

# See the Good in Grief

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Good Grief!

It's hard to believe that it's been almost a full year since our country has started coping with this global pandemic. In March of last year, all of our lives changed in what felt like an instant. This is a feeling that our grieving people know all too well. Let's take a moment and pause to remember those who have died from COVID-19, the loved ones grieving those losses, and all of those struggling with the isolation, anxiety, and depression that has come with the pandemic.

Let's also remember that a change of season is almost here. And often with this transition from winter to spring, we feel hopeful. There is hope here at the Baptist Centers for Good Grief as we look to the future for both brighter days and opportunities. We are still moving forward with our Cottage development project. This will create several opportunities for our community to be involved, including volunteer opportunities, naming in honor of loved ones, charitable giving, and an increase in available programming. It's a testament to the endurance of hope that we are able to make this dream a reality. Let us know if you would like more donor information.

Sincerely,

Angela Hamblen  
Kelly, LCSW  
Executive Director  
Baptist Centers for  
Good Grief



Good Grief Cottage  
Collierville, TN | 01.19.008.00 | 02.23.20  
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Perspective View at Main Entry



## Your Season Of Grief

It's almost time for the season to change again. Can you believe it? Grieving people often experience time differently, so you may or may not. Some grievers describe that, at times, it feels like they have been grieving forever when it's really only been a matter of days or months. Other times, they have said that it feels like time is standing absolutely still. The world continues moving, and you may feel frozen in this spot with these overwhelming, heavy emotions. This means that you may experience the change of season differently from non-grievors. You are in the midst of your season of grief.

Grief is a season of its own with different time frames, areas of focus, and emotions. Early grief is a time that is about nothing more than survival – remembering to breathe, eat, and rest. Some days, just doing the basic activities of daily living is all you can do, and that is enough. Then, sometimes suddenly, you may find yourself right in the midst of some movement. The reality settles in for you, and the emotion intensifies. You may start to have questions about who you are and how you want your life to look. This may ebb and flow for many months. In this space, you work on coping skills and identity reformation. So what comes next? Reconciliation is your end point that is not really an end. It is accepting that your loss has happened, coping with it, integrating it into your life the way it looks now, and allowing yourself some sort of forward movement. Just like seasons in nature, your grief is not linear. You will probably experience a winter storm in April or a heat wave in October. Unexpected grief bursts may make you think that you are regressing. In truth, you are experiencing your season of grief. The longer you live with it and the harder you work at coping, the more real reconciliation as a goal will become. Persevere.



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## Coping With Change

One of the major issues at the crux of your bereavement will be how to cope with change. This was a change that happened to you; you didn't ask for it, you don't want it. Yet here it stands. One of the challenges of coping with change is finding what works for you. First, you can try to acknowledge how your life has changed – talk to your support people about how each day looks and feels different than it did when your loved one was here. This acknowledgement to others can help them and you grasp the enormity of what has happened here. Realizing that enormity may also help your support people do a better job of meeting your needs.



Once you have acknowledged the changes that have occurred, you can think about next steps. The key here is taking things in very small, “bite sized” pieces. Everything about your life may have changed with this loss. Address one thing at a time. Maybe now you are the one responsible for a household – break that down into different parts and focus on just one for now. As always, do not be afraid to seek help in whatever way needed.

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## Be the Good in Grief

Let us introduce you to our dear friends Missy & Jim Rainer.

### **When did you get involved with the Grief Center?**

I was really interested in getting involved. My husband, Jim, who had a very strong relationship with Baptist, urged me to talk to Scott Fountain and Jenny Nevels and tell them I was ready to be involved with the Baptist Foundation. I always believe that God puts you in places at the right time, and this definitely proved to be the right time. Getting involved with the newly formed Reynolds-Wilson Council began a long relationship with the Baptist Centers for Good Grief.



### **What attracted you to the Center?**

I took a tour of the Center as I was learning about its mission, and emotions overwhelmed me. My father died suddenly at 59. I was 30, married, the mother of 2 little boys, and I had a hard time accepting Dad's death. I kept a journal at the time, but really did not talk to anyone or have a place like the Center. After the tour, there was no doubt in my mind that I would be supporting the Center and its mission.

