

# See the Good in Grief

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Good Grief!

Over the years, we have had the privilege of working with many bereaved siblings, both children and adults. Worldwide, bereaved siblings are remembered in November. However, we did not want to wait until then to talk about sibling grief. Why, you might wonder? For no other reason than the fact that people don't think about the significance of your loss enough.

When a sibling is born into a family, the system shifts to make space, and balance is created. Often, this a child's first experience with having a friend. As the years go forward, if siblings grew up together, they have little experience of life without one another. They share a parent or parents, and they can be "partners in crime." That role is irreplaceable.

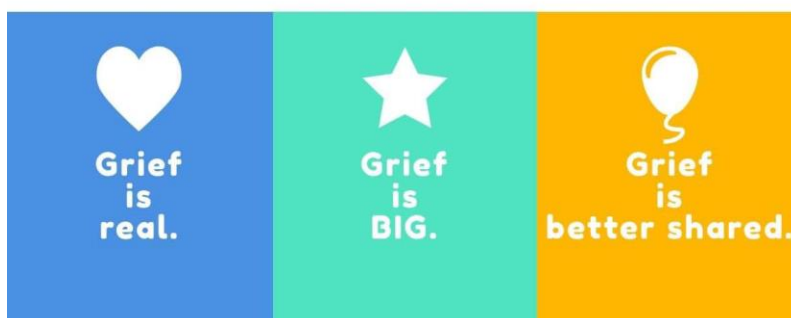
I know this first hand. My brother, Paul, died six years ago. He was my first friend. His death changed me forever. I lost my brother, my friend, the person who made me laugh harder than anyone, but also made me crazier than anyone, too. Since his death, I have found it to be so helpful when people say his name and share memories of him.

Sibling grief is big, it's real, and it's better shared.

Sincerely,

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

**Baptist Centers for Good Grief**



## The Forgotten Mourner – Loss of a Sibling

Bereavement due the loss of a sibling is significant, no matter the age of the sibling or the griever. Yet, in spite of this significance, it is often unacknowledged. Many times, siblings are the “lost” or “forgotten” grievers in the family system. As a culture, we are quicker to acknowledge the intensity and disruption that the loss of a child or spouse brings than that of a sibling. Keep in mind that the loss of a sibling is just as intense, disruptive and significant as other types of losses.

Let’s spend a moment thinking about why and how this is so significant. The loss of a sibling in the family system creates a void and major shifts in relationships. In most family systems, people play the roles that they always have. Remove one player from that system and everything becomes unbalanced.

Children (and adults for that matter) can feel guilty because sibling relationships are often rooted in some ambivalence – there is competition and rivalry, they love each other but don’t always like each other. This is confusing to manage when a sibling dies.

So what does the grieving sibling need? The grieving sibling needs acknowledgement that what they are coping with is real and deserving of attention. The grieving sibling needs to be able to express their grief openly, including ambivalence, and work on coping skills. Finally being able to share memories and participate in memorial activities for their sibling is an important part of the healing process.

### **Tips for younger grieving siblings:**

- Encourage memory work. Help the grieving child create a photo book or a memory journal about their sibling. If you feel unable to do this yourself because of your own grief, have other family members or friends help.
- Look for changes (subtle or not) in your child’s behavior, school performance, development, health, and self-esteem. These domains are commonly affected by grief. Sometimes children get the sense that they are “different” from their friends, and this can be isolating. If you notice



any of these concerns, they may be an indicator to you that your child is in need of additional support.

- Ensure that your child has adequate support, especially if you are grieving yourself. Take the initiative to talk with them about their loved one. Be sure that they know that they can talk to you or other family, friends, church support, their counselor at the Baptist Centers for Good Grief, etc.
- Notice if your child or children have started to “take care” of you. Often children recognize the intensity of parental grief and want to be able to support you, whether or not this is helpful for their own process. Your living child/children need(s) you. It is important to model open expression of grief, but also to provide them with reassurance that you are taking care of yourself and that you will be OK.

