

See the Good in Grief

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Good Grief!

Hello,

Another year has come to a close. We make it a habit at the Baptist Centers for Good Grief to try to count our blessings with each transition of season to season, year to year. We are looking forward to some exciting additions to our programming in 2022!

As our services have grown over the years, so has the need for increased programming and space. We've expanded from our Kemmons Wilson Family Center for Good Grief in Collierville, adding Milla's House in Midtown, and the NEA Center for Good Grief in Jonesboro, Arkansas. This year, we will be building our Cottage next door to the Kemmons Wilson Family Center for Good Grief in Collierville. The Cottage will include space for large and small group programs (support groups, camps, retreats, seminars, family nights, and more) as well as additional space for individual counseling sessions.

For several years now, the feedback we have received from those who have participated in our support groups is that they want more. They have asked us for more opportunities to learn about grief, connect with other grieving people, and develop coping skills. We have taken their needs to heart and are pleased to offer monthly, loss-specific groups, a walking grief group, a grief Bible study, and a variety of virtual seminars. More information about these groups and seminars is provided later in this newsletter.

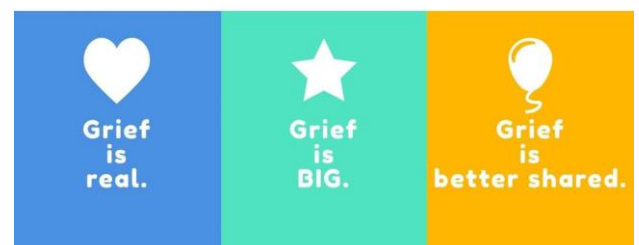
All of this is, of course, in addition to our counseling services tailored to meet the needs of each person, wherever they are in their grief journey. We are truly blessed and grateful to be able to do this.

Also, we post daily on social media. Follow us on Facebook for helpful thoughts, articles and holiday tips at *Baptist Centers for Good Grief – Kemmons Wilson Family Ctr & Milla's House and NEA Baptist Center for Good Grief*.

Sincerely,

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

Baptist Centers for Good Grief



Marking Time – A New Year, the Same Grief

Well, 2022 has arrived. For grieving people, it is likely that ringing in the New Year didn't exactly mean champagne and fireworks. When you woke up on day 1 of 2022, it probably felt about the same as the last 100 days (or 200 or 365). That's one of things with grief – we mark the days just like everyone else, but often those days don't feel a whole lot different. With a collective groan, you see that in the new year, the grief feels about the same. But, is that a helpful thought?

Sometimes when you are grieving, it is hard to see movement in the process. It may feel like there is not any progress or like you take a few steps forward and then five back. It is normal and expected to feel this way, but it doesn't necessarily mean that there really is no progress or movement. This might be a good time for you to try your best to take a step back and evaluate where you are. Early in bereavement, the primary goal is survival (we've talked about that a lot). If that is the space in which you find yourself, the new year means you need to keep surviving, nothing more at the moment. The new year will bring new challenges, but this is a chance for you to develop some coping skills for what you need.

If you've been grieving for some time, and you've done the necessary work of grief, you've developed some coping skills. Work toward using those skills when your grief is overwhelming or you are struggling to function. Once you feel like you have some good skills in place and the days don't feel as hard collectively, you are able to start looking at the bigger picture. You may start to consider questions of your identity. Who are you in the wake of loss and who do you want to be? You may find that you grow and change from the experience of your loss and that your grief changes with you. So take a look at the new year – is it really the same old grief, or is it starting to morph into something a little different, maybe a little new?



Coping Skills Toolbox Series – Emotional Grounding

Emotional grounding is nothing more than a simple distraction technique that lends itself extremely well to coping with anxiety, trauma symptoms, and grief by shifting focus to the present. It reminds you that you exist in the here and now, not the intensity of past experience. The idea here is to shift focus from the emotional experience going on internally to a physical one either in your body or in your environment. So for example, say you are feeling completely overwhelmed with grief - hopeless, uncontrollable crying, struggling for breath. Try the “5-4-3-2-1” technique - say out loud five things you see here in this moment, four things you can feel in your body, three things you hear, two things you smell and one you taste.

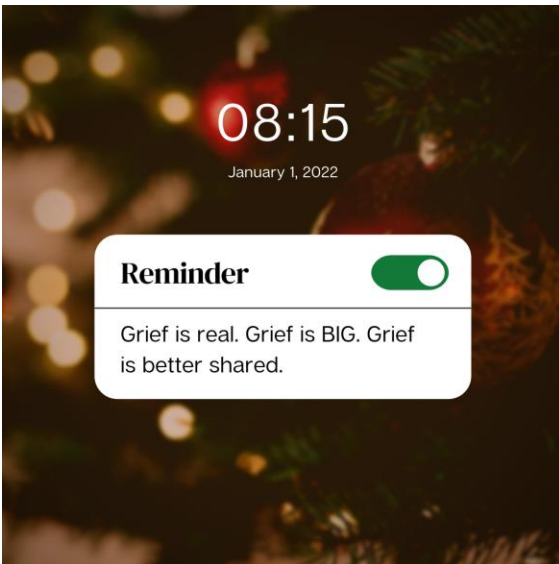
A word of caution: emotional grounding or any distraction technique cannot be utilized exclusively when coping with grief. If you are struggling with your grief or trauma, these thoughts, feelings and memories will not heal if never expressed and if other coping skills are not developed. The idea here is to find some balance between leaning into the grief and stepping away from it. This is what us grief counselors refer to as the “dual process model” - movement between loss orientation (your grief, intrusive thoughts, denial of new life) and restoration orientation (distraction, avoidance, new activities, new relationships/roles). Emotional grounding can help you swing back and forth between your grief and your life.

