

# See the Good in Grief

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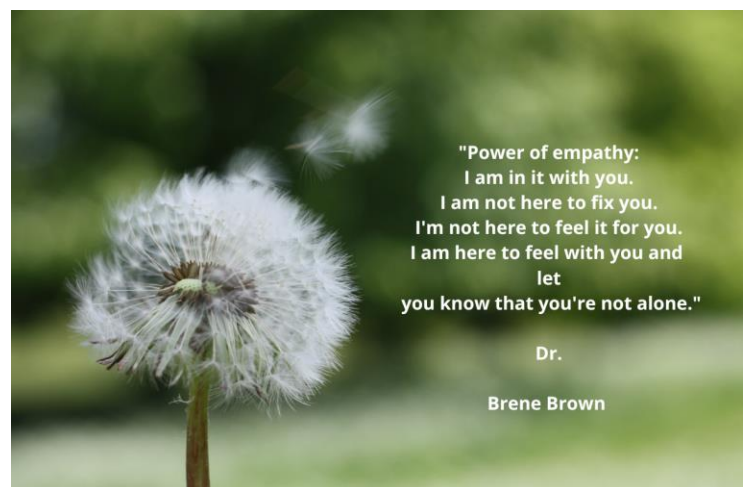


Good Grief!

Hello,

There is so much weight of sadness in the world right now, dear griever. So much that adds to the heaviness that we already experience day to day from personal loss. When there is a mass shooting (and another and another and another), we the griever and we the helpers feel it. At the root of our feeling is the empathy that comes with the experience of grief. We know what loss is, what it looks like, how it feels. Naturally, we do what the empathetic do – we put ourselves in the shoes of the mother who lost her child when they were supposed to be safe at school or the grandchild whose grandmother stopped for groceries and was murdered. This adds depth and complication to what we already cope with. So what is to be done?

One of the ways to counteract the effects of global grief is to look for the small signs of goodness in the world every day. If you pay attention, you will find them. People can be kind to each other for no particular reason. I'm reminded of a story that someone told me some years back (she gave me permission to repeat it). She was weeping in the grocery store because she missed her husband, who had died not long before. A man who worked at the store stopped to ask her if she was all right. She was honest with him and said she was unsure. He listened and responded with empathy. He didn't know what it was to lose a wife, but he had lost his mother and was able to relate to some of the woman's feelings while acknowledging the difference in their experiences. This was the good – compassion born of empathy born of experience. This is what sustains us when things are so very hard.



Sincerely,

Angela Hamblen Kelly, LCSW  
Executive Director

& Lauren Strini, LPC/MHSP  
Clinical Director

## Depression or Grief?

When you go through loss of any kind, it is normal to experience sadness and a certain level of depression. Distinguishing grief from clinical depression can be a challenge. Depressive symptoms are often part of the natural grief experience. They serve a role in healing by allowing you to slow down and acknowledge the depths of your loss. Healthy, normal grief is manifested through feelings of intense sadness and emptiness. Clinical depression, on the other hand, is usually an overall feeling of hopelessness and emptiness that cannot be attributed to a specific event.



Grieving people often experience their emotions in waves. They can still experience and enjoy moments of laughter, happiness or peace. Conversely, people who are clinically depressed typically have a pervasive sense of doom in all aspects of life. A healthy griever will accept support, whereas a depressed person might isolate and purposefully avoid others. Sometimes the person struggling with depression cannot get any relief from the cycle of negative thoughts that swirl through their mind all day.

One approach you may take in order to determine whether you are grieving in a healthy way is to look at the degree to which you are engaging in actions that are characteristic of healthy grief, such as emotional expression, acts of memorialization, allowing others to support you, and making self-care a priority. Understandably, grief can affect our ability to function in the same way that we are accustomed. However, if you find that your grief is significantly impacting your daily functioning most of the time over several weeks, this could be an indication that additional treatment may be helpful.

Grieving people who have a history of clinical depression prior to their loss may find that their grief and depression affect each other. They may experience more intense depression for a time, or they may find that their depression makes it difficult to actively mourn in healthy ways. If you are unsure whether what you are experiencing is normal or wondering if you might need additional treatment, make an appointment with your counselor or psychiatrist for an evaluation.