### **Tips for older grieving siblings:**

- Acknowledge the importance of your grief as a sibling. Siblings are the only other people who understand being born into your unique family of origin. They are often your first friends with whom you share a special connection throughout your life.
- Honor your sibling’s memory in ways that are meaningful to you. Examples include verbally sharing memories, putting up pictures, looking at photo albums as a family, doing something that they loved to do, or making memorial donations in their honor.
- Find outlets for your grief. Seek support. Talk to other family members, friends, people at church, or your counselor at the Baptist Centers for Good Grief.
- Know that in sibling relationships, as in other types of relationships, you grieve for the past (shared history), the present (the most current state of your relationship and what you are missing most right now), and the future (no new memories to be made with your sibling, someone who may have known you for your entire life).



## Celebrating July a Little Differently

Almost every month of the year, there can be something through which grieving people have to survive. Holidays, birthdays, special days, anniversary days - this “marking of time” is seemingly endless. For many, July 4<sup>th</sup> is a significant one of these celebratory days, a day that is attached to many memories. So we remember this day, but we decided that we can also take a different approach this month.

Were you aware that July 3<sup>rd</sup> is National Eat Beans Day, July 14<sup>th</sup> is Pandemonium Day, or that July 26<sup>th</sup> is Bagelfest? You might be thinking, “Why would that matter to me even the slightest bit?” All in all, it doesn’t really matter, but it can help to shift your focus.

We at the Baptist Centers for Good Grief are big proponents of using humor as a coping skill. As often as you hear crying coming from our counseling rooms, you hear laughter too. It’s because sometimes, if we don’t allow ourselves moments of joy, moments of levity, it becomes too overwhelming. So for one day, try to allow yourself some space. Step away from the intensity of grief for just a little bit, and celebrate National Avocado Day on July 31<sup>st</sup> by either eating some guac or smearing it on your face for that fresh vegetable look.





## Be the Good in Grief – Miles for Milla’s House

What a great day it was for Miles for Milla’s House on May 22!

We raised \$125,000 for the grief counseling needs of Milla’s House. Thank you to the 270+ riders who rode on the 43 mile ride, the 75+ riders who rode on the family ride, and the 500+ supporters who were on site!!



Check out this video to see fun footage from the day.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=r8FLOTRWJTc&feature=youtu.be>



We are so thankful for Frazer and Dana Gieselmann and their commitment to grief services in our community through the work of Milla’s House. Frazer and 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 our 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.

# Growing the Good in Grief

Summer is here! And soon (September!!!) we will be breaking ground for our new addition to the Kemmons Wilson Center for Good Grief, called The Cottage.



The Cottage adds 4,100 square feet of space to our campus adjacent to the Kemmons Wilson Family Center for Good Grief in Collierville, Tennessee. It includes a large multipurpose room, two break out meeting rooms, two private counseling rooms and an outdoor reflective space. Nestled beside our original facility in a welcoming pastoral setting, The Cottage significantly increases our ability to serve more children and families. Construction is anticipated to be complete by March 2022.

LRK Good Grief Cottage  
Collierville, TN | 01/19/2018.00 | 02.23.20  
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Perspective View at Main Entry

BAPTIST  
SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCH

Here's a list of just a few programs we will be adding:

- Adult Grief Retreats
- Camp Good Grief – day camps & weekend camps for children & teens
- Monthly Grief Seminars
- Family Gathering Time – creative grief exercises, family movie nights, family grief scavenger hunts, and more
- Putting Emotions Into Motion – grief yoga, grief walking groups, and more
- Grief groups specific for homicide loss, suicide loss and drug related loss
- Grief Bible Study
- Teen specific programming- monthly
- And so much more!!!!

There are a variety of ways to contribute, including commitments that can be pledged over time, corporate sponsorships, individual contributions and gifts made through estate plans. We will be offering tours and presentations to the community, and we hope that you will consider how you can be a part of this exciting effort. The future is before us, and we hope that you will choose to grow with us. For further information, you may call Jenny Nevels at 901 227-7141. We will also share the construction journey through our social media pages. Stay tuned for more information in our August edition of *See The Good In Grief*.

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

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## Be the Good in Grief - Tuga's Project

The NEA Baptist Center for Good Grief in Jonesboro wrapped up its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Tuga's Project last month, engaging local businesses in both raising funds and bringing awareness to the free services provided at the Center.



