

March, 2019

Your Journey

THROUGH GRIEF

"With open hearts and expertise, we serve the seriously ill and those touched by loss."

Your Grief Toolbox

A LETTER FROM THE BEREAVEMENT COORDINATOR

Experiencing a loss in the past may not completely prepare us for the loss of another loved one. Each loss is different. Many times, we believe that if we have lost a loved one previously, that we are somehow prepared for the next. In some ways, we are. Our past experience may help us with process of what to do after a beloved friend or family member has died. Perhaps we have experienced memorial service planning or have helped sort through and distribute belongings in the home. We can check off the to-do list with more confidence if we have done it before. However, each time someone we love dies, we become rookies in the grief process. Each loss is incredibly unique, and therefore the grief and mourning is incredibly unique as well. What worked to move you through grief the last time, may not work this time. This time, the person is different, the relationship was different, the circumstance of the death are likely different as well. Because of this, no one, no matter how many losses, is an expert on grief. Each time we experience a loss we learn, process, and move forward differently. We must allow ourselves to be open to this unknown journey, gathering tools along the way.

With thoughts of comfort,
Kaylee Kron, LMSW, GC-C
Bereavement Coordinator

Just for You

GATHERING YOUR TOOLS

BY KAYLEE KRON



There are an unlimited number of ways to deal with the death of someone we love. This is especially true because each and every one of us, and our grief, is different. Each loss will need different tools.

Some people find comfort writing in a journal while others simply cannot find the words. Some people like engaging in activities that remind them of their loved ones, while others may find that to be too painful. Luckily, many who have walked this journey before have chosen to share their tools with future grievers.

The following ideas are meant to be a starting point for each individual's journey. However, for a tool to work, each person should feel that:

1. the tool fits into their own skill set
 2. that they have time to complete it
 3. the idea of doing the activity brings about hope
 4. completing the tool does not cause pain
- While reading through these suggestions and ideas, consider answering these questions, tailoring the toolbox to fit your needs.

Toolbox Idea 1: Reading

You can gain knowledge from a book in several ways. If you find it hard to sit down for any length of time to read, consider an audiobook. Many publications are available through websites like audible.com

There are many books about the stages of grief, understanding grief, and accepting your unique journey. Many people have found these to be helpful in understanding and normalizing their experiences with grief and mourning. Normalizing grief can be comforting, knowing you're not alone.

Some suggestions for these books include:

- *Understanding Your Grief, Ten Essential Touchstones to Finding Hope and Healing Your Heart* by Alan Wolfelt, Ph.D
- *On Grief and Grieving Finding the Meaning of Grief Through the Five Stages of Loss* by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross
- *It's Ok that You're Not Ok Meeting Grief and*

Loss in a Culture that Doesn't Understand by Megan Devine

Fictional or Nonfictional Depictions of Grief: Sometimes reading a story about someone who has gone through a similar experience can be very therapeutic and comforting.

Some suggestions for these books include:

- *A Grief Observed* by C.S. Lewis
(about the death of a spouse)
- *The Year of Magical Thinking*
(about the death of a spouse and child)
- *For One More Day* by Mitch Albom
(about the death of a parent)

Toolbox Idea 2: Journaling

When grieving, it is important to outwardly process thoughts, feelings, and memories. When this cannot be done with a person for whatever reason, it can be beneficial to jot it down.

Open "Free Write" Journaling:

This is typically done with a book full of blank, lined pages. At times, those in grief will write like they are talking to the person who has died, to God, or to their future selves. This free writing style also allows the journaler to write about they are doing on any given day.

Structured Journal Prompts:

Prompts for journaling can be helpful if a griever does not know where to start. Journal prompts can be found online, or in books like, *Understanding Your Grief Journal Exploring the Ten Essential Touchstones*, a companion book to *Understanding Your Grief* by Alan Wolfelt, Ph.D.

Toolbox Idea 3: Activities

Remembrance Activities:

These activities include anything a griever does that triggers memories of their loved one. This could include looking through photo albums, reading old letters, and making a blanket out of their favorite clothing. These activities trigger beloved, and sometimes painful, memories which help in the processing of a loss.

