

See the Good in Grief

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Good Grief!

Hello,

We really want the focus of this edition of the newsletter to be on you and your self-care. It is so easy in the thick of the holiday season to neglect your own needs. In a lot of ways, it may feel easier to focus on others and the “tasks” of the season. But for the griever, it is imperative that you treat yourself kindly. That means different things to different people.

A simple rule of thumb is to treat yourself as you would a best friend: with kindness, compassion and empathy. So if you feel tired, allow yourself a nap or rest time. If you don't want to celebrate, scale things back and ask for what you need. In fact, if there is something you just don't want to do, set a boundary and say no. It is all right if you are not ok, and it is also all right to put yourself first this holiday season. We are here for you if you need us, only a phone call away.

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.*

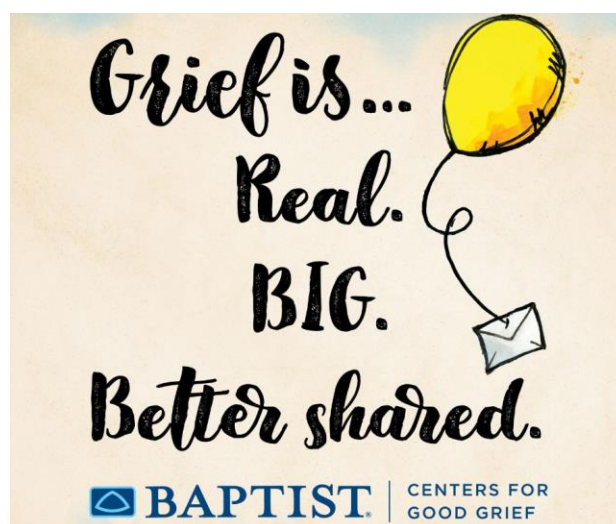
We hope for peace for you this holiday season.

Sincerely,

Angela Hamblen Kelly, LCSW
Administrator

&

Lauren Strini, LPC/MHSP
Clinical Director



Why Are the Holidays So Hard for Grievers?

As you are probably acutely aware, grief is difficult on an average, “normal” day. Special days tend to magnify and intensify those already difficult feelings – the weight of sadness feels heavier, the emptiness more acute, the anger more intense, and the joy and spirit of gratitude harder to access. Family is the central focus of the holiday season, and there is a key member of your family or friend group missing. Your loss is immediately highlighted. Past traditions cannot always carry on in the same way, and this is a loss in and of itself. Sometimes families disagree on how to get through the season without the beloved person, and that conflict can create tension that feels hard to manage.

Have you noticed that the holiday season has become longer and more intense over the last several years? It creates added stress and requires so much energy. Often grieving people do not have energy to spare – they are doing their best just to get through each moment of each day. The season starts immediately after Halloween and feels like it goes on and on. The buildup lasts for many weeks, and the air of festivity can be elusive for the griever. For non-grieving people, this feels stressful; for the grieving person, it can feel unmanageable. Take heart and hold on to hope. The Baptist Centers for Good Grief is here for you and your family as you face the challenges of the holiday season.



Coping Skills Toolbox Series –Tips for Managing the Holiday Season

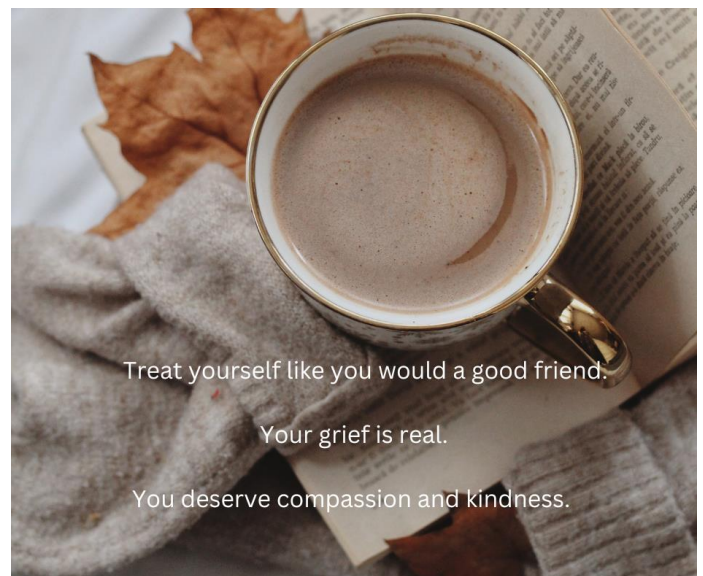
There is no magical recipe for coping with grief. In general, it takes a lot of time, patience, and all the coping skills you can muster. We here at the Baptist Centers for Good Grief spend a lot of time talking about coping skills in general and about coping with the holidays specifically. Here are some practical tips that we’ve come up with in order to cope. It is by no means exhaustive, but we know it has helped a lot of our clients over the years.

