

See the Good in Grief

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Good Grief!

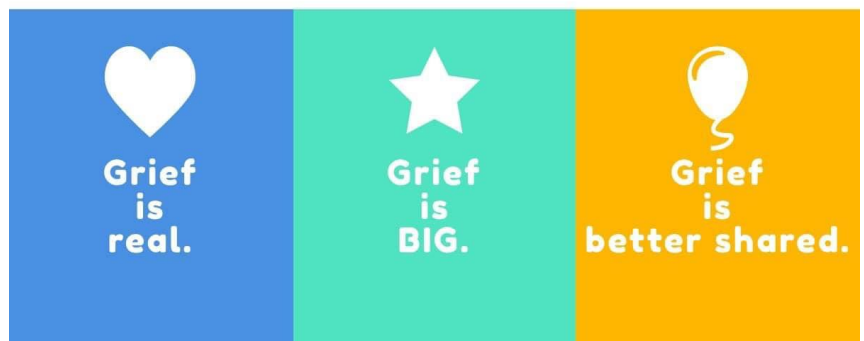
October is an exciting month for us here at the Baptist Centers for Good Grief. October 3rd is our 12th Annual Camp Good Grief 5K: A Run to Remember. This event is near and dear to my heart because it does two incredibly important things: it allows us to continue providing Camp Good Grief free of charge to grieving children in the Mid-South, and it gives our families an opportunity to engage in memorialization (yet another coping skill for their toolbox). They can run, walk, or be a spirit runner/walker in memory of their loved one. It's an opportunity for families and friends to move together and share stories about the person they are grieving. The event is being held both virtually and in person so that anyone may participate.

Camp Good Grief is only possible with funding from our grants and donations from individuals, organizations, and partnerships with local businesses such as Memorial Park and Pugh's Flowers. My heart is full of gratitude. Thank you to all of our supporters.

Sincerely,

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

Baptist Centers for Good Grief



Grieving a Drug-Related Death

According to the [state of Tennessee annual overdose report from 2021](#), “Tennessee’s overdose epidemic continues to worsen. In 2019, over 2,000 Tennesseans were lost to drug overdose, and overdose deaths involving illicit fentanyl and stimulants increased again for yet another year.”

Overdose is an epidemic in and of itself. As with any type of loss, it is important for those who have a loved one who has died as a result of an overdose or other drug-related cause to tell their story, connect with others, share their pain, and receive support. However, due to societal stigma, the person grieving an overdose loss can experience feelings of shame surrounding the death. That shame creates a reluctance to tell the truth about what happened. The resulting silence marginalizes the bereaved.

While not everyone needs to know every detail of your loved one’s death, it is important that you work toward telling some key support people what has happened in order to relieve the burden of carrying such a secret. In addition, truth-telling helps to destigmatize the loss. People who struggle with drug abuse are people who are loved – they have parents and siblings and children and friends. Their loved ones grieve when they die. That grief is real and valid, and it deserves to be honored.

Sometimes those who are grieving an overdose death are also grieving the changes that their



loved one experienced as a result of addiction. The bereaved experiences the pain regarding the death itself as well as pain for how the life of the person changed as a result of addiction. If a true addiction was present, the grief surrounding that must be processed along with the death itself.

Let’s start to talk about addiction and drug-related death so that we can honor the lives lost and care for the bereaved left here in mourning.

Coping Skills Series Part 1 – The Importance of Relaxing Your Body

Did you know that your body can have real, physical reactions to grief? There are a wide range of physical responses that the bereaved can experience. These include insomnia, nausea, headaches and more. It is common for grieving people to carry their grief in their bodies in the form of muscular tension. One coping skill to help you deal with that tension is learning to relax your body.

Relaxation starts with awareness. First, you need to pay attention to your body. Are your shoulders creeping up toward your ears? Is your jaw continually clenched? Do you feel ready to burst out of your chair and run away? If the answer is yes to any of those questions, relaxation is a good place to start. This is a learned skill, meaning it may not work immediately in every situation. It will take you some time to learn to quiet your mind and let go of the tension. While you are practicing this, your mind will wander, and thoughts will pop into your head. Recognize them as thoughts and think of them as clouds passing in the sky. Try the simple relaxation outlined in “The Next Step.” Perhaps this exercise can be something you can add to your coping skills toolbox.



Be the Good in Grief



How do you feel about fall?

Are you: Hello, Fall – glad to see you!

Or more: Hello?...Fall?...Ugh! I wasn't expecting you so soon.

Fall brings us football, pumpkins, (hopefully) cooler temperatures, changing leaves, and much more. As the days get shorter, we become more aware of upcoming holidays and seasons that can seem very difficult when we are working through our grief.

Like the variety of leaves that fall from the trees this time of year, we all walk around with an array of colorful emotions and feelings. Sometimes we share the colors with others, and sometimes we do not. At the Baptist Centers for Good Grief, clients can use art activities to depict their emotions. One such activity is the grief mask. Those working on the grief mask start with a blank, white mask, similar to something you might see around stores this time of year as part of a Halloween costume. With illustrations and letters, they creatively draw how the outside world perceives them. Then, they show what their grief actually feels like on the inside – the feelings and emotions they carry through their days, often hidden from the outside world.

We know that grief is universal, but we all experience it very differently. Leaves, masks, seasons, or crayons in a box - there are so many ways we could classify our range of emotions and feelings. Our “Pigpen” art room gets a lot of use, and this creative space truly helps people process how they are feeling when words are difficult. Could you help us fill this space with a variety of colorful supplies? A \$50 donation would allow us to restock our cabinets and drawers with tools to help clients creatively express themselves.

Visit <https://baptistgriefcenters.org/> to donate today!



Dates to Remember

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

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. “Helping Yourself Heal When Someone You Care About Dies of a Drug Overdose” – Alan Wolfelt, PhD
<https://www.centerforloss.com/2017/01/helping-heal-someone-care-dies-drug-overdose/>

2. GRASP (Grief Recovery After Substance Abuse) - a national resource founded to provide sources of help, compassion and understanding for those whose loved one died from substance abuse or addiction. They also provide online and in-person support groups throughout the country.
<http://www.grasphelp.org>

3. “When a Child Dies from a Substance Related Cause” – Compassionate Friends
<https://www.compassionatefriends.org/child-dies-substance-related-cause/>

4. *Calm* – app for meditation and sleep.

5. “Six Relaxation Techniques to Reduce Stress” - <https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/six-relaxation-techniques-to-reduce-stress>





The Next Step

Relax Your Body

This video is a guided deep breathing exercise from the National Institute of Mental Health. It states that it is for anxiety, but it absolutely works for anyone in need of some assistance with relaxing their body.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3g-evIsaFw>



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