## Coping Skills Toolbox Series – Medication for Mental Health

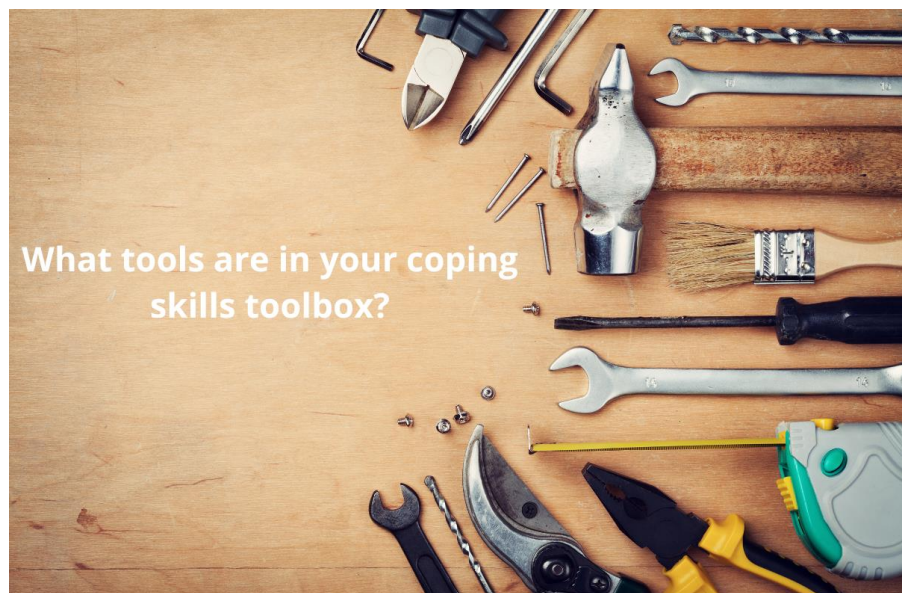
Taking care of your mental health is an important part of coping with your grief. Many things that have been found to promote mental health in general (e.g. nutrition, adequate rest, exercise, positive relationships with other people, emotional expression, mindfulness practice, boundary-setting) are also helpful ways of coping with grief. For people who may be struggling with severe grief reactions or concurrent mental health concerns (such as depression, anxiety, or PTSD), the treatment recommendation is often counseling along with medication in order to balance the chemicals in the brain.

None of us at the Baptist Centers for Good Grief are physicians, and so we cannot and do not make recommendations about medication. That does not mean that we never talk about this in the context of our counseling with the bereaved. In fact, we talk about this often. Some people we see have been prescribed an antidepressant, but they find that it is not working as they had hoped. If the issue here is truly situational (grief) and not chemical (depression), then antidepressants may not be the most effective. There is no pill that we can take that will cure us of our grief – the only remedy is to allow ourselves to mourn our loss. In these cases, we recommend people talk to their prescriber about this.

Sometimes, our grievers have concurrent depressive symptoms, and they find they do get some relief from antidepressant medication. Maybe their low moments are not as low as they previously were. Maybe they are sleeping better and eating more consistently. Maybe it helps them manage thoughts of suicide or eradicates them entirely. Perhaps they find that they are better able to do the things that help them take care of their grief. This is successful treatment and it is beneficial to try to maintain it.

Sometimes we see people who are doing pretty well on antidepressants and in therapy, and they are considering discontinuing their medication. The recommendation here is that if it makes good clinical sense to try it at this time, talk to the prescriber about tapering off of the medication.

At the end of the day, taking medication to cope with mental health concerns concurrent with bereavement is just another tool in the toolbox of the griever. It deserves no more weight or judgement than any other coping skill.





## Be the Good in Grief

It is here! The date we have been waiting on! On September 1, 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 2023.

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-Focused Spiritual Book 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- 227-7123. We will also share the construction journey through our social media pages. Stay tuned for more information in our September edition of *See The Good In Grief*.

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

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*.



