After the death of a loved one, you may experience many changes in your mental and emotional state of mind. You may find yourself simply being in a daze, unable to focus, or going aimlessly in circles at times. Completing routine or simple tasks may seem overwhelming, impossible or may take longer. The efficient way you juggled work and home prior to the death of your loved one has suddenly disappeared, along with your good coping skills and ability to manage stress. You may have been excellent at balancing your checkbook, but now you can’t add one plus one. You miss due dates on bills or discover you have paid a bill twice. Where once you could have done most things blindfolded or with a hand tied behind your back, that is no longer true.

Enter: “Grief Brain.”

Now it seems you may go days without doing a thing; even though you had multiple items you “planned” to do. You find yourself getting lost while driving to familiar places or arriving and wondering, “how did I get here?” You might forget appointments, scheduled activities, or familiar names. You may misplace your cell phone, wallet, glasses or keys more often, only to find items in unlikely places (aluminum foil in the refrigerator, TV remote in the kitchen cupboard). Your judgment may seem clouded when making routine decisions.

These are symptoms of Grief Brain. Don’t worry, this is a natural part of grief. Your brain is on overload with thoughts of grief, sadness, loneliness and many other feelings. Grief Brain affects your memory, concentration.

You find yourself getting lost while driving to familiar places or arriving and wondering, “how did I get here?”

see “Grief Brain...” on page 7
Spring can be an unstable time in Northeast Ohio. Lake effect snows can occur, suddenly bringing life to a halt. Snow, rain and sunshine may appear on the same day. Just like the constant changes in weather, grief reactions can change rapidly. You may feel the torrents of grief come over you like an ice dam melting. Then the surges of grief abate and you find that you’ve weathered that storm.

At the other extreme, spring is a time to look forward with great optimism and hope. The plants are coming back to life in the garden. The sun is shining longer every day. Animals come out of hibernation and birds’ songs fill the air.

Spring doesn’t happen overnight. We first see small signs – a flower here, a new leaf there, a robin or spring rain. Grief work doesn’t happen overnight either. There may be new experiences, less tears, or a new interest. Slowly the fog lifts and you feel more like yourself.

You may be a person that feels better in the spring and you may also feel better with your grief. Others however, may experience heightened grief or grief anxiety as the seasons change. Warmer, sunnier months can be nurturing, but the changing seasons do not make grief go away.

The warmer months do bring the opportunity for outdoor activities. Whether it’s planting a garden, traveling, nature walks, baseball, or family gatherings, take the time to plan things that will nurture you in this time of grief.

Whatever the season brings, we continue to be here with comfort, hope and healing.

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

Two Ways to Remember Your Loved One

TRIBUTE GARDENS • The gardens at Ames Family Hospice House, David Simpson Hospice House and the Medina Hospice Inpatient Care Center 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 or visit hospicewr.org/tribute-walks to learn more.

SAVE THE DATE! • Walk to Remember 2018 is Sunday, June 10 at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo. Learn more about how you can be involved at hospicewr.org/walk.
Reading Rewards

Hi, Kids & Adults! Reading is such a great way to spend time. Imagining yourself in the story, learning something new, or exploring imaginary worlds – the options are endless. Did you know that there are books and journals available to help kids of all ages understand the idea of death and help them tackle the big feelings of grief?

Reading one (or more) of these great books can help kids and adults start to talk about the death of their special person, identify their own feelings, and encourage ways to remember and honor their loved one.

A lot of the books we love were written for younger kids, but I’ll let you in on a secret: older kids and even some adults find they can relate to the simplicity and meaning of these stories. Going “back to the basics” can help us remember that grief is normal, and everyone experiences it. Here are some ideas for furthering the conversation around grief:

- **Read the book with a trusted adult (or ask him/her to read it to you).**

  If you have a grief journal, look through it to see what pages you feel like completing on different days. There is no rule that says you have to do the pages in order, or even that you have to finish a page that you start.

  You might feel like sharing some, all or none of the work you do in your grief journal with a trusted friend or adult in your life.

- **Talk about the characters:**

  Talk about, write down or draw ways in which your situation is similar to or different from the characters in the book.

- **Talk about the characters:**

  What did they do? How do you think they felt? What did they do to manage their feelings? Who did they turn to for support?

**Read the book with a trusted adult (or ask him/her to read it to you).**

If you have a grief journal, look through it to see what pages you feel like completing on different days. There is no rule that says you have to do the pages in order, or even that you have to finish a page that you start.

