peace and comfort in the new year.

Karen Hatfield, MMT, MT-BC, CHPCA
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Grief and the Holidays

An inevitable question grieving people ask at this time of the year is, "How will I ever get through the holidays?" Whether it's the first or second holiday season they face, the added strain can create increased pressure for people already experiencing intense feelings of grief. Combined with the stressors brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, it can be difficult to imagine coping well, much less finding any enjoyment in the season whatsoever. So how do you "get through" this time? There is no single answer. Let this be the guiding thought: Do what is comfortable for you.

Be mindful. Anticipating the day is often much worse than the day itself. Recognize that the holidays will be different this year. In addition to the absence of your loved one, you too, are different this season. Slow yourself down by taking deep breaths. Take time to nurture yourself and allow yourself to notice any moments of joy or peace that happen.

Create a plan. Discuss your plan with your family. Be flexible in expectations for yourself and others, and compromise as needed. Avoid additional stress. Make a plan for a trusted friend or family member to be there for you in those "grief wave" moments. Consider purchasing gift cards or shopping online to avoid crowds in public spaces. Decide what things are most important to you and make changes where you can.

Consider rituals and traditions. These may be changing not only because of the death of your loved one, but also because of the pandemic's limits and precautions. It may seem unsettling that nothing is the same as it was in years past. However, it may also feel okay this year to be relieved of the pressure to put on a brave face for a big family gathering or neighborhood party. Rituals support the continuing bond between you and your loved one. Consider a new ritual or tradition to help strengthen that connection – light a candle, donate a gift in their memory, or gather with family and friends via Zoom or another platform to share memories and honor the person everyone is missing.

Look ahead. The death of your loved one and the events of the past year have created changes you may never have imagined. As you look toward the coming year, consider all that has occurred and what you have learned. As you search to find meaning in your loss and continue your life story, you may begin to understand some of what has happened and find a bridge between the past and future that makes sense to you.

THE VISTA WALK AND TRIBUTE WALKS

Remember Your Loved One

THE GARDENS AT AMES FAMILY HOSPICE HOUSE AND DAVID SIMPSON HOSPICE HOUSE offer beautiful outdoor spaces for meditation and reflection. When you dedicate an outdoor tribute to your loved one with a paver or stone bench, 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.



AMES FAMILY HOSPICE HOUSE



DAVID SIMPSON HOSPICE HOUSE

Support Groups

WINTER 2020-2021

Community Support Groups and Activities

Please note that at the time of this printing, all support groups will be offered virtually via Microsoft Teams. Registration is required for all groups, and the number of participants is limited. Please call or email the group facilitator for more information or to register. Once registered, you will receive an email invitation that includes a link that will allow you to join the group at the designated time.

Virtual groups can provide a valuable source of support during the pandemic. Sometimes, more than one attempt may be necessary to find the group that best meets your needs. Please do not be discouraged; it's okay to experiment.

Regardless of your loss or coping style, remember that you are not alone, and you need not grieve alone.

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

Virtual 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 or email the facilitator for more information or to register for a group. *Registration is limited.*

Circle of Hope

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

Tuesdays, January 5 to 26, 2021
10 to 11:30 a.m.

Susan Hamme

shamme@hospicewr.org
440.596.3582

Mondays, February 1 to 22, 2021
1 to 2 p.m.

Tensie Holland

tholland@hospicewr.org
216.383.3741

Hope and Healing

MONTHLY An ongoing monthly support group for grieving adults

First Monday of the month
6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Susan Hamme

shamme@hospicewr.org
440.596.3582

Third Wednesday of the month
1 to 2:30 p.m.

Mary Murphy

mmurphy@hospicewr.org
216.763.6442

Healing the Heart

Grief after an overdose death

First Tuesday of the month
6 to 7 p.m.

Shawn Eigenbrode

seigenbrode@hospicewr.org
216.486.6364

Parents Together

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

Second Wednesday of the month
2:30 to 4 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.

Judy Beckman

jbeckman@hospicewr.org
440.414.1731



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330.725.1900

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30080 Hospice Way
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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

Child Loss

MONTHLY Parents who have experienced the death of a child aged 18 or younger are invited to join us for an opportunity to find support and feel community with others who experienced similar losses.

Third Wednesday of the month
2 to 3 p.m.

Jonathan Cahill

jcahill@hospicewr.or.org

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

Third Wednesday of the month
1 to 2 p.m.

JoDee Coulter

jcoulter@hospicewr.org
330.662.4240

Women's Group

MONTHLY A workshop for women who have lost their partner, significant other or spouse

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

Judy Beckman

jbeckman@hospicewr.org
440.414.1731

After the Holidays: Coping with Grief

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

Thursday, January 14, 2021
3 to 4 p.m.

Lisa Florjancic

lflorjancic@hospicewr.org
440.853.5365

Grief 101

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.

Thursday, February 11, 2021
3:30 to 4:30 pm

Lisa Florjancic

lflorjancic@hospicewr.org
440.853.5365

Grief During a Pandemic

Join us as we discuss how the COVID-19 pandemic impacts grief, as well as suggestions for connecting and memorializing during a time of continued social distancing. For adults who have experienced the death of a loved one within the past year.

Tuesday, February 9, 2021
6 p.m.

