



# Grief Support

SPRING/SUMMER 2023

**W**e are thinking of you during your journey through grief. We are here to counsel and provide support to all members of the community following the death of a loved one. These seasonal grief support newsletters are also available to you, your friends, and your community at [trucare.org/grief](https://trucare.org/grief). Please call us anytime for support at (303) 604-5300.

## Navigating Grief Around Spring & Summer

*Adapted from an article by Elizabeth Fox Butler, Psy.D.*

As we emerge from our winter shells, get-togethers will start to ramp up. Spring and summer are a time for relaxing and having fun with people you love.

But get-togethers with those who aren't grieving can be difficult to navigate when you're grieving the loss of a loved one. Many people aren't sure how to handle the dichotomy of wanting to be around people and feeling the sadness of their loss.

If you're pondering how to handle your grief during spring and summer social events, below are some tips that can help:

### Feel Your Pain

Grieving is an important part of the healing process. Suppressing your feelings could prolong your grief. Your instinct may be to avoid all gatherings to not feel your pain, but enjoying time with others can be a progressive step in your healing journey.

### Choose Wisely

While you shouldn't completely avoid being social with those you love, you don't need to say yes to everything. Choose events that you think you can handle and decline invitations to those that may be more difficult. Ultimately, you are the one who knows how you feel and what you can handle.

### Have an Escape Plan

It can be helpful to have a plan or explanation prepared so you can leave whenever you want. For example, you can say "I'm not sure how long I can stay" or "I'm tired and might leave early". Being a part of gatherings is your choice and when you decide to leave is up to you.

### Coordinate Social Time with Other Grievers

Try to make some time to connect with other people who are grieving and spend time with them. There's no need to protect the people you're with from your inner conflict because they know it well. Consider joining a support group if you're up for it!

### Honor Your Loved One

Find new ways to keep the memory of your loved one close to your heart. If you're invited to a BBQ, make their favorite dish to bring and share with others. Creating unique ways to memorialize your loved one in the spring and summer will honor your grief and their memory.



### Introducing Joan Hummel, LCSW

TRU Grief Services' newest counselor, Joan Hummel, holds a Master's in Social Work from Eastern Washington University where she trained at the Spokane AIDS Network and Hospice of Spokane. She was drawn to the conversational nature of hospice - to the idea that hard things are made easier by giving voice to them.

Joan moved to Denver in 1993, and spent six months as a hospice volunteer and nearly a year as a hospice field social worker before turning her attention to the bereavement support side of hospice.

Since 1995, Joan has worked as a grief counselor for several Denver area hospice programs. She practices with a client-centered approach that recognizes each person's unique style and set of life circumstances. Her grief counseling combines creative modalities with emerging neuroscience discoveries and centering practices for calming nervous systems that so often get overly taxed during grieving.

Our grief groups are open to anyone needing support after the death of a loved one and are free of charge. The meetings, led by experienced bereavement group facilitators, include specific topics and optional personal sharing in a safe and accepting atmosphere. Registration is required prior to first attendance for all groups. To register, please visit [trucare.org/grief](http://trucare.org/grief) or call (303) 604-5300 for group information, times, and locations.

## Ongoing Adult Grief Support Groups

### Bereaved Parents Group

Support meeting with program and sharing for bereaved parents only.  
Meets 3rd Wednesday,  
6:30 - 8:30 PM.

### Spouse/Partner Loss Group

For people who have experienced the death of a spouse or partner.  
Meets 3rd Tuesday,  
6:00 - 8:00 PM.

### First Year Spouse/Partner Group

For spouses or partners whose loved one's death has occurred within the past 12 months.  
Meets 2nd Tuesday,  
6:00 - 8:00 PM.

### Sudden Loss Group

Support for those who experienced the sudden, unexpected loss of a loved one.  
Meets 4th Monday,  
6:00 - 8:00 PM.

### Widowed Senior Group

For senior men and women who have lost a spouse or partner.  
Meets 4th Wednesday,  
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM.

### Yoga After Loss Group

Exploring grief through yoga poses, breath work, and meditation.  
Periodic offering.

## Structured Adult Grief Support Groups

### Creative Expression Group

Exploring grief through the process of making art. Periodic offering.

### Newly Bereaved Support Program

Support, information, and networking for persons with recent death losses.  
Offered monthly.

### Eight-Week Support Group

For anyone who has experienced a loss. Offered monthly.



## Healing with Horses

### Support for Children and Teens Coping with a Death Loss

This four-week group is for kids and teens ages 7 -18. We combine equine- assisted activities with peer support to share stories, memories and have fun. We learn various ways to care for horses and to develop skills in a safe environment. We talk about grief, ways to remember your special person, and how to take care of yourself through your grief journey.

#### Dates:

Group One: 5/31, 6/7, 6/14, 6/21

Group Two: 7/12, 7/19, 7/26, 8/2

Time: 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Location: Lyons, CO

Cost: \$100 per child

To register, or for additional information, please call (720) 322-3506.