1. Expect to feel your grief in spite of the “Happy Holidays.”
2. Feel whatever you feel – it’s ok to feel sad, good or both.
3. Make a plan for yourself, but also be flexible.
4. Accept your limits.
5. Take care of your physical, spiritual and emotional needs.
6. Manage your expectations and those others have of you – do the best that you can, no judgements.
7. Welcome your loved one to the holiday – engage in deliberate remembering.
8. Extend a helping hand to others in need.
9. Never lose hope – your holiday may look and feel different, but (even if not this year) it can be good again.

Self-Care and the Holidays

Remember how important it is to take care of yourself physically, emotionally, and spiritually during the holiday season. Physical care seems intuitive, but at this time of year, it has to be intentional. Allow time for both rest and nutrition. Some of our clients have built in a “rest time” during the middle of the day to either nap or just put their feet up and relax. Even if this happens in the middle of a holiday event, it is all right. Sometimes it gives you just what you need to keep going the rest of the day. Similarly, paying close attention to what you are eating and how much water you drink daily can help your overall feeling of well-being. There is a tendency to eat too much heavy holiday food and neglect staying hydrated. Being mindful about eating and drinking in healthy ways is a simple thing that you can do to take care of yourself.

Emotional and spiritual care are just as important as your physical self-care. Be sure you create some “heart time” – time to confide how you are feeling and coping with someone you trust. Be sure this is someone you can be honest with and who will support you. Allow yourself some “soul time” as well. Write in a journal, read, or pray to tend to your spiritual needs. Attend a church service if you feel up to it. This can help you feel more a part of your faith community during this difficult time. Above all, maintain hope that the holidays will be good once again, even if not this year.



Treat yourself like you would a good friend.

Your grief is real.

You deserve compassion and kindness.

Coping Skills Toolbox Series – Memorialization



“One purpose of creative ritual was to experience the connection to ‘the other’ as well as a deeper connection to oneself. That’s why ancient people would say: that ritual made me more aware of how I’m connected to life, to the earth, to the spirits, to the song of creation, and made me more aware of who I am inside, at the level of my own being. What we’ve lost is partly the sense that we are each connected to the whole thing, that each human soul is secretly connected to the living soul of the world.” -Michael Meade

Michael Meade is an anthropologist and psychologist who knows the

value of ritual. Memorialization is one form of ritual or ceremony. At its heart, it is deliberate, intentional remembering, either by yourself or with others who also love the person who died. Our friend Alan Wolfelt, one of the nation’s leading death educators and grief counselors, recommends the use of ceremony or ritual in order to continue the work of mourning: “They give us a structure for mourning. They also bring people together to support one another.”

Here are some examples of ways to create ceremony and “bring your loved one to the table” at the holidays. You might consider a ritual of remembrance. This can include making a trivet with your loved one’s name on which to place a holiday dish or lighting a candle that burns through the day in their memory. Some families have created a memorial table with pictures and items that spark memories of their loved one. Gift giving can be challenging when grieving – you may not feel that you have the time, energy, or extra money to dedicate to the task. Memorial gifts, donations, or special object gifts can be ways of remembering, and they can also ease one of the more difficult tasks of the season. Special object gifts can include linking objects (things that belonged to your loved one or that remind you of them) or other symbols of hope. Some families have had quilts made of the clothing of their loved one. Other families have had ornament parties where each guest brings an ornament that reminds them of their loved one. We have known families who have written down special memories of their loved one and placed these notes in stockings in lieu of stocking stuffers. Remember, it is important to acknowledge your loved one, even if it feels difficult. Family and friends are feeling the weight of the absence too, and remembrance allows you to rely on one another for support.

Be the Good in Grief

Do you have a memory of a favorite gift? How about a special memory of a gift you have given someone else?

The holidays are synonymous with gifts. Decorated window fronts entice us to step inside to shop. Online sales make it simple to purchase items from anywhere and have everything delivered to you. Boxes and bags, wrapping paper and ribbons. Gifts for family and gifts for friends. Even silly, little gifts we exchange for fun. Gifts of time and gifts of service usually abound this time of year, too. We make a point to spend time with those we care about and try hard to serve those who need it most.

But what do you give someone who is grieving?