### **What motivates you to stay involved?**

I've been involved in many organizations in the community, serving on boards, working in development, and promoting missions and events. The Center isn't an event, it's a lifeline, a necessity for our community. Being a wife, mother of 5, and grandmother of 3, I know that the health and well-being of grieving family members are the most important things to check on. I keep thinking back on the grief that I've experienced in my life and how the Center would have been a part of my therapy.

### **In your opinion, what is the most important work that the Center does?**

The Center is a place of comfort, love, and healing broken hearts. It is a place where friendships grow between counselors and families, and support is always there. It is a safe place for all.

### **Of what contribution or achievement are you most proud?**

Jim and I chaired "Art of Caring" for several years after having been involved with the event from its early days. I was so touched by the support from the community for this fundraiser. The mission is clear, and there is no misconception of why support is needed. Art of Caring is a wonderful way to highlight our talented artists, and to spread the word about the Center.

### **Do you have an anecdote about the Center that really moved you?**

I had the opportunity to hear the story of a family where the murder of a mom by the dad destroyed the family. The children left behind were embraced by the Center, their grief was acknowledged, and their fears were worked through. On a more personal note, while on my first tour, Angela showed the group one of the counseling rooms that utilized a



sandbox with trucks, bulldozers and shovels in it. As I looked at the sandbox, memories flooded my mind and tears filled my eyes because I remembered taking my two little boys to my dad's grave, where they saw a backhoe at the cemetery. As we stood there, they asked me why I didn't use it to dig up their granddaddy. Boy did I need the Center back then!

### **Do you have a message to share?**

The Center for Good Grief is definitely a special place. It is also a much needed place where grief can be examined, explained and worked through. As I learned from the beginning of my time supporting the Center, you do not have to plan big events to raise awareness. All you need is the support of the families who have benefited from its love to spread the word of its mission to their friends and business acquaintances. Grief is not a disease but a part of life that we all must learn to accept and deal with. Grief does not discriminate against race, religion or socio-economic background. Everyone in God's creation is vulnerable to grief and will experience it at least one time during his or her life. This is why the Center is so vital to our community.

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## Miles for Milla's House

Save the date – the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Miles 4 Milla's House is happening on May 22, 2021!

Miles 4 Milla's House is a family-friendly event focused on raising funds to support the work done at Milla's House. Typically, there are three options to participate in this event: there is a 40-mile ride; a 6-mile family fun ride; and a post-ride celebration. All of the details are being finalized, and we hope you will make plans to join us! We will update you on details to come.

Miles 4 Milla's House is an essential fundraiser that allowed us to open Milla's House, the midtown location of our Centers for Good Grief, in 2017. With the support of sponsors, donations and participants over the years, this event has raised over \$300,000. To put that in terms of grief services, this event has provided 2,307 individual grief sessions!

Would you consider joining us this year to remember your loved one at our 5<sup>th</sup> annual Miles 4 Milla's House? If you are interested in helping us raise money, we would love to talk to you about sponsorship opportunities – the entry-level sponsorship is \$750, and at \$3,000, you can get your logo or family name on this year's t-shirt!