## Podcast & YouTube Channel

Tune in to our podcast, *Grief is... Real. Big. Better shared.* There you will hear brave people sharing their grief in order to work toward healing and to support one another. You can find our podcast wherever you get your podcasts. We also have a YouTube channel, *Baptist Centers for Good Grief*. Here you can find a variety of “Coping Skills Toolbox” segments, which offer practical tips for coping with grief.

Don’t forget to follow us on Facebook for the latest news, updates, and education about grief, mourning, and coping. Please like and share our posts so that others can find support in their grief.



## Dates to Remember: Grief Support Groups

### **Adult Grief Groups**

#### Monthly Groups

**Alcohol or Drug Related Death Support Group**– monthly virtual support group  
August 9 & September 13 from 5:00 – 6:30pm

**Homicide Grief Support Group**– monthly virtual support group - August 16 & September 20  
from 5:00 – 6:30pm

**Suicide Loss Support Group**– monthly virtual support group  
August 18 & September 15 from 4:00 – 5:30pm

**Pregnancy & Infant Loss Support Group**– monthly virtual support group  
August 23 & September 27 from 5:00 – 6:30pm

#### Series Groups

**6-week Grief Group**- weekly virtual group for grieving adults – September 12, 19, 26, October 3, 10 & 17 from 12:00-1:30pm

#### Screening and registration required:

TN/MS call 901-861-5656

AR/MO call 870-936-7719



## **Grief–Focused Spiritual Book Study**

Weekly virtual spirituality book study for adults will meet September 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, October 6 & 13 from 10:30-12:00pm.

Spirituality is an important part of each person's grief journey. During this 7-week study together, we will be creating a safe and sacred space for group members to engage in spiritual reflection as it relates to your grief. Each week introduces fresh topics that will allow you to explore the depths of grief and suffering through spiritual lenses using the book *Suffering* by Paul David Tripp.

During this group, you will be given the opportunity to share your own unique experience, as well as engage in meaningful activities that will help foster growth, development, and spiritual connectedness, as we explore our spirituality and grief in an ecumenical/non-denominational environment.

### **Screening and registration required:**

TN/MS call 901-861-5656

AR/MO call 870-936-7719

## **Walking with Your Grief**

An in-person walking grief group for adults will begin in September at our Collierville location. Grief manifests itself in many ways, and we are often left wondering how to cope with it all. This easy-paced walking group offers participants an opportunity to express their grief through movement alongside others while connecting to the present moment through mindful walking. This six-session series is not an exercise group, but rather an alternative to more traditional grief support groups for people who would benefit from expressing their grief in different ways.

September 9, 16, 23, 30, October 7 & 14 from 10:30-12:00pm.

### **Screening and registration required:**

TN/MS call 901-861-5656

## **Dates to Remember: Kaleidoscope Series**

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

**August: Coping with Guilt in Grief – August 11 from 4:00-5:30pm**

**September: Journaling & Grief – September 29 from 5:30-7:00pm**

### **Registration required:**

TN/MS call 901-861-5656

AR/MO call 870-936-7719

## **KALEIDOSCOPE SERIES**



## **GRIEF SUPPORT SEMINARS**

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### **Take Five!**

Here are five resources to help you along your journey:

1. *The Depression of Grief* by Alan Wolfelt, PhD
2. “Grief vs. Depression – Which Is It?” - <https://www.verywellmind.com/grief-and-depression-1067237>
3. “Depression” – [https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/depression#part\\_6159](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/depression#part_6159)
4. *Humans of New York* – This website allows you to witness other people’s stories, some of which are stories of loss or trauma. At the heart of all of them is a recognition of the good in people and the value inherent in each individual person. – <https://www.humansofnewyork.com>
5. “How Kindness Spreads in a Community” - [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how\\_kindness\\_spreads\\_in\\_a\\_community](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_kindness_spreads_in_a_community)







## The Next Step

### The Next Step – Look

Over the course of the next week, write down the small signs of goodness you see in your world every day. Don't think too hard. Just observe and write it down. It could be the smile from a stranger, someone holding a door, or the “go ahead” wave in the car. It's there, and sometimes we just have to remember to look.



**BAPTIST** | CENTERS FOR  
GOOD GRIEF

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

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