

# LIFT

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

March 2022

Bereavement Newsletter

Living Is For Today

West Texas Rehab's Hospice of San Angelo

Grief Education Support Group

Tuesday, March 1, 5:30 pm

WTRC/HOSA Bates Bereavement Center

1933 University Avenue

Monthly Luncheon

Tuesday, March 15, 11 am

WTRC/HOSA IDT Room

1933 University Avenue

*For more information about any of HOSA's bereavement offerings, please call the Bereavement Department at 325-658-6524 or email Karen at [kschmeltekopf@wtrc.com](mailto:kschmeltekopf@wtrc.com).*

~~~~~

## GRIEF CAN HAVE VERY REAL PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

By Pathways Home Health, Hospice and Palliative Care

Accessed at [pathwayshealth.org](http://pathwayshealth.org)

We all know the loss of a loved one can leave a devastating wake of emotional destruction. However, the thing no one tells you is that grief can manifest itself physically as well, making you sick, causing you pain and leaving you exhausted. We have begun to explore how grief goes beyond the emotional impacts and invades the realm of very real physical symptoms. Both go hand in hand. There are techniques you can try to improve your emotional wellness, such as mindfulness, that can help you decrease stress, depression and anxiety. On top of that, it's extremely helpful to take part in bereavement services after facing the loss of a loved one.

There are many physical symptoms of grieving, including:

- Digestive problems
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Sore muscles
- Chest pain

Let's explore the many ways in which grief can present itself physically.

**Exhaustion:** One of the more common early signs of grief is that feeling of being extremely tired all the time. It's that can't-get-out-of-bed tired that may keep you from getting up and doing all the things you used to do every day. It's physically exhausting to grieve, so give your body the time it needs to rest, as your body may feel fragile and tired. According to psychologist Dr. Catherine M. Sanders, bereaved people can get so weak they actually feel like they have the flu.

**Difficulty Thinking Clearly.** The cognitive effects of grief often times interfere with your ability to think clearly, to make wise decisions and to problem solve. Studies have shown that short-term memory can be affected for those who are grieving. When long-term complicated grief is involved, memory is impacted even more, as people can remember anything as long as the memory involves the deceased loved one. Studies also show that people who are grieving suffer a form of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), impacting their memory as well. Overall, depression, PTSD, and anxiety all have a hand in major memory issues, sometimes causing sufferers to forget even the simplest of tasks.

**Anxiety, Depression, and Substance Abuse.** Prolonged grief can bring on anxiety attacks and depression, which may lead to drug and alcohol abuse. Anxiety is a common component of the grieving process, to be sure; however, if symptoms do not lessen [over time] following the loss of a loved one, you can have an anxiety disorder or be experiencing complicated grief. According to [Psycom.net](http://Psycom.net), symptoms of an anxiety disorder include excessive worry,

restlessness, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, irritability, sleep disruption, muscle tension, phobias, and social anxiety.

People suffering anxiety may also suffer from panic attacks, characterized by shortness of breath, chest pain, fear of dying, a feeling of choking, nausea, dizziness, and heat or cold sensations.

Unresolved grief and depression can lead to a substance abuse problem. Many people try to deal with their feelings of loss by self-medicating with alcohol or drugs. However, rather than take away the pain, these substances act as depressants, often intensifying negative emotions like shame or sadness.

**Heart Health and Immunity.** Cardiac problems can arise as part of the grief process thanks to the release of stress hormones. Some people can have vulnerable cardiovascular and immune systems when grieving, leading to increased rates of cardiovascular disease and cancer. Acute stress can also cause [a condition known as] stress cardiomyopathy.

**Coping and Treatment.** Potential health consequences related to grieving are a real concern among caregivers and healthcare providers today. While grief is a natural response to permanent and impactful loss it should lessen ... ever so slightly over time. If it doesn't, it's important to reach out and tell someone – a loved one, a doctor, a grief counselor, a therapist.

But the importance of self-care cannot be stressed enough. You must take good care of yourself so you can stay well. Eat a healthy diet, drink plenty of water, rest, get exercise and get outside for Vitamin D. Address your grief head-on and participate in support groups, counseling, workshops – whatever it takes to get out and talk about how you're feeling and deal with it in a healthy way.

REMEMBER, WEST TEXAS REHAB'S HOSPICE OF SAN ANGELO IS HERE FOR YOU.

*If you would like to receive this newsletter via email, or if you would like to change your mailing address/information or be removed from the mailing list, please contact Karen at [kschmeltekopf@wtrc.com](mailto:kschmeltekopf@wtrc.com), or 325-658-6524. Thank you.*

# March 2022



Nonprofit Organization  
US Postage  
PAID  
San Angelo, TX  
Permit 251

Hospice of San Angelo, Inc.  
3001 S. Jackson Street  
San Angelo, Texas 76904