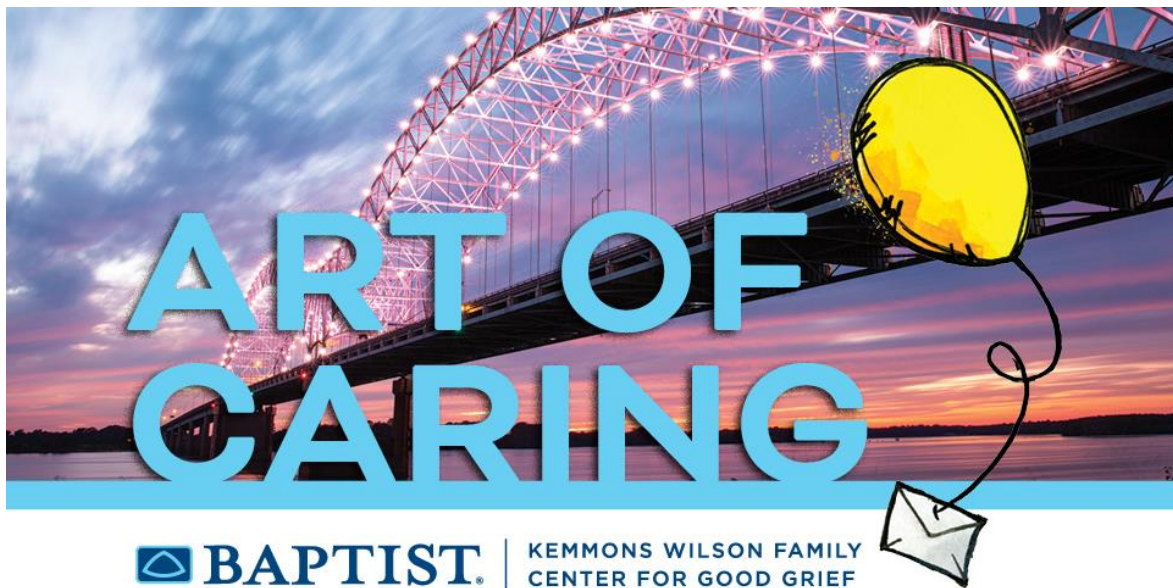
Our services are only available because of donations and dollars raised by wonderful friends and supporters. If you would like more information about ways you can help, reach out to [Melissa.Surles@bmhcc.org](mailto:Melissa.Surles@bmhcc.org) or visit <https://baptistgriefcenters.org/give> to donate today!

Grief is real. Grief is BIG. Grief is better shared.

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## Save the Date

We hope you will make plans to participate in Art of Caring, our signature fundraiser benefitting the Kemmons Wilson Family Center for Good Grief. Stay tuned for exciting details and announcements about this year's event, which will be held April 27 - April 30!



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## Dates to Remember

**Kaleidoscope Series** - educational and supportive virtual grief seminars provided by grief counselors for grieving adults.

***Spiritual Aspects of Grief*** – April 14 from 4:00-5:00pm

***When Grandparents Grieve*** – May 19 from 1:00-2:00pm



## **Registration Required:**

TN/MS call 901-861-5656

AR/MO call 870-936-7719

## **Grief Support Groups**

### **Adult Grief Groups**

***COVID-19 Grief Support Group*** – weekly virtual group

March 24, 31, April 7, 14, 21 & 28 from 4:00 – 5:00pm

***6 Week Series Grief Group*** – weekly virtual group

March 22, 29, April 5, 12, 19 & 26 from 12:00-1:00pm or 5:30-6:30pm

***Child Loss Grief Support Group*** – weekly virtual group

March 23, 30, April 6, 13, 20 & 27 from 4:00-5:00pm

## **Registration Required:**

TN/MS call 901-861-5656

AR/MO call 870-936-7719



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## **Take Five!**

Here are five resources to help you along your journey:

1. “Manifesto of the Brave and Brokenhearted” – Brene' Brown

<https://brenebrown.com/downloads/>

2. “The Journey Through Grief: The Six Needs of Mourning” – Alan Wolfelt -

<https://www.centerforloss.com/2016/12/journey-grief-six-needs-mourning/>

3. “Grief Emotions Aren’t Good or Bad, They Just Are”  
- <https://whatsyourgrief.com/grief-emotions-arent-good-or-bad/>

4. *Through a Season of Grief: Devotions for Your Journey Back to Joy* – 365 day Christian devotional by Bill Dunn and Kathy Leonard

5. “Seasons of Grief”  
<https://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/seasons-of-grief>



## The Next Step

On a day that the weather allows, spend an hour outside (you can do this alone or with a friend or support person). Make some observations about the changes that you see in the natural world around you. Keep in your mind and heart the changes that you have experienced since the loss of your loved one. Make a list of these that feel most overwhelming to you. Then next to each item, list one coping skill that helps (even if it only helps a little).



CENTERS FOR  
GOOD GRIEF

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Collierville, TN 38017

**MILLA'S HOUSE**  
326 Ellsworth  
Memphis, TN 38111

**NEA BAPTIST  
CENTER FOR GOOD GRIEF**  
1717 Executive Square  
Jonesboro, AR 72401

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