

See the Good in Grief

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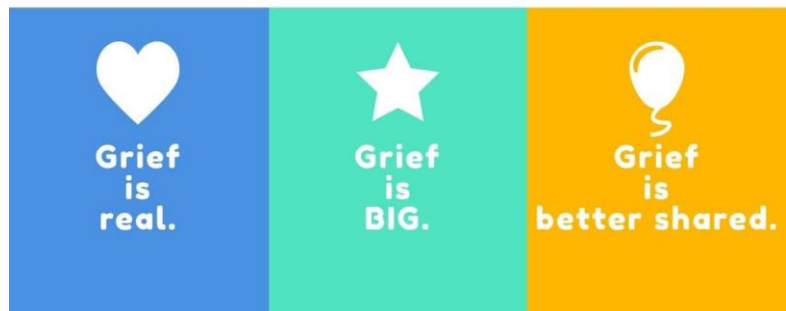
Good Grief!

We know that grief is the most universal experience there is. No one is immune to it. Yet, grief is one experience we often try to keep to ourselves and not share with others. We may fear that we will become emotional, or we may worry that we are burdening others with our grief. At the Baptist Centers for Good Grief, we know that grief is real, grief is BIG, and grief is better shared. Sharing grief allows for connection, empathy and support. Sharing grief helps foster community and a sense that we are not alone. Our Facebook page offers a place for people to share their grief and support each other, and we invite you to join our community by following and commenting on this page.

Baptist Centers for Good Grief

We hope to “see” everyone soon,

Angela Hamblen Kelly, LCSW
Executive Director



Grieving our Dads



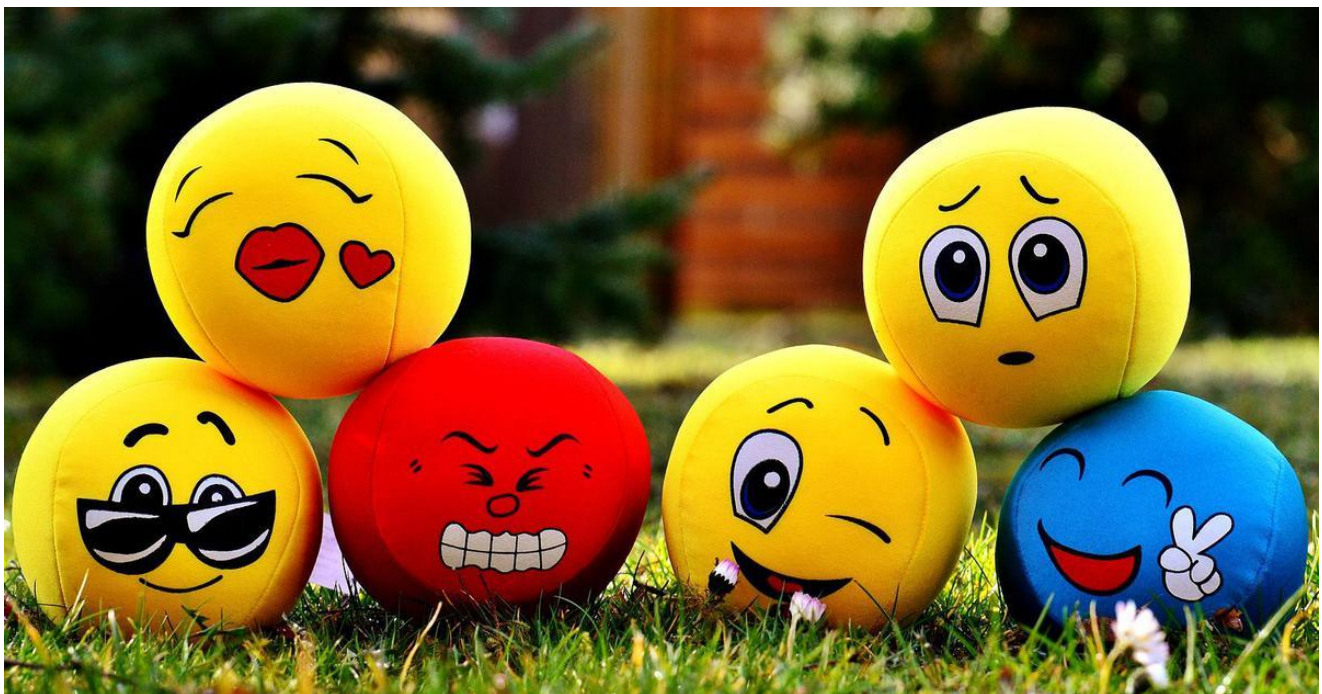
Special days, such as holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, etc., can make our grief more intense. Grief is hard on any regular day, but when you add the expectations and memories of special days, it can sometimes intensify the feelings. Father's Day is a wonderful day to celebrate the gift of fathers in our families. However, this can also be a very difficult day for those who have lost a father, or for a father who has lost a child. As we approach Father's Day, the constant reminders, such as advertisements for the “perfect” Father's Day gifts and all the talk of Father's Day plans, can cause feelings of anxiety and dread, as well as a

wave of other emotions and memories. Those with good memories of their fathers miss them even more deeply; those with complicated or difficult relationships with their fathers can be filled with regret and sadness. In order to experience these difficult times while still working through your grief in a healthy way, it is important to remember a few tips for coping: 1. Allow yourself to feel whatever you feel. 2. Come up with a plan, even if the plan is just to talk about it or to have no plan. 3. Remember to include children in these plans and let them acknowledge the day in the way that feels comfortable to them – all people experience grief differently. 4. Take time for self-care during these intense days. 5. Most importantly, allow yourself to remember, for it is through memories that we keep our connections to those we love.

