

# See the Good in Grief

Issue #17 • 09/01/2021



Good Grief!

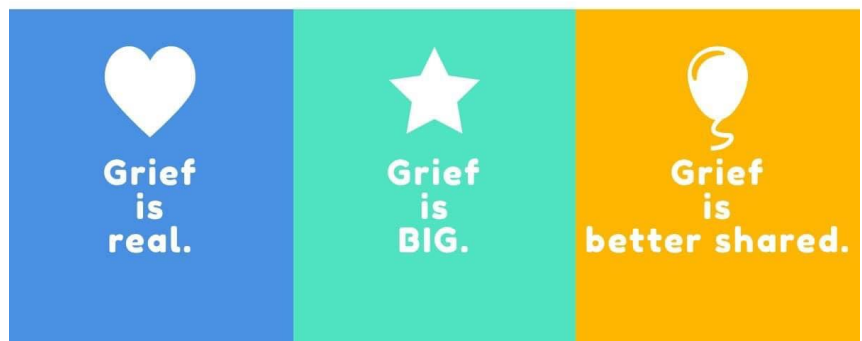
September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. Let's look at some of the statistics. According to the CDC, in 2019, suicide was the 10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death overall in the United States. And it was the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death for young people between the ages of 10 and 34. Why am I telling you all of this? To show you that this is a problem. A big one.

So, we direct our attention this month to grief from suicide loss and to suicidal ideation in bereaved people. As mental health professionals, it is our duty to raise awareness of both of these issues. Those of us at the Baptist Centers for Good Grief are no strangers to talking about the uncomfortable things – we talk all day long about death, dying, funerals, and grief. We do this because even though they are difficult topics, we know that it is important for them to be discussed and shared openly. Discussion of suicide benefits just about everyone – those who have lost a loved one to suicide, those who are experiencing suicidal thoughts of their own, and the community as a whole. Grief and suicide loss are real, they're BIG, and they're better shared.

Sincerely,

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

**Baptist Centers for Good Grief**



## Suicide Grief – Fighting the Stigma Together

As a society, we struggle to talk about suicide. Our inability to talk about suicide openly does not make it go away – all it does is stigmatize people who struggle with suicidality and marginalize those who are bereaved from suicide loss. If you are bereaved due to a loss by suicide, consider telling the truth about what has happened to you and your loved one. While not everyone needs to know what has happened, it is important to work toward telling some key support people in order to relieve the burden of carrying such a secret. Truth-telling helps destigmatize the loss.



Have an awareness of the impact of language that people use regarding suicide. It can be hurtful to survivors. One common phrase is “committed suicide,” with the word “committed” used in the same context as “committed a crime.” This further stigmatizes the loss. Our preferred way at the Center for Good Grief is to say that a loved one “died by suicide.” What is most important is the language that you choose regarding the death of your loved one.

Understand that grieving a loss by suicide is unique and complicated. Sometimes the “why questions” are overwhelming and require a lot of focus from the bereaved. Other times, feelings of guilt (rational or not) can be intense and cause the bereaved to feel stuck. It can be common to feel great anger toward your deceased loved one. Know that it is ok to have these feelings. Expressing them to a counselor can help you sort through, process, and cope with the intense emotions you may be experiencing. By allowing yourself to feel the pain of the loss, you allow yourself to heal.

There is a lot of talk about suicide prevention. In fact, September is suicide prevention awareness month. This can cause conflicting feelings for those bereaved by suicide. “If it’s so preventable, why couldn’t I prevent it?” There are often some warning signs when someone is suicidal. However, they are not always recognizable as such to loved ones. Often, like many things in life, they can only be identified in hindsight. Suicide can be a choice that is planned out ahead of time, or it can be an impulsive act. While the work of suicide prevention is vital

and necessary to support suicidal individuals and their families, it is important to acknowledge that not every suicide is preventable.

Finally, a word on suicidal thoughts during bereavement. It's actually a pretty common occurrence for grieving people to think about and sometimes even wish for their own death. For some, it is a reflection of their desire to be reunited with their loved one. For others, a sentiment that echoes the deep well of pain that accompanies this new and foreign life. Whatever the reason, it needs to be taken seriously, and it needs to be addressed. If you feel this way, please talk about it with a counselor at the Center or call the crisis center hotline at 1-800-273-TALK.

---

## Coping Skills Series Part 1 – Giving Yourself Permission to Be Where You Are in Your Grief

We are going to start highlighting particular coping skills each month in order to help the grieving person add more tools to their toolbox. We know that in order to cope with grief moment to moment and day to day, it helps to have as many useful coping skills at your disposal as possible. This month, we are going to highlight “Giving yourself permission to be where you are in your grief.”

What exactly does this mean? At its heart, this is an act of self-love and acceptance. We've talked at length about how each person's grief is unique and how there are no definite road maps. So we challenge you today to consider where you are. Maybe you are only a few months out from your loss and you are just trying to remember to eat. Ok, that is where you are today. Try to remember to eat – that is your only job. Maybe you are 9 months out from your loss and you can't quite catch the thread of who you are anymore because nothing feels normal. All right, you are in the “land of lost identity.” That is where you are right now – work on it when you feel able and leave it alone when you don't.