Honoring Activities:

These activities include anything a griever does for the purpose of honoring their loved one who can no longer do said activity. These activities include celebrating the loved one's birthday, or baking their favorite dish on a holiday. These activities can also be done on non-special occasions. Examples of this would include learning a skill that a loved one was good at and enjoyed, or reading their favorite book. These activities help the bereaved feel as though a piece of their loved one is still present in their world.



Toolbox Idea 4: Reaching Out

Although grief is an independent activity, the reality is that we do not have to do it alone. Reaching out for support helps a griever find others who can relate to their experiences which makes the journey a little less lonely.

Joining a Support Group:

Support groups can often be the most beneficial for those who are experiencing grief, especially a group that is specifically formatted for the type of loss they have experienced. For information regarding which support groups Hospice of North Idaho provides, please visit our website www.hospiceofnorthidaho.org

Letting Friends Help You:

It can be incredibly difficult to reach out to friends, especially when they may not understand exactly what you are going through. However, a friend is someone who chooses to support you in an authentic, open hearted way. A small suggestion; the next time a friend asks you "How are you doing?", reply honestly, instead of the instant response of "I am fine, how are you?" Give a friend the opportunity to be a support to you.

We hope these ideas inspire you to build your own unique toolbox, just for you.

"The hardest part of losing someone isn't having to say goodbye, but learning to live without them; always trying to fill the void, the emptiness that's left inside when they go."

-Adapted from myowneulogy.com

Spiritual Care

MY FAVORITE GRIEF TOOL

BY REV JENNIFER HACKENBRUCH

SPIRITUAL CARE COORDINATOR

"I am grieving. I am mourning. I feel lost. I feel sad and so alone. I feel all sorts of things that just don't compute. Now what?"

When my mother died I felt so many different emotions. I was lost. She was my person, and now, she was just gone. My world would never be the same. I cried. And I cried, and I cried some more. I wondered if I would ever stop crying.

Looking back, I had so many tools at my disposal to help me move through my grief and my pain. I used many of them and forgot about many others. Sometimes I was aware I was utilizing a tool and other times I was on auto pilot.

My grief tool box consisted of prayer, dance, journaling, walking in nature, meditating, breathing, emoting (allowing myself to emote with abandon), sleeping (I slept a lot), watching Lord of the Rings over and over again, being with loved ones who understood and avoiding those who didn't. I would drive for hours (make sure you remember to fill your gas tank!).

Your grief tool box is yours. What tools are you using to move through this period of your life? If you don't think you have any, try one or two from my list, or talk with some one who has lost a loved one about the tools they used, research grief and tools on the internet. There is so much support for you during this time. Reach out when

the time is right for you.

My favorite tool is breathing. Yes, breathing. Simple breathing, in through your nose and out through your nose. Inhaling all the way into your belly and slowing exhaling.

Sometimes when we go through a hard time, we forget to truly breathe. Take a moment to breathe with me now.

Settle into a comfortable position, where ever you are. And become aware of your breath. Follow your breath for a moment and notice how far your breath goes in and how it comes out. And when you are ready, lengthen your breath, breathing in through your nose. Allowing it to fill your lower belly, mid belly, and chest, and then slowly exhale through your nose. Release the air from your chest, your mid belly, and your lower belly.

As you breathe, notice what comes into your awareness. Notice your thoughts. Notice your emotions. Allow all of it to be. Just notice and breathe.

As I breathe in

I allow myself to settle into the moment

As I breathe out

I allow myself to feel this moment

And I breathe.

Teens In Grief

WHAT GRIEVING TEENS WANT PARENTS TO KNOW

“How are you?”

Broken. Useless. Alone. Clueless.
Confused. Betrayed. Fragile. On the verge
of tears. Depressed. Anxious. About to
break down. Really, really pathetic.
Fine. Annoying. I'm just a burden. Distant.
Lonely. Bitter. Heartbroken. Lonely.
Rejected. Crushed. I feel like I'm going to
just fall apart at any moment. Empty.
Defeated. Never good enough.