Tuga's name means "grief, deep sorrow" in Croatian. He is a "grief friend" that is given to every child or teen seen at the Center to bring comfort to those grieving the loss of a loved one.

Started in 2019 with the help of local business owners, Chris and Kim Fowler, and their chain of KFC and Taco Bell restaurants, Tuga's Project encourages participating businesses to ask their customers for a donation at the point of sale. This year saw over 70 businesses joining to raise funds to continue to meet the needs of our grieving community, raising \$53,434.70

For more information, or to see how your business can participate, please call 870-936-7719.

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## Be the Good in Grief - Art Slam

In 2004, the physicians of NEA Baptist Hospital were enthusiastically looking for ways to raise money for the still young NEA Baptist Charitable Foundation. A group of doctors joined together and hosted the first Art Slam event – an event like no other! That successful event led to another, and this July, the NEA Baptist Charitable Foundation will host its 12<sup>th</sup> Art Slam event. Art Slam is a private party and auction with art donated from local artists, as well as many pieces from our very own physicians.

In celebration of the Foundation's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, there will be two incredible items up for raffle at this year's event. In partnership with Sissy's Log Cabin and Encore Bank, the raffle winner will have his or her choice of a Tag Heuer Carrera Calibre watch, valued at \$2,500, or a Gucci Marmont handbag, valued at \$2,350. Tickets will be sold only online, and the winner does not need to be present to win.

For 20 years, the NEA Baptist Charitable Foundation has been committed to enhancing the health care and lives of those in our region through the programs and services they support, including the NEA Baptist Center for Good Grief.



For more information on Art Slam, or to purchase tickets for the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Raffle, please visit [NEABaptistFoundation.org](http://NEABaptistFoundation.org).



# 20th Anniversary Raffle

- \$25 a Ticket • 5 for \$100

[NEABAPTISTFOUNDATION.ORG](http://NEABAPTISTFOUNDATION.ORG)



**GUCCI PURSE**  
The small GG Marmont camera bag has a softly structured shape and a flap closure with Double G hardware. The sliding chain strap can be worn multiple ways, changing between a shoulder and a top handle bag. Made in matelassé chevron leather with a heart on the back.



**TAG HEUER CARRERA CALIBRE**  
5 Day Automatic Day-date  
Stainless with blue dial

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## Dates to Remember

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

***Coping With Anger & Guilt in Grief*** – September 20 from 5:30-6:30pm

**Registration Required:**  
TN/MS call 901-861-5656  
AR/MO call 870-936-771





## **Grief Support Groups**

### **Spouse Loss Grief Support Group** - weekly virtual group

August 17, 24, 31 and September 7, 14 & 21 from 10:30-11:30 am or 5:30-6:30pm

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

September 16, 23, 30 and October 7, 14 & 21 from 12:00-1:00pm or 5:30-6:30pm

### **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. “Grieving the Death of a Sibling” –  
<https://whatsyourgrief.com/death-of-a-sibling/>

2. “Reasons to Celebrate in July” –  
<https://www.thespruce.com/reasons-to-celebrate-in-july-4164366>

3. *Healing the Adult Sibling’s Grieving Heart: 100 Practical Ideas After Your Brother or Sister Dies* – Alan Wolfelt, PhD

4. *Tragedy Plus Time: A Tragi-Comic Memoir* – Adam Cayton-Holland

5. “Helping Children Cope With Grief” - <https://childmind.org/guide/helping-children-cope-grief/>





# The Next Step

## Make a Connection

With a trusted individual – a friend, a support person, a pastor - try telling them one thing that you are feeling this month. After you discuss the feeling and where it may be coming from, see if you can identify what you might need that is creating the feeling. For example, “I am feeling lonely this month, and this is stemming from a need for more support.” Then, practice asking your trusted person for what you need and also what you might want. Asking for help is a skill that most people are not good at, but it is an absolute necessity for grieving people.



CENTERS FOR  
GOOD GRIEF

[baptistgriefcenters.org](http://baptistgriefcenters.org)

**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**  
1717 Executive Square  
Jonesboro, AR 72401