People spend a lot of time and energy wondering why they aren't “further along” or why they are feeling the way they do. This time and energy is a waste and devoid of grace. You cannot make your grief move faster, you cannot rush the process. Give yourself grace. Know that what is happening right now is merely a snapshot – you are this way at this particular moment in time. A month, a year, ten years from now, the snapshot may look different. You may find that your grief actually feels lighter when you stop trying to change it.





## Be the Good in Grief – Camp Good Grief 5K

The Camp Good Grief 5K is October 3!

- Register by September 13th if you would like to purchase an “In Memory of” sign to be displayed on the course.
- Register by September 16th if you would like your loved one’s name printed on the 2021 race shirt.
- Register by September 22nd if you want to skip packet pickup and would prefer your packet shipped to you.

With a variety of options to participate and support, we hope you will register today:

<https://campgoodgrief5k.raceroster.com/>

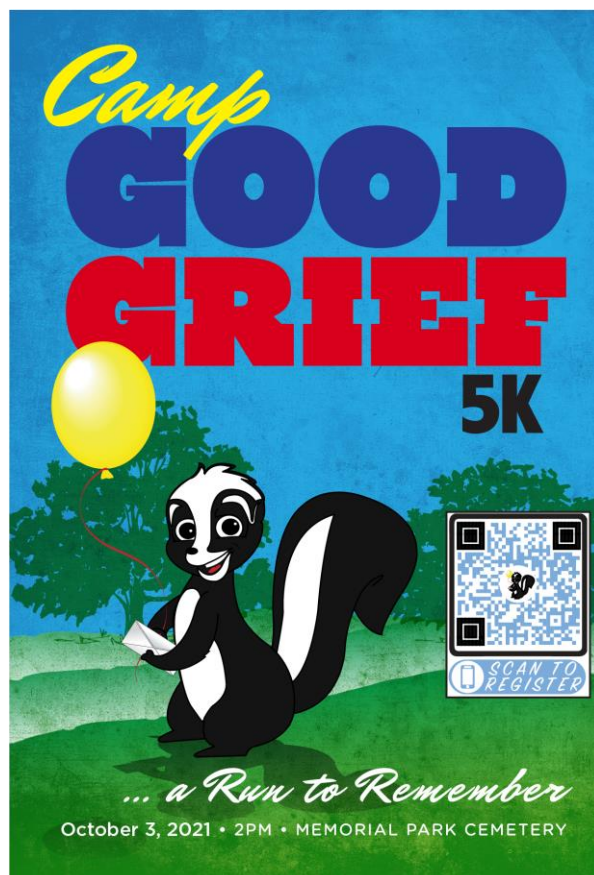
You can create or join a team online to help us increase awareness and raise funds to continue making programs like Camp Good Grief possible. We always have sponsorship opportunities available, and our Yellow Balloon Sponsor level starts at just \$500. We think this would be a wonderful way for families, friends, or coworkers to come together to remember someone special. We know with friends and partners like you, we have the ability to make this year’s Camp Good Grief 5K the biggest and most successful yet!

\$500 sponsorship includes:

- Race day signage
- Website logo & link
- T-shirt & sweatshirt
- Handmade Camp Good Grief 5K coffee mug
- Finisher medal
- 2 race entries

Can you support the Camp Good Grief 5K by becoming a Yellow Balloon Sponsor for \$500?

Contact [Melissa.surles@bmhcc.org](mailto:Melissa.surles@bmhcc.org) for more information!



.....

## 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

***Coping with Grief During The Holidays*** – choose one

November 1 – 12-1:30pm

November 2 – 9-10:30am or  
6-7:30pm

November 3 – 3:30-5:00pm

November 4 – 9-10:30am or  
3:30-5:00pm

**Registration Required:**

TN/MS call 901-861-5656

AR/MO call 870-936-771



## **Grief Support Groups**

***Support Group for Adults Grieving a COVID-19 Death***– weekly virtual group

November 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 & December 6 – 4-5:00pm

***6 Week Series Grief Group*** – weekly virtual group for grieving adults

November 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 & December 6 – 4-5:00pm

**Registration Required:**

TN/MS call 901-861-5656

AR/MO call 870-936-7719

## Take Five!

Here are five resources to help you along your journey:

1. *The Wilderness of Suicide Grief* - Dr. Alan Wolfelt
2. “5 Common Myths About Suicide Debunked” - Kristen Fuller, MD - National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)  
<https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/September-2020/5-Common-Myths-About-Suicide-Debunked>
3. “Suicide - When Someone Is Too Bruised to Be Touched” - Father Ron Rolheiser -  
<https://allianceofhope.org/suicide-when-someone-is-too-bruised-to-be-touched/>
4. “8 Suggestions for Coping With Grief” - Eleanor Haley - *What’s Your Grief* -  
<https://whatsyourgrief.com/suggestions-for-coping-with-grief/>
5. *Grief Narratives* - a website designed for the bereaved to tell their stories -  
[www.griefnarratives.com](http://www.griefnarratives.com)





# The Next Step

Alan Wolfelt, PhD defines the Six Needs of Mourning as:

1. Acknowledge the reality of your loss.
2. Feel the pain of your loss.
3. Remember the person who died.
4. Develop a new self-identity.
5. Search for meaning.
6. Receive on-going support.

Remember, wherever you are in your grief is where you are. It does help to evaluate this from time to time so that you can see progress made and work to be done. So where are you with these needs? Which ones are you working on currently? What need have you not tended to at all or even just recently? Discuss with a trusted individual or counselor at the Baptist Centers for Good Grief, or write about it.



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