Helping a teen cope with grief can be a daunting task. Even without a major loss within the family, the teenage years can be some of the most difficult to navigate for family members. Keep in mind that teens need a parent or guardian's help in navigating this difficult time, however, they may have strong opinions on the subject as well. Take your time, and be patient with yourself as you navigate through this difficult time with your teen. This will be a time of transition, however, it doesn't have to have a negative outcome. The following list is a compilation of opinions that teens expressed at Comfort Zone Camp in Richmond Virginia, during a camp healing circle. It is an excerpt from www.ComfortZoneCamp.org.

Don't say "I know how you feel".

Don't say "Everything will be okay".

Don't say "Your (person who died) would have wanted this". It makes us feel guilty.

Don't make us talk.

Be considerate of our emotions.

Don't pretend that the person who died was never there - help us keep our memories alive.

Explain your feelings and grief to us.

Moving and changing schools means having to tell our story all over again to new people.

Remember that we are still kids - try not to give us the duties of a parent.

Get the details on health-related deaths to help prevent it in the rest of the family.

Realize that every kid reacts differently, we're all individuals.

Acknowledge the anniversary of the death, find something the family can do together.

Don't force counseling -let us grieve on our own terms.

Help us and our little siblings ease into life transitions - and be patient.

Don't date or remarry just to replace the person who died.

For more resources regarding supporting a teen through grief, please call

Hospice of North Idaho 208-772-7994.

Resources for Your Teen



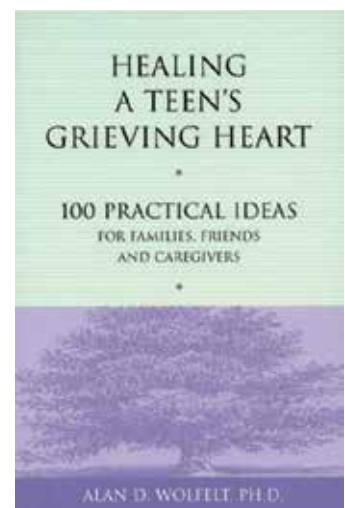
CAMP KANIKSU
JUNE 28-30, 2019

Each summer, Hospice of North Idaho provides a safe, supportive, but most of all, FUN environment for kids and teens who have experienced the death of someone close to them. Offered to ages 6-16, this 3-day, 2-night camp helps empower campers to own their grief experience through building communication skills, learning about strong grief emotions, and finding a creative outlet to express strong feelings.

Most importantly, kids and teens meet others who share similar experiences, helping campers learn that they are not alone in their grief. Camp Kaniksu combines a typical camp experience on Lake Coeur d'Alene, with skilled volunteers from the community to help campers feel supported in their grief.

RECOMMENDED READING

It can be very difficult to navigate how to support a teen through their grief. *Healing a Teen's Grieving Heart, 100 Practical Ideas For Families, Friends and Caregivers*, by Alan D. Wolfelt, PH.D. holds 100 ideas including conversation starters, writing prompts, and activity ideas specifically meant for a grieving teen.





HOSPICE OF NORTH IDAHO

HOSPICE OF NORTH IDAHO
2290 West Prairie Avenue
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815

Upcoming Events

HOSPICE OF NORTH IDAHO IS HERE FOR YOU

ON- GOING SUPPORT

CAMP KANIKSU

This camp for kids and teens who have experienced the death of someone close to them is offered each year, free of charge to families. To register your child for this 3-day, 2-night camp experience, fill out a camp registration form located on our website www.hospiceofnorthidaho.org. Registration closes April 15, 2019!

SPOUSE-LOSS SUPPORT GROUP

For many, the loss of a significant other often feels like the loss of your best friend. Whether you were together 1 year, or 70, the loss often echoes throughout every aspect of life. Join Sonja Dove, Bereavement Counselor in this support group which is open to all adults who have lost a spouse or partner. No registration is required. The group meets on the first Tuesday of each month 5:00PM.

Share this newsletter and sign up for events at www.hospicenorthidaho.org or (208) 772-7994