5-4-3-2-1 GROUNDING

TAKING SLOW, FOCUSED BREATHS, NOTICE:



Be the Good in Grief



Reminders about grief may seem unnecessary, but we think our tagline is a mantra worth remembering and repeating every day.

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

We see just how real and how BIG grief can be for you and many in our community. We also know that sharing grief in a safe space can help tremendously.

When we began in 1999 as an annual grief camp for children, we had no idea how the need and demand for our services would exponentially grow with each passing year. Our commitment to meet the needs of the Mid-

South never stops, and while we are immensely proud of the progress we made with you in 2021, we are also looking forward to some exciting plans for 2022. We provide more than 6,000 individual grief counseling sessions per year, and with expansion opportunities in 2022, we will be able to serve more people in a variety of new ways.

We are honored to walk beside children, teens, and adults grieving the loss of a special person, and we cannot embark on this journey without the financial resources we receive from individuals, businesses, and foundations. We need your support this year.

Whether you like to make resolutions or not, a new year presents us with new opportunities to give back, and, as we like to call it, to “pay it forward.” In honor of the new year, you can be the good in grief – would you partner with us by making a monthly donation of \$22 this year? Every dollar directly supports our Baptist Centers for Good Grief programs and resources, which are available to anyone in our community grieving the loss of a special person.



Be the good in grief today: scan the QR code, visit <https://baptistgriefcenters.org/give/>, or call 901-227-7123 to get started!

As always, you can like, comment, and share our messages on social media. Follow along on Facebook at *Baptist Centers for Good Grief – Kemmons Wilson Family Ctr & Milla’s House and NEA Baptist Center for Good Grief*.

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Dates to Remember: Grief Support Groups

Adult Grief Groups

Homicide Grief Support Group— monthly virtual support group

January 18 from 5:00 - 6:30pm

February 15 from 5:00 - 6:30pm

Spouse Loss Support Group— weekly virtual support group series

February 8, 15, 22, March 1, 8 & 15

10:00 - 11:30am or 5:30 - 7:00pm

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

February 8, 15, 22, March 1, 8 & 15– 4-5:30pm

Registration Required:

TN/MS call 901-861-5656

AR/MO call 870-936-7719



Dates to Remember: Kaleidoscope Series

Educational and supportive virtual grief seminars provided by grief counselors for grieving adults.

February: Enneagram & Grief – February 17 from 5:30-7:00pm

The way someone grieves is very much connected to personality type. In this seminar, we will dig deeper into the nine different Enneagram personality types and how each one deals with grief. Learn the challenges and benefits of your personality type and how it can help you understand and process your grief. Whether you're brand new to the enneagram or consider yourself an enneagram "expert," this is a seminar you won't want to miss.

2022 Virtual Group Preview – more info to come

March: Child Loss Support Group; Teen Camp Good Grief

April: Teen Monthly Grief Support Groups

May: Monthly support groups begin for Suicide Loss; Pregnancy & Infant Loss; Alcohol & Drug Related Loss; Walking Grief Group & Grief Bible Study

June: Camp Good Grief & Putting Emotions Into Motion for children

2022 Virtual Seminar Preview – more info to come

March: Relaxation & Grief – March 24 from 5:30-7:00pm

April: Coping with Anger in Grief – April 19 from 4-5:30pm

May: The Importance of Self-Care in Grief – May 10 from 4-5:30pm

June: Grief & Your Body – June 23 from 12-1:30pm

Take Five!

Here are five resources to help you along your journey.

1. *The Mourner's Book of Courage: 30 Days of Encouragement* – Alan Wolfelt
2. “Grief in the New Year: 5 Mindful Tips to Cope” - <https://mindfulnessandgrief.com/manage-grief-in-the-new-year/>
3. “Grief Theory 101: The Dual Process Model of Grief” - *What's Your Grief* - <https://whatsyourgrief.com/dual-process-model-of-grief/>
4. “30 Grounding Techniques to Quiet Distressing Thoughts” - <https://www.healthline.com/health/grounding-techniques#mental-techniques>
5. Coping With the New Year's Eve Blues: The YouTube Edition – *What's Your Grief* - <https://whatsyourgrief.com/new-years-eve-blues/>





The Next Step

This is an activity to complete on your own as a way of expressing your grief and coping.

Emotionally ground yourself in your outside environment. Put on a coat, a hat, gloves, umbrella – whatever you need. You are going outside. Step into the weather – no matter what it is.

Take note.

What does it smell like?

What do you feel on your face or in your body?

What do you hear?

What do you see?

Can you taste anything?

Remind yourself that this is where you are – here and now in this present moment, not worried about the future, not thinking about the past. It is amazing how this simple thing can take you from meltdown to calm.

Give it a try.



baptistgriefcenters.org

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