You might feel like sharing some, all or none of the work you do in your grief journal with a trusted friend or adult in your life.

**TALK ABOUT THE CHARACTERS:**

What did they do? How do you think they felt? What did they do to manage their feelings? Who did they turn to for support?

**SAVE THE DATES!**

**Together We Can Grief Camps**

**WE OFFER A VARIETY OF CAMPS TO MEET THE NEEDS** of grieving children and adolescents. Camps provide the opportunity to be with others who are also grieving the death of a loved one. Camps are expressive in nature and led by experienced facilitators in art, music, play and nature activities. For more information or a registration packet, please contact us at 216.486.6838 or visit hospicewr.org/camps.

**One-Day**

**Common Ground**

Saturday, July 14, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
14240 Baird Rd., Oberlin, OH 44074
A one day bereavement camp for children ages 8-14 who have experienced the death of a loved one.

**Three-Day**

**Red Oak**

August 7-9, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Red Oak Camp, Kirtland, OH
A bereavement day camp for children ages 8-14 who have experienced the death of a loved one.

**Five-Day**

**Riding Through Grief**

June 18-22
Supported by trained counselors, campers ages 8-12 explore grief issues through riding and working with horses. Offered in collaboration with Fieldstone Farm Therapeutic Riding Center.

**Family Event**

**Family Day at the Beach (all ages)**

Saturday, July 28, 3 – 5 p.m.
Mentor Headlands, Mentor, OH
Join us for fun and festivities as we honor the life of your special person.
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.

Adult Support Groups

**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, May 2–June 6, 10–11:30 a.m.
  Register by April 25
  Susan Hamme 440.596.3582

- **Lakeshore Campus**
  Mondays, April 16–May 21, 6–7:30 p.m.
  Tensie Holland 216.383.3741

- **The Robertson Bereavement Center**
  Wednesdays, April 4 – May 9, 1–2:30 p.m.
  Theresa Suing 330.241.6282

- **Mentor Office**
  Tuesdays, April 3 – May 8, 1–2 p.m.
  Lisa Florjancic 440.853.5365

- **West Campus**
  Mondays, May 7 – June 18, 6:30–8 p.m.
  (No group May 28)
  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 Monday of the month, 6–7:30 p.m.
  April Ratcliffe 216.383.3782

- **The Robertson Bereavement Center**
  Second Tuesday of the month, 3–4 p.m.
  Theresa Suing 330.241.6282

- **Mentor Office**
  First Tuesday of the month, 10–11 a.m.
  Lisa Florjancic 440.853.5365

**Parent Loss**

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

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

**Parents Together**

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

- **Please call for southeast location**
  Second Thursday of the month, 2:30–4 p.m.
  Karen Kincaid 216.486.6973

**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, 1–2:30 p.m.
  Chemarra Bryant 440.414.1737

**New Beginnings**

**MONTHLY** For adults in middle life who have experienced the death of a spouse, partner or significant other.

- **West Campus**
  Second Wednesday of the month, 6:30–8 p.m.
  Chemarra Bryant 440.414.1737

**New Journey**

**MONTHLY** For adults of any age who have experienced the death of a spouse, partner or significant other.

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

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

**Horizons**

**MONTHLY** For adults in late life who have experienced the death of a spouse, partner or significant other.

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

- **Lorain County Community College**
  Spitzer Conference Center, Room 219
  1005 North Abbe Road, Elyria
  First Friday of the month, 10:30–11:30 a.m.
  Laurie Mason 440.787.2099

Circle of Hope: Art Therapy Edition

**Art Therapy Edition** Six-week art and educational support group for adults who have had a loved one die.

- **The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center Art Therapy Studio**
  Wednesdays, April 18 – May 23, 10 a.m. to Noon
  Mollie Borgione 216.486.6544 or mborgione@hospicewr.org

Circle of Hope: Art Therapy Edition
Women's Workshop
SPECIAL A periodic workshop for women who have lost their partner, significant other or spouse.
Please call for date, time, and location.
Judy Beckman 440.414.1731

Grief 101 (for the newly bereaved)
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.
The Robertson Bereavement Center
Wednesday, May 16, 3 – 4 p.m.
Theresa Suing 330.241.6282

Please call for southeast location
Second Tuesday of the month, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Mary Murphy 216.763.6442