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The Many Emotions of Grief

Grief can bring about numerous emotions, such as sadness, shock, anger, guilt, fear, numbness, loneliness, and confusion, just to name a few. Feelings are neither good nor bad; they just are what they are. However, with so many different (and sometimes contradictory) feelings, grief can seem overwhelming at times. Some grieving people even talk about feeling “crazy.” While it may not seem normal, it IS normal to feel many different emotions while grieving. The important thing to remember is that everyone grieves differently, so the emotional reaction one person has to a loss is not necessarily the same as another person’s. Finding healthy ways to express these emotions contributes to healing. Healthy coping can include talking about your feelings, using creative arts, physical exertion, writing/journaling and memorializing your loved one. These feelings are too big to experience in isolation, so reach out for support from friends, family, professionals and community resources to help you on your grief journey.



Meet Frazer Gieselmann

Frazer Gieselmann and his wife, Dana, are the parents of Ann Carlyle, Milla and Elle. Milla and Elle were both diagnosed with Batten's disease, a genetic, neurodegenerative disease with no cure. After Milla and Elle were diagnosed, the Gieselmanns, along with their oldest daughter, Ann Carlyle, started anticipatory grief counseling with the Baptist Centers for Good Grief. Milla died in 2016, followed by Elle in 2019.

Throughout these difficult times, Frazer and Dana have turned to the Baptist Centers for Good Grief, which, as the couple said, "was essential to their family's journey through a grief that is complicated and messy." After Milla's death, Frazer and Dana chose to honor her memory by naming the Baptist Centers for Good Grief Midtown location, Milla's House. Frazer and Dana have worked to help secure funding for Milla's House so that free grief counseling is available to all who need it.



Coping with grief is an ongoing process, and Frazer has found journaling to be especially helpful to him. The following is from his writings:

I recently read this question as it relates to the civil unrest in our country right now:

Where is our collective pain supposed to go in the absence of justice?

As a father of three girls, two of which went to be with the Lord before they were 8 years old, I think the question applies to us as individuals. Where does my pain go in the absence of justice? Surely, it cannot be just to have two daughters pass away, and not only pass away, but to live a life of much suffering. I think that finding a healthy place for pain is uniquely difficult for men struggling with the loss of a child, children or spouse. So often, men are not afforded the luxury of expressing grief, mourning and lament in a healthy, physical way. My pain is to be expressed and it is rarely a peaceful expression. My grief is destructive at times (I burned and destroyed an entire patio set and grill one night in the name of Old Testament lament and it was a good thing) and peaceful at times whether through writing or drawing and at other times it is very physical through running or cycling. I do not have the answers, but I know there is a path forward and it takes a lot of work and a lot of support. That includes me opening up to some of those around me, to allow them to support me and my work. It includes being honest with others and seeking help from those close and those trained to serve. Over time, I have learned that there may not be an absence of justice in my experience, maybe I do not know what justice is...and so for today, I put one foot in front of the other, one-step at a time.

Be the Good in Grief

We are grateful for every single dollar donated to support our Baptist Centers for Good Grief, and we are especially honored to receive gifts in memory of loved ones you, or others, have lost. We often receive gifts in memory of loved ones after counseling sessions and on birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays throughout the year. Sometimes we receive gifts in lieu of sending flowers to a visitation or funeral.

When you remember a loved one by supporting the work we do, you are giving others an incredible gift too. We call this paying it forward.

We hope you might want to pay it forward to help someone else on their grief journey. If you are interested in being the good in someone's grief today, visit baptistgriefcenters.org/give to donate, or call us at (901)861-5656 for additional information.



Take Five!

Here are five resources to help you along your journey.

1. Art journaling <https://artjournalist.com/how-to-start-an-art-journal/>
2. Visit www.griefshare.org to sign up for a daily email encouragement for one year that focuses on grief
3. A Grief Observed by C.S. Lewis
4. Grief Out Loud podcast from the Dougy Center
5. Healing your Grieving Heart – 100 practical ideas – Alan Wolfelt, Ph.D.



The Next Step

This is an activity to complete on your own as part of your way to cope and express your grief.

Set a timer for 3 minutes and use the box below for a 3-minute free write. Free write means you can write about whatever comes into your stream of consciousness. There is no right or wrong and no need to pay attention to grammar or punctuation. Just write continuously for the allotted period of time.



My GRIEF feels like.....



CENTERS FOR
GOOD GRIEF

**KEMMONS WILSON FAMILY
CENTER FOR GOOD GRIEF**

1520 W. Poplar Ave.
Collierville, TN 38017

MILLA'S HOUSE

326 Ellsworth
Memphis, TN 38111

**NEA BAPTIST
CENTER FOR GOOD GRIEF**

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