

LIFT

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

August 2022
Bereavement Newsletter

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

Grief Education Support Group

Tuesday, August 2, 5:30 pm
WTRC/HOSA Bates Bereavement Center
1933 University Avenue

Monthly Luncheon

Tuesday, August 16, 11 am
WTRC/HOSA IDT Room
1933 University Avenue

Upcoming: Pet Loss Memorial Service

Thursday, September 29, 2022

Pavilion, Civic League Park (International Waterlily Collection)
2 S. Park Street, San Angelo

For more information about any of HOSA's bereavement offerings, including individual counseling, support groups, and/or memorial services, please call the Bereavement Department at 325-658-6524 or email Karen at kschmeltekopf@wtrc.com.

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**EXCERPT: SUMMER PROVIDES CHALLENGES WHEN COPING WITH GRIEF**

By Melissa Waugh MS, [kchospice.org](http://kchospice.org)

**Vacation**

Summer may mean vacation time and traveling. If you and your loved one used to travel at this time of the year, you may find it hard to travel. Traveling alone to visit friends and family can lead to feelings of loneliness. This may be the first time you have ever traveled solo.

It's normal for these feelings to arise, so find ways to help support yourself. Writing down your emotions, talking with someone you trust and planning ahead to take short breaks when traveling can be helpful. If you find this year you can't travel due to finances, perhaps you can find ways to spend time with friends that are nearby. Plan mini-vacations where you can do something with a friend that you normally would not do, like take a class, visit a museum, or go to a park.

Your first summer without your loved one can be a challenge. Remember to take care of yourself. Reach out to friends, family and community that are supportive to you in your grief. Remember that the intensity of your emotions you feel will begin to lessen as you create new memories.

**DEPRESSION VS. GRIEF**

By Patti Anewalt, PhD, LPC, FT; [hospicefoundation.org](http://hospicefoundation.org)

Most people who are deeply grieving worry whether they are grieving "correctly." If this is you, perhaps in your moments of deep sadness you wonder what the difference is between grief and depression. This may be compounded if others offer comments such as "You seem to be holding up well" when, on the inside, you are not. It is important to understand the difference between clinical depression and the naturally deep sadness that accompanies grief.

Grief is the reaction to loss – it is comprised of all the reactions you are experiencing, not just emotionally but spiritually, physically, cognitively and socially. There's a clear correlation between how much you grieve and how much you love. Everyone grieves differently based on their personality, previous losses, the relationship to the loved one, and their environment, just to name a few influencing factors. This deep sadness serves a specific purpose. When

you have those times of deep sadness, you naturally turn inward, into yourself. You slow down and become enveloped with a protective layer that causes you to lose some of your focus on the outside world.

The key to this deep grief or sadness is to tend to it. In today's fast-paced world, many tend to block out or shove away times when grief hits you front and center. Doing this doesn't bypass the grief; it is still there, waiting to be tended to at a later date. It is far better to tune into these times telling yourself to pause and reflect, because the answers for what you need are there within you. By paying attention to this deep sadness, you will begin to understand what you need, in that moment and going forward, to move beyond those feelings. The moments will ebb and flow – they come and go. When these episodes occur, you may question "How do I go on?" Yet over time, the moments will become less frequent. In between these times of deep sadness, most people are able to experience some pleasures, such as the support of a good friend or the love of a grandchild.

In grief you may have a bad day or bad moment, but it eventually passes. Clinical depression, on the other hand, is not intermittent. It is persistent, ongoing, never changing. Depression is accompanied by a feeling of hopelessness and apathy. One will continually question, "Why go on?" While deep sadness is usually more focused on feelings surrounding the loss, clinical depression often has a negative self-focus which can become distorted with feelings of worthlessness and guilt. If you find you have lost all interest in everything you previously cared about and can find no joy or meaning in any of the moments of your life, you may be experiencing clinical depression. If your symptoms are not going away or if you have a history of depression, it is important to reach out to a mental health professional or your family doctor. Depression is treatable, often with ongoing counseling and sometimes with medication. Don't suffer in silence; reach out. There are always others who care.

#### SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

##### EXCERPT: IN GRIEF IS HOW WE LIVE NOW

By Dr. Gary Breedlove, Psychotherapist; *NYT* (May 7, 2022)

Perhaps the American Psychiatric Association is correct to turn prolonged grief into an illness and to cite the multiplicity of world-historical calamities to support this claim. Not because the diagnosis will lead to finding errant brain circuits to treat but because, as the links in the supply chain of our familiar world weaken and snap, we may need to be reminded that behind the outrage and blame is bereavement, that we may be entering a long age of grief and we have no one to console us for our losses or to build something new with, except one another.

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