

LIFT

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

May 2022
Bereavement Newsletter

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

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

Grief Education Support Group

Tuesday, May 3, 5:30 pm
WTRC/HOSA Bates Bereavement Center
1933 University Avenue

Monthly Luncheon

Tuesday, May 17, 11 am
WTRC/HOSA IDT Room
1933 University Avenue

Artistry of Life Memorial Service

Tuesday, June 14, 6 pm
San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts,
1 Love Street

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.

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EXCERPTS: "What's the Best Way to cope in an Anxious World? Do Something."
By Tara Parker-Pope for the New York Times (March 10, 2022)

Many people are experiencing a jumbled mix of emotions right now. There's sadness and a feeling of helplessness about the brutal attacks against the people of Ukraine, as well as anxiety and fear about the threat of nuclear weapons. Add to that exhaustion after two years of worrying about a deadly virus. And for some, there's also guilt, for the indulgence of talking about anxious feelings at a time when others are suffering more.

In early March, the American Psychological Association reported the results of its annual Stress in America Survey. Worries about Russia's invasion of Ukraine and global uncertainty were high on the list. Psychologists say that nobody should be shamed or feel guilty for feeling anxious. People with anxiety who have been triggered by world events should seek support and counseling. Medications may also be prescribed to help people manage anxiety.

One of the first steps to coping with anxiety is to remind ourselves that we live with uncertainty all the time.

"We often try to convince ourselves that we know what will happen," said Dr. Lakaesha Sullivan, a clinical psychologist in Atlanta. "Every time we get into a car, we don't know how the situation will unfold. We are experts at moving through life with uncertainty and managing and coping with uncertainty."

"It takes a heavy dose of accepting that these times are uncertain and accepting that times are always uncertain," adds Dr. Sullivan. "Feeling anxious right now is normal. It's human."

Dr. Judith Brewer, an associate professor at the Brown University School of Public Health and author of the book, "Unwinding Anxiety," notes that our brains are generally uncomfortable with uncertainty, which explains why we keep checking the television or the Internet for the latest updates. "Information to the brain is like food is to the stomach."

But even the pundits don't have a crystal ball, and constantly checking the news can increase anxiety. Dr. Brewer suggests naming your thoughts and recognizing that you're worried about an uncertain future. Naming your thoughts can help you stay more grounded in the present moment. "When we do that, we can ask ourselves what's needed right now," said Dr. Brewer. "I want the uncertainty to end, but I can't make it end. What do I actually need right now?"

One way to loosen the grip of anxiety is to help someone else. Several studies suggest that supporting others helps buffer our bodies against the detrimental effects of stress. A five-year study of 846 people in Detroit found that stressful life events appeared to take a greater toll on people who were less help to others, while helping others seemed to erase the detrimental physical effects of stressful experience. In a 2017 study of psychological resilience among American military veterans, higher levels of altruism and a sense of purpose predicted resiliency.

There are many ways to help. You can donate to aid organizations working in Ukraine, or volunteer with a local group sending supplies abroad. Find an organization that helps refugees from all over the world. Give blood to the American Red Cross. Your efforts don't have to directly impact Ukraine. As donations flow into Ukraine, other groups may get less. Consider supporting local food banks or other nonprofits in your community.

"If you're actively working toward alleviating the pain of others, it helps you alleviate your own anxiety at the same time," said Dr. Bayoumi, author of "How Does It Feel to Be a Problem?" "That kind of work is self healing. If you're doing something with your own talents to try to make the world a better place, I think that's a way of coping with the tremors of destruction that are vibrating around us." There are many "kinds of work to be done."

May 31: Observing Memorial Day

Memorial Day is a federal holiday set aside to honor those who lost their lives fighting in the Civil War, World War I, World War II, The Vietnam War, The Korean War, and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

While many will spend Memorial Day relaxing at home or outdoors, it's also important to spend a few moments during the unofficial start of summer remembering those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our nation.

To observe the day, you might go to a local Memorial Day parade in your community or watch the National Memorial Day Parade or the National Memorial Day Concert on television, virtually visit a war memorial in D.C., learn about Gold Star Families or the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, brush up on your Memorial Day knowledge or your family's military history, fly the American flag, make a Memorial Day craft with children, or observe a moment of silence at 3 p.m.

"May we never forget our fallen comrades.

Freedom isn't free."

-Sgt. Major Bill Paxton



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