Restoring Hope: When a Loved One Dies From an Overdose
SERIES Five-week group for those adults who have had a loved one die from an overdose death. Registration is required.
Ashtabula Office
Mondays, April 9 – May 7, 6 – 7:30 p.m.
Register by April 4
Susan Hamme 440.596.3582

The LCADA Way
Avon Lake Wellness Center
525 Avon Belden Road, Suite 1, Avon Lake
Mondays, April 2 – April 30, 6:30 – 8 p.m.
Register by March 26
Judy Beckman 440.414.1731

Who Am I?
SERIES A 5-week group for those who are trying to rediscover personal interests, explore new opportunities and identify support systems and tools to help since the death of your loved one. Come brainstorm, share and discover new ideas and resources with the group. There will be independent assignments most weeks. Recommended for those whose loss was 6 months ago or more. Registration is required.
The Robertson Bereavement Center
Tuesdays, May 1 – May 29, 6:30 – 8 p.m.
JoDee Coulter 330.662.4240

Mother's Day Tea
SPECIAL 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.
The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
Saturday, May 5, 1-3 p.m., Register by April 27
216.486.6838

Coloring for Comfort
SPECIAL Join us for an evening of Coloring for Comfort. At the Lakeshore Campus location, we’ll go outside and the lake will be our inspiration.
Lakeshore Campus
Thursday, June 28, 6 – 7:30 p.m.
Please register by June 22.
Tensie Holland 216.383.3741

Mentor Office
Wednesday, April 18, 5 – 6 p.m.
Register by April 11
Lisa Florjancic 440.853.5365

Walking with Grief
SPECIAL Getting moving after the loss of a loved one can be a challenge and there are so many benefits to walking. Why not take the first step and join others who are grieving for friendship, motivation and some sharing. May through October – weather permitting.
Mugrage Park (meet at the Pavilion)
4985 Windfall Road, Medina
May 8 & 22, June 12 & 26, 9 a.m.
JoDee Coulter 330.662.4240

Senior Workshop
SPECIAL A grief workshop for seniors who have suffered losses. Come for discussion, support and comfort.
Refreshments served. We meet once every three months. Please call for date, time, and to register.
Lakewood
Lakewood Senior Center
16024 Madison Avenue, Lakewood
Judy Beckman 440.414.1731

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Lakewood
Lakewood Senior Center
16024 Madison Avenue, Lakewood
Judy Beckman 440.414.1731

SPECIAL Registration is required. Please call facilitator listed for more information.

MONTHLY Please call to confirm group.

SPECIAL Registration may or may not be required. Please call facilitator listed to learn more.
Healing Arts Workshops  SPRING 2018

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 her at mborgione@hospicewr.org to register no later than four days in advance of workshop date. Suggested $5 donation for supplies.

**Art for Relaxation: Birds of a Feather**
Across cultures, birds have long been associated with life and death. Many people say that certain birds appear to them over and over after their loved one has died, which is a comfort to them. At this workshop, paint and decorate a bird house in memory of your loved one and that special bird.

*Please call for southeast location*
Wednesday, March 14, 6 to 8 p.m.
**The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center**
Thursday, March 15, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
**West Campus**
Tuesday, March 20, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

**Butterflies are Free**
A crawling caterpillar envelops itself in the darkness of a cocoon, and emerges as a beautiful butterfly with the ability to fly. Many cultures and religions consider them to be symbolic of transformation, change, or the soul. Participants will learn how to make an Origami paper butterfly and decorate it to represent the spirit of their loved one.

*Please call for southeast location*
Wednesday, March 14, 6 to 8 p.m.
**The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center**
Thursday, March 15, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
**West Campus**
Tuesday, March 20, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

**Stepping Stones**
Make a cement stepping stone to celebrate a loved one. Small stones, tiles, glass beads and mementos may be embedded. Names and dates can be stamped. May be used in your garden or it can be displayed indoors.

*The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center*
Thursday, May 10, 6:30–8:30 p.m.

*Please call for southeast location*
Wednesday, May 16, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
**West Campus**
Tuesday, May 22, 6:30–8:30 p.m.

**Kidz Art: Sun Catchers**
Celebrate the approach of summer by creating a sun catcher from tissue paper and glue. The vibrant colors will bring beauty hanging in a sunny window and remind you of your loved one. Light refreshments provided. Kids (ages 6+) are invited to bring family members along for this workshop.

*The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center*
Tuesday, May 1, 6:30–8:30 p.m.
**West Campus**
Tuesday, May 15, 6:30–8:30 p.m.

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*The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center*
Tuesday, May 1, 6:30–8:30 p.m.
**West Campus**
Tuesday, May 15, 6:30–8:30 p.m.

**Fabric and Feelings**
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.

**LGBTQ Art Therapy Event: Mandala Plates**
**SAVE THE DATE!** Participants will create their own mandala design and paint both sides of a bisque (unglazed china) dinner plate with ceramic glazes at the first session. The plates will be kiln-fired during the week so that we can use them for our potluck meal at the second session, which will be devoted to sharing stories. Bring your loved one’s or your own favorite food to share! This event is for members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Queer Community who have experienced the death of a loved one.

*The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center*
MUST ATTEND BOTH TUESDAYS June 5 & 12, 6:30–8:30 p.m.

**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.

*Please call for southeast location*
Wednesday, June 13, 6 to 8 p.m.
**West Campus**
Tuesday, June 19, 6:30–8:30 p.m.
**The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center**
Thursday, June 21, 6:30–8:30 p.m.
One of the assumptions people make about art therapy is that one must be good at drawing, painting or sculpting. Nothing could be further from the truth! In art therapy, the process of creating art is more important than the resulting product. There are no critiques or judgements made of the art. It’s all about what the artist learned in their experience of creating. Art therapy takes a holistic approach, as it is not only concerned with creativity, but also with the emotional, psychological, mental, physical and spiritual aspects of healing.

The Healing Arts art therapy workshops offered by Western Reserve Grief Services provide a safe, creative space in which feelings of grief and loss can be expressed through art. Many times, people who attend these workshops find it difficult to talk about the loss of their loved ones. Healing Arts workshops facilitate a non-verbal space for the expression of feelings in four ways:

"Grief Brain...
from page 1

and cognition. Your brain is focused on the feelings and symptoms of grief which leaves little room for your everyday tasks.

It is important to be gentle and patient with yourself. It may be unreasonable or impossible to expect to complete your normal tasks as you did before your loved one died. Be mindful about setting reasonable expectations and build from there. When you can complete a task, give yourself a pat on the back and recognize it as a step towards healing.

To help yourself focus, write things down on a legal pad or tablet and keep it on a nearby table where you can readily refer to it. Sticky notes may not be a helpful resource as they can lose their stickiness and get misplaced. Ask for help when needed. Get plenty of rest. Recite positive affirmations. Journaling is an excellent form of therapy and will help release the many feelings you are experiencing.

As you heal, you will find that your thinking is clearer/sharper and your judgement becomes more reliable and you can accomplish more. It is important to take your time, baby steps, as they say. Slow down and take care of yourself.

THE HEALING ARTS PROGRAM offers diverse projects throughout the year, in several locations throughout Cuyahoga County. It provides grieving people with a creative outlet for their grief and is open to the community. The program is made possible by a project support grant from Cuyahoga Arts and Culture. These art projects were created by people who didn’t feel they could draw or be creative. 1: Ceramic kiln-fired Mandala Plate 2: Marker and watercolor Relax-O-Doodle 3: Watercolor from Landscapes of the Heart 4: Watercolor tree from The Tree is Me

EDITOR’S NOTE
This article was inspired by a client who spoke of “Grief Brain” often and shared her grief journey with her bereavement group members.
BOOK REVIEW

By Lisa Florjancic, MA, LSW

"The year my brother died, I forgot how to breathe, and no one seemed to notice. After all, it was only my brother; I should get over it."

When T.J. Wray lost her 43-year-old brother, she realized that the death of a sibling is not often acknowledged and that there is little information available to help cope with the loss of an adult sibling. That is what prompted Wray, a Professor of Religious and Theological Studies at Salve Regina University in Rhode Island, to write about her experience with losing her adult brother. Her own research confirmed that sibling loss has been ignored and is often considered insignificant in the eyes of others. This book describes her journey through grief walk, as well as the experiences of others. Her beautifully written book was designed to acknowledge and validate the feelings of the surviving sibling.

Each chapter reinforces the message that the survivor is not alone in dealing with their grief, and Wray gives practical advice for coping with each stage. The resources listed in the appendix provide additional useful guides to those in need.

Surviving siblings are examples of what is known as “the forgotten bereaved” and Wray’s book offers hope and support to those left behind.