

Coalition News

Quarterly Newsletter of the Minnesota Coalition for Death Education and Support
P.O. Box 50651 ♦ Minneapolis, MN 55405 ♦ 715-733-0265 ♦ www.mcdes.org ♦ info@mcdes.org

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Since 1977...Education and Support for Those Providing Care to Grieving Persons

June 2021

Mark Your Calendars

June 7-9 ♦ International Death, Grief & Bereavement Virtual Conference, *Ambiguous Loss and Grief*. Information/register at <https://www.uwlax.edu/ex/dgb/register/>.

June 15 ♦ *Three Questions for Midwest Faith Leaders: The Power of Planning and Care Options at the End of Life*, a free program for faith leaders presented by Compassion & Choices. More about the program is on page 12. Registration is free, and required: <https://join.compassionandchoices.org/a/0616web?sourceid=1069832>.

July 15 for 6 weeks ♦ *Grief Group for Children, Teens and Their Caregivers*. Six week series, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Information: jenny@brighterdaysgriefcenter.org or 952-219-8514.

August 13-14 ♦ *Palliative Care Summit: Practice, Policy, and Payment*. Info at <https://www.mnhpc.org/>.

September 25 ♦ *Camp Erin Bereavement Camp for Youth*. Email Jenny, jenny@brighterdaysgriefcenter.org, for more information.

October 1 ♦ *MCDES Virtual Fall Conference*. More information is on page 15 and at www.mcdes.org.

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MCDES Spring Conference Review

Meaning-Centered Grief Therapy (MCGT): A Clinical Intervention to Support Grieving Individuals

Reviewed by Catherine Colrud



Wendy G. Lichtenthal, PhD, FT

I was fortunate to receive the Dorothy Geis scholarship to attend the April 30, 2021 MCDES conference on “Meaning-Centered Grief Therapy.” This program, “Meaning-Centered Grief Therapy: A Clinical Intervention to Support Grieving Individuals” was facilitated by Dr. Wendy G. Lichtenthal, Director of the Bereavement Clinic, Associate Attending Psychologist Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, in New York, NY. It was a full day, packed with valuable information, useful interventions and words of wisdom for those working in this field. This is challenging and rewarding work and critical for those who receive these types of support services. I know, firsthand, how valuable these services are. I had the honor to do end-of-life care for my younger brother Jared, and the support, insight and compassion extended to our family during this time made such a difference for all of us, including my brother.

I have long held an interest in end-of-life, and the many different needs a person has during this time. I firmly believe in the death with dignity framework, and believe making meaning for the family and the one passing on, is vital on so many different levels. I want to learn more about this area, to gain additional skills, insight, and knowledge, to help when the need arises. I felt this conference would be very beneficial and provide lots of useful tools. I was right.

Dr. Lichtenthal started her presentation with the importance of meaning-making, and its therapeutic value. She explained how the term “meaning-making” is an umbrella term, used to describe many activities, such as benefit finding, developing and/or refining a sense of purpose, identity and personal legacy. All of these activities can help those impacted, which will eventually be all of us and our loved ones, if we haven’t experienced this already, deal more effectively with the reality of the impending death and the end of a life. She also talked about how the lack of doing meaning-making, and sense-making in particular, have been associated with higher incidents of prolonged and/or unresolved grief. We spent time learning

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From The Editor: On Kindness

“All that matters now is to be kind to each other with all the goodness that is in us.”

~ from the journals of ETTY HILLESUM, who died at age 29 at Auschwitz,
An Interrupted Life, The Diaries, 1941-1943.



Sharon Dardis

I am beginning to think that it all boils down to kindness. Be kind. Might all of the world's troubles be lessened if every one of us were kinder to one another? What if every day we woke up and chose the specific intention: be kind. It seems kindness comes easier to some than to others. It's too bad there's not a kindness vaccine that would help us stand up better to evil. It would inoculate us with loving understanding, kindness and empathy. And sadly, yes, I suspect we might still need boosters every now and again. We are, after all, only human.

During these troubling times, I find myself looking for kindness, shining a light into the darkest corners, longing for reasons to be hopeful. Experiencing an act of compassion moves me to tears. Searching for the good, I become an unabashed obituary reader. I comb through the newspaper, on alert for inspirational obituaries. And believe me, they are out there. Kindness lives!

Coalition News is published quarterly by the Minnesota Coalition for Death Education and Support. Your submissions are encouraged. Editor: Sharon Dardis Layout: Verla Johansson Deadline for September newsletter: **August 1, 2021**. (covers Sept., Oct. and Nov. events). Please send your items to: Sharon Dardis 9267 Wedgewood Dr., Woodbury, MN 55125 612