Laurie Mason

lmason@hospicewr.org
440.787.2099

VIRTUAL Healing Arts Workshops WINTER 2020-2021



We use the Microsoft Teams platform, which is similar to Zoom. Registered participants will receive an email invitation that provides a link to join the workshop at the designated time. Each workshop consists of two sessions, a week apart. At the first session, a theme or topic is introduced, and we have a discussion. Then you will be given instructions on the art assignment and the required basic supplies will be shipped to you. Complete your art assignment during the week, then join us for the second session to share and talk about your art. The supplies will be new and yours to keep.

We have waived our suggested donation for supplies during the pandemic; however, if you wish to make a donation to the Healing Arts Program, go to hospicewr.org and click "Giving Back" to find out how.

Call Mollie Borgione at [216.486.6544](tel:216.486.6544) or email at mborgione@hospicewr.org to register no later than two weeks before the workshop date.



PAINTING THE LIGHT

We have darker, shorter days at this time of year, but we look forward to the increase in light day by day. When we have experienced the death of a loved one, it is sometimes hard to emerge from the darkness of grief and look to the light of hope. How would you paint that light? Will you paint the sun, the moon, a campfire, a candle?

Thursdays, January 14 and 21, 2021
6 to 7:30 p.m.

Tuesdays, January 19 and 26, 2021
6 to 7:30 p.m.

CIRCLE OF HOPE: ART THERAPY EDITION

A six-week art and educational support class for adults who have had a loved one die.

Wednesdays: January 20 –
February 24, 2021
10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

KIDS ART: HEART HUGS

After a special person dies, the absence of their physical presence is one of the most difficult adjustments for kids to make. 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 a piece of your loved one's clothing may be incorporated. Ages 6+. Kids are invited to have a family member in attendance.

Tuesdays, February 2 and 9, 2021
6 to 7:30 p.m.

ALWAYS IN MY HEART

At this time of year, missing a loved one is especially difficult. During this workshop, participants will paint and decorate a paper clay heart which can be worn as a pin. A small photo can be incorporated into the pin.

Thursdays, February 11 and 18, 2021
6 to 7:30 p.m.

Tuesdays, February 16 and 23, 2021
6 to 7:30 p.m.

SAVE THE DATE

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. We will focus on the creative process.

Thursdays, March 11 and 18, 2021
6 to 7:30 p.m.

Tuesdays, March 16 and 23, 2021
6 to 7:30 p.m.



Supporting Kids Through the Ups and Downs of the Holiday Season

By **Susan Hamme, LSW, CHP-SW**



For grieving families, the winter months may spark unexpected feelings of fear and anxiety over the approaching holidays. Where will we spend special days? What will we do? Will it upset Mom, Dad, Grandma, Grandpa, etc., if I bring up the person who died? Is it okay to have fun?

Most often, children who have experienced the death of someone special are part of a larger family unit that is also grieving and adjusting to life after that same loss. As adults, taking care of ourselves and giving space to our own grief is essential as we support the grieving kids in our lives.

Childhood grief is tricky no matter what, but the holidays can be a time of especially heightened emotion. The season's sights and sounds can be triggers for children and adults alike. Combine that with an awareness that things will be very different without your special person, and you have the perfect recipe for emotional meltdowns and miscommunication all around. While it may be impossible to avoid this altogether, there are ways you can lessen the stress and build in moments of peace and celebration.

- **Choose an old tradition that can be continued.** Children are comforted by routine and normalcy. Even though everything else may be different, choosing even one tradition from holidays past helps the family feel connected to the loved one who died.
- **Plan even the simple things.** Young people love to feel in control of their world. Including them in decisions about meals, decorations and table seating can help them to feel more connected to the celebration and in control of things going on around them.
- **Schedule "down time."** Feeling overwhelmed, overstimulated and overtired can lead to behaviors and emotions most families would like to avoid. Including time for rest and play throughout a busy holiday schedule allows kids (and adults) to decompress before they reach a tipping point.
- **Try something new.** The COVID-19 pandemic has taught all of us that there are different ways to do almost anything. Plan a virtual meet up with friends or family who can't be together in person, sing favorite holiday songs, play holiday charades, light a candle "together" in honor of the person who died or simply share stories and memories of past holidays.
- **Allow fun and laughter to have its space.** Children naturally move between the presence of grief and moments of joy. As adults, we can learn from them: there is room for both. Affirm and validate for them that it is still okay to laugh, play and be excited.

The loved ones we are missing often brought joy to our lives. That is why we miss them. Allowing and acknowledging the joy that remains is a beautiful way to honor their memory. We wish you and the kids in your life a season of comfort, joy and memories.

300 East 185th Street
Cleveland, OH 44119-1330

Serving the Northern Ohio
counties of Ashtabula, Cuyahoga,
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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 REVIEW

The Essential Guide to Grief and Grieving

by Debra Holland, M.S., Ph.D.

By Lisa Florjancic, MA, LSW

At the beginning of *The Essential Guide to Grief and Grieving*, Dr. Debra Holland states: "My wish is that this book gives you hope that you'll eventually recover from your grief." This book helps readers understand the grief process, their emotions and reactions. It also helps individuals who are supporting others through the grief journey.

This book is divided into four sections:

1. Loss and Grief
2. Bereavement
(examines specific losses encountered in life)
3. Loss in Other Life Circumstances
4. Recovery

Each section includes detailed chapters that provide definitions, describe emotions, tell stories and describe reactions to loss.

Dr. Holland does a nice job explaining the grief walk. She adds "side-bar boxes" throughout the book listing survival strategies, cautions and concerns, definitions and typical expressions of grief. At the end of each chapter, there are "Essential Takeaways" to summarize the chapter. *The Essential Guide to Grief and Grieving* is an informative, easy-to-understand book that covers many situations.