“We never lose our loved ones. They accompany us; they don't disappear from our lives. We are merely in different rooms.” — Paulo Coelho

### *It's OK that you're not OK: Meeting Grief and Loss in a Culture that Doesn't Understand* by Megan Devine

Many people who have suffered a loss feel judged, dismissed, and misunderstood by a culture that wants to "solve" grief. Through stories, research, life tips, and creative and mindfulness-based practices, Devine offers a unique guide through an experience we all must face—in our personal lives, in the lives of those we love, and in the wider world.



### *How to Carry What Can't be Fixed: A Journal for Grief* by Megan Devine

With her breakout book *It's OK That You're Not OK*, Megan Devine struck a chord with thousands of readers through her honest, validating approach to grief. In her same direct, no-platitudes style, she now offers *How to Carry What Can't Be Fixed*—a journal filled with unique, creative ways to open a dialogue with grief itself.



### All There Is (Podcast) Anderson Cooper

Anderson Cooper takes us on a deeply personal exploration of loss and grief. He starts recording while packing up the apartment of his late mother. Going through her journals and keepsakes, as well as things left behind by his father and brother, Cooper begins a series of emotional and moving conversations about the people we lose, the things they leave behind, and how to live on - with loss, with laughter, and with love.

## Spring and Grief

by Corinne Roosevelt Robinson

I SEE my love in every little child  
Whose eyes meet mine with laughter in their blue;  
I hear him in the note, half sweet, half wild,  
When bird calls bird their promise to renew;  
I feel him in the ardor of the sun  
That woos the fragrance from the waking flower,  
And maple buds, rose flushed by beauty, won  
To swift fulfillment of the Sun God's power.  
The world is young once more as he was young,  
With life and love reborn in everything—  
O singing hearts! My own is faint and wrung;  
The rapture and the riot of the Spring  
Can but enhance the throb of my despair—  
I miss him most when joy is everywhere!



## Sunny Grief by Bria Vogt, Grief Services Intern

In the spring of 2022, my father-in-law passed away. That day, as I left the hospice, my grief was overflowing out of me. It was one of those beautiful, sky-blue Colorado days. I remember distinctly looking up and feeling that the weather was incongruent with how I was feeling. It was almost disrespectful that there was a blue sky and a warm sunny day. I wanted the clouds to come in and produce a rainstorm that would be more in conjunction with how my grief felt. As the birds began chirping and resting in the trees, the idea that life was beginning again felt unfathomable. With this, I began to understand how my own grief would change with losing Terry, and so I began to garden.



We had planned to grow vegetables and flowers together, and while he could not create that space with me, I went ahead and decided to plant flowers in his memory. There was a moment when I was wandering through the garden at my husband's parents' house and a pair of Stellar's blue jays flew overhead. In this moment, I felt the presence of Terry. I felt the chattering Stellar's jays were in some way connected to my father-in-law, who loved to tell stories.

In many ways, moving through nature and finding my connection to the garden and birds allowed me to find some solace within my own grief. It helped me pay tribute to my relationship with my father-in-law.

## SUMMERTIME AND GRIEF FOR CHILDREN

Summer is a season of mixed emotions for children and families who are grieving. With school being out and after-school activities coming to a halt, the lack of rigid schedules can be a relief. However, others will feel that the absence of structure enhances their feelings of grief. With summer approaching, this may be a good time to talk to your child about their expectations for the coming months.



If structure is needed, try to create a daily schedule. You can also have your child write or draw on a special calendar and put in all scheduled events. The visual might help children feel more at ease.

Families may also wonder whether to continue warm weather traditions they shared with their person who died. Traditions like family vacations, barbecues, reunions, and other gatherings might spark or reignite grief emotions within the family. Below are two summer activities that can help children share their feelings surrounding the loss and keep your loved one's memory close throughout the summer.

### **Bubble Messages:**

Bubbles are a great way to share memories in a group while also being outside. Invite people to say a memory or a message out loud (or to themselves) while they blow a bubble. This is also a good activity for children to do on their own when they want to say something to the person who died.

### **Sidewalk Chalk Memories:**

For this activity, all you need is a sunny day, chalk, and a sidewalk! As a family or individually, people can draw pictures of memories with the person who died. You may choose to write messages instead of drawing images. If your child or other family member struggles with a painful memory, they can draw it and wash it away with a hose or bucket of water. Acknowledging and intentionally erasing those images may help lessen their intensity and aid in the healing process.

*Adapted from "Summertime and Grief," by The Dougy Center.*



### **Grief Services Staff**

**Kathryn Messman**  
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Adult Grief Counselor

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**Casey Weiss**  
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### **Contact Us**

(303) 604-5300

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TRU Grief Services welcomes donations at [trucare.org/donate](http://trucare.org/donate). Donations help provide group resources and materials. TRU Community Care is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization. We appreciate your support.