We strive to provide a safe environment for ANYONE in our community to explore and express their feelings after the death of a loved one and learn to thrive in a world without that special person. With our uniquely trained professional counseling staff, we sit with grief a lot. We listen to stories of all the love that was, we listen to the ways love still feels, and we make plans for all that love can continue to be. We think it is important for you to honor the past, to remain present, and to build a future, and we hope you have found great strength in doing this work beside us.



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BE THE GOOD IN GRIEF

Just as we do this work with you, it is important for us to also honor our past, remain present, and build a future for the Baptist Centers for Good Grief. We love to see how far we have come since our first Camp Good Grief in 1999, we focus on all that we can do today, and we have exciting plans to serve our community in greater ways in the future. To ensure we are able to continue this work, we need financial gifts.

Can you make a special gift this holiday season to honor the past, remain present, or build a future for the Baptist Centers for Good Grief?

We would love for you to consider making a gift of \$130 (typical cost for one hour of professional counseling) and tell us what this special gift will honor – your past, present, or future. Visit <https://baptistgriefcenters.org/give/>, or scan the QR code to make this gift today, and please include a note if you would like to honor or remember someone.



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.*

Duck Classic - NEA Center for Good Grief – December 8 & 9

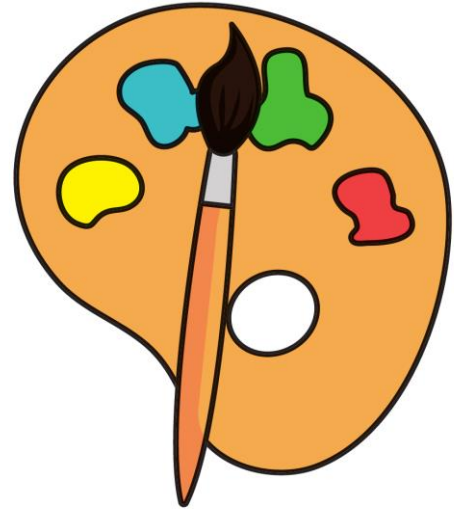
Duck Classic is the largest waterfowl fundraiser in the state of Arkansas, bringing thousands of outdoor enthusiasts from across the country together for the annual event. All proceeds from this exciting event support the programs of NEA Baptist Charitable Foundation which includes NEA Baptist Center for Good Grief.

The Duck Classic Banquet features dinner, live and silent auctions, raffles and lots of fun! The following morning teams will set out for a competitive duck hunt competing for the coveted Duck Classic trophy and thousands of dollars in prizes. Information on teams, sponsorship opportunities, as well as tickets to the Duck Classic Banquet, are available at <https://duckclassic.com/>.



Artists' Call

Are you or someone you know an artist that would love to donate a piece to the 25th annual Art of Caring? Join us for an artists' event on January 18 at Dorothy's Cottage. Artists will get to hear about the Baptist Centers for Good Grief and the impact the Centers have on the community. For more information, contact Laura Cantrell at (901) 227-7002 or Laura.Cantrell@bmhcc.org



Save The Date:



On January 7, all three local CycleBar locations will be hosting “Get Going for Grief” to benefit the Baptist Centers for Good Grief. This will be a two-hour ride for teams of four—open to anyone who wants to attend! Each team member will ride for 30 minutes. Registration for a team of four is \$100, or you can register individually for \$25 and be placed on a team. Bikes will have signs with team names. Each team will have the opportunity to fundraise using the JustGiving platform. There will be drawings for prizes at different levels based on the amount fundraised by the teams. An email will be sent out with the information to register. We hope to see you there!

Wish List

People frequently ask if we need supplies. At the Baptist Centers for Good Grief, we believe that grief demands expression, and we use A LOT of supplies in the process. Some families like to collect supplies and donate them as an act of remembrance. If you would like to donate, for any one of our centers, please email angela.kelly@bmhcc.org .

Baptist Centers for Good Grief wish list

- Hobby Lobby gift cards
- Gas and meal gift cards for families
- Markers
- Crayons
- Glue Sticks
- Poster board
- \$130 funds a grief session
- \$200 funds dinner for teen grief group
- \$1,500 sends a camper to grief camp
- iPads
- Amazon gift cards
- Small cans of playdough

www.baptistgriefcenters.org

Dates to Remember: Grief Support Groups

Check out our website after November 15, 2023 for all 2024 grief group and seminar information.

<https://baptistgriefcenters.org/events/>



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.



 **BAPTIST** | CENTERS FOR GOOD GRIEF

baptistgriefcenters.org

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