

See the Good in Grief

Issue #043 • 02/01/2024



Good Grief!

Hello,

At last the holidays are behind us! Some people dislike the inevitable lull in activity that happens after a busy November and December, but we've come to appreciate the slower pace and the quieter days. Sometimes, a short January day is just what the grieving person needs – less time to think, more time to rest and make an attempt to recover and heal. In these winter months, we often hear griever's say, "I'm so tired, and I don't know why. Am I depressed?" It's possible that depression or seasonal affective disorder is the issue – or it may just be that sometimes griever's push themselves to the limit with social activity, interaction, and "busyness" in the two months before.

Now it is time for you to rest and reflect. Use the space created by the season itself to lean into your grief. Know that we at the Baptist Centers for Good Grief are always here to support you, to bolster you and listen in the quiet.

Our newsletter will come to you quarterly, and we also provide updated, useful information and resources through our website. Feel free to explore the newsletter archives available on our website for any articles you may have missed over the years. In addition, our podcast, *Grief is... Real. BIG. Better Shared.* is available wherever you get your podcasts. It is an amazing opportunity to hear from our counselors and from fellow griever's about their thoughts, feelings, challenges and triumphs.

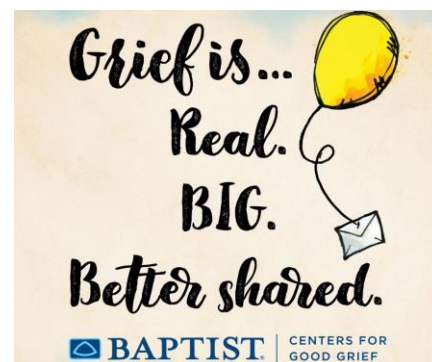
We also, post daily on social media. Follow us on Facebook for helpful thoughts, articles and holiday tips at *Baptist Centers for Good Grief – Kemmons Wilson Family Ctr & Milla's House and NEA Baptist Center for Good Grief.*

Sincerely,

Angela Hamblen Kelly, LCSW
Administrator

&

Lauren Strini, LPC/MHSP
Clinical Director



The Winter Blues and Grief

Recently I read an article about things that people do in Scandinavian countries during winter. Their winters are long, cold and dark. Yet despite this, they continue to live their lives basically as they normally would. They work, go to school, spend time out and about in restaurants and with friends. They allow their tiny babies to nap outside in full winter gear – the pictures are endearing to say the least. There is some evidence that maybe they sleep a little more than usual or feel a bit more tired, but the point here is that they accept that this is a season and keep doing what they would normally do. They know that winter and darkness will not last forever.

Even in the farthest reaches, when it is dark most of the day, there is some light that shines through. Norwegians call it the “blue hour” when the remaining light reflects off of the sea and snow, giving the landscape a deep shimmering blue hue. There is true beauty even in the darkness. And so it is with winter and grief.



Winter’s quiet challenges us to look at our grief more deeply and to reflect. Is there somewhere that we can find some beauty and some potential healing? It is all right if the answer to that question is “no.” I would encourage you to consider that it is “no, not right now” and not “NEVER.” People do find some meaning and potential beauty in their grief. We have seen it happen, we have felt it happen. One of the more common examples is the idea of an increase in compassion or empathy. With the experience of deep pain comes greater awareness of the pain of others. Being able to recognize that pain in other people

and give them validation for it is a beautiful gift, whether it feels like one or not.

Your grief at the moment is a season. It will grow, shrink, change – just as you and your capacity for awareness and coping will grow, shrink, and change. Growing up, my mother always told me, “there is no thing as constant as change.” I hated that at the time because it usually meant something was going to be different. But as a result of that life lesson, I

became the most adaptable of my siblings and the most open to life's fluidity. When the winter blues combine with your grief to form a formidable wall of sadness, remind yourself that this is just a moment in time, a season. It can change as quickly as the weather (and we all know in the Mid-South that is minute to minute). Go outside, breathe the cold air deeply. I had an 8th grader in one of my grief groups say "the colder the better for breathing – it reminds me that I'm alive." He's not wrong. Breathing the cold in so your lungs burn a little reminds you that you are still here (for better or worse). So, what can you do in this season to make your little slice of the world more bearable?

Coping Skills Toolbox Series – Don't Forget Those Daily Coping Skills

The long winter can be a challenging time to utilize your coping tools. "How exactly am I supposed to take my daily walk if it's sleeting?" "It's so dark. I don't feel comfortable going out of the house." "The cold makes me want to curl up in a ball. My body aches from it." "I stay in my bed. It's the best I can do." These are all things that we have heard from grieverers over the years. We challenge you to utilize the "yes but" or the "yes and" approach to pushing yourself toward using those skills.



Statement: "How exactly am I supposed to take my daily walk if it's sleeting?"

Response: "It's sleeting, so I can't walk outside. BUT I can walk 20 laps around the house in order to move my body".

Statement: "It's so dark. I don't feel comfortable going out of the house."

Response: "It's dark, and that makes me want to isolate. BUT I can call a trusted friend to come be with me at home."

Perhaps you get the idea. Reframing the way you talk to yourself about the daily struggle in winter can help you remember those skills that you already know and use during the "easier" parts of the year. You also may have stopped regular dosing of your grief because of the activity in November and December. It's time to start doing that again if you are struggling. Winter's slowness reminds you that you have to keep that toolbox of coping skills both fresh and flexible.

The following resources may help:

“Three Ways to Grow Your Adaptability “—*The Good Grief Journey* – this article is by a fellow griever, not a professional

“The Process of Coping with Grief and Loss: How to Best Navigate Our Feelings After Losing Someone” - *Psychology Today*

“When Seasonal Affective Disorder & Grief Coexist” - *Hospice of the Red River Valley (hrrrv.org)*

“Beat the Winter Blues”- *NIH News in Health*

Be the Good in Grief

Happy New Year! As we embark on 2024, we reflect on the impact we’ve made together in providing free grief counseling through the Baptist Centers for Good Grief. Your support has been instrumental in bringing comfort and healing to those facing the challenges of loss. To kick off the new year, we invite you to give \$24—a symbolic gift for the year ahead. Your generosity will enable us to continue offering vital grief counseling services to children, teens, and adults in need.

As we look forward to the promise of the year ahead, your generosity provides hope for those navigating the path of grief. Together, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals and families in our community.

Thank you for your unwavering support and commitment to making a positive impact.

With gratitude,

Laura

Laura Cantrell
Baptist Memorial Health
Care Foundation



NEW: CORPORATE PARTNERS' OPEN HOUSES

**WE WILL BE OFFERING TWO OPEN HOUSE
OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR CORPORATE PARTNERS IN
FEBRUARY AND MARCH.**

**THIS IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES
TO HEAR ABOUT THE GREAT WORK HAPPENING AT THE
CENTERS FOR GOOD GRIEF.**

**IF THE CAUSE RESONATES WITH THESE INDIVIDUALS, WE
WOULD LOVE TO HAVE THEM AS A SPONSOR OR
DONOR. PLEASE REACH OUT TO LAURA CANTRELL AT
LAURA.CANTRELL@BMHCC.ORG FOR MORE
INFORMATION.**

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.*



Save the Date for Art of Caring 2024!

The 25th annual Art of Caring will take place on April 25, 2024 at the FedEx Event Center in Shelby Farms. Tickets will go on sale soon!



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Dates to Remember: Grief Support Groups

Check out our website for all 2024 grief group and seminar information.

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

Screening and registration are required for all groups and seminars:

TN/MS call 901-861-5656

AR/MO call 870-936-7719



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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.



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