

LIFT

Grief is a process, not a state. –Anne Grant

January 2021
Bereavement Newsletter

Living Is For Today
West Texas Rehab's Hospice of San Angelo

What a difference a year makes! This time last year we were enjoying the routines of our monthly support groups and other bereavement department opportunities. This year, we're topsy-turvy thanks to the pandemic. The one thing that is the same, though, is that the HOSA Bereavement Department continues looking for ways to provide bereavement support and services to the Concho Valley. Please contact Karen Schmeltekopf, 325-658-6524, or kschmeltekopf@wtrc.com for information about our current services.

ONLINE GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Thursday, January 21, 1:00 pm

Participation is possible via computer, device, or phone – cell or landline. Contact Karen at kschmeltekopf@wtrc.com or 325-658-6524 for information about participating.

SPRING SESSION OF BUILDING BRIDGES

Building Bridges, HOSA's bereavement program for grieving children and their families, will begin in a few weeks. For more information, please contact Melissa Salvato at 325-658-6524 or msalvato@wtrc.com.

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### **NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FOR AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE**

*LIFT* Editor

In a study released by the Pew Research Poll in September 2020, about half of U.S. adults (51%) say they expect their lives will remain changed in major ways after the pandemic is over, while about the same share (48%) expect a return to normalcy.

According to Pew, the coronavirus outbreak has disrupted major aspects of American life, including how people work, get an education, attend religious services, care for their children, connect with friends and family, and do things like travel.

The coronavirus outbreak is still going on, and no one knows how long it will last. When it is over, the question is to what extent life will go back to "normal."

The following New Year's Resolutions for Grievers appear on the [Whatsyourgrief.com](http://Whatsyourgrief.com) website and have been used in previous LIFT newsletters. In pre-pandemic times, the resolutions are presented as strategies, backed up by sound clinical practices, to help people control life situations. However, in 2020, a global viral outbreak has forced everyone to consider another set of clinical/empirical evidence: how to maintain some sense of normalcy while minimizing the risk of contagion to ourselves and others. Clearly, these are not "normal" times, but still there are things we can control.

A number of the following resolutions involve socializing with others. Your "assignment" is ask yourself how you can modify the following suggestions which involve socializing while maintaining some distance to minimize risk to yourself and others.

### **8 NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FOR GRIEVERS**

By Eleanor Haley, Accessed at [Whatsyourgrief.com](http://Whatsyourgrief.com)

1. **Go easy on yourself.** Don't place expectations on yourself that you may not be able to live up to. Whenever possible, try not to set timetables on when elements of your life (like work or other activities) will be back to "normal." Don't put pressure on yourself or allow others to pressure you into feeling like you should be "over" the loss.
2. **Spend time with people you like.** Life after grief can be isolating. Resolve to spend at least a little time in the first half of this year with people who make you feel happy and well supported. You may gravitate towards individuals who have experienced the same (or same type of) loss, or you may want to spend time with people far removed from your experience. Also, you may choose to distance yourself from those who have not been helpful or supportive.
3. **Engage in one hobby or activity that makes you feel good.** Any hobby that you find enjoyable can be beneficial to your mental health. Hobbies can provide you with all of the following: an escape; an outlet for negative energy; a means for getting together with other people; an excuse to have alone time; and feelings of accomplishment, productivity, and fulfillment.
4. **Be honest about how you feel.** Around 3 to 6 months after a loss, many people feel compelled to start putting on a "happy face" for their family and friends. You may want people to start treating you like you're "normal." Or you may be worried that if you keep talking about your loved one's death, you will alienate those around you. Perhaps you so desperately want to be okay again that you try to fool even yourself. Over time though, all this pretending can become stressful. I understand there are valid reasons why you may not want to tell your co-worker or your cashier at Wal-Mart how your day is *really* going, but finding ways to express your true feelings in places where you feel safe to do so can be beneficial.
5. **Speak your loved one's name.** Keep speaking your loved one's name. Remember them on holidays with family and friends, write about them in e-mails or letters, recount stories. It can make you feel much closer to those who are no longer here.
6. **Support someone else.** You may feel completely raw, but when you are ready, look for ways to support others who are grieving. Try going to a support group with the intent to give as well as receive support; offer support and suggestions to others in online support forums, blogs, or social media sites; or send a card to someone in the community who has recently been through a loss.
7. **Plan opportunities for remembrance.** Think of 1 or 2 ways to formally remember your loved one. You could participate in a walk/run in their honor, start a scholarship fund, or have a memorial party on their birthday. Also, think of some less formal ways to remember. You could have a favorite photo of the person framed for yourself and other friends and family, create a memorial scrapbook, or write about your favorite memories in a journal.
8. **Seek professional help.** A loss can have a profound effect on the stability of individuals, marriages, and families. So you may decide to sit down with a grief counselor or therapist, either by yourself or with members of your family.

#### REIMAGINING THE FUTURE

The Pew Research Poll did not ask the following question: "Do you think it is possible for life in post-pandemic America to be *better* than it was before the onset of SARS-CoV-2?"

Is it possible that "old normal" was not good enough, that it did not benefit you and others as it should have? By changing some things, can we make "the new normal" better than "the old normal"?

Perhaps the list of 8 Resolutions has given you an idea about how you can memorialize the life of your loved one while benefitting the life of someone else at the same time. What a fitting tribute it would be to use your grief to make a better future for someone!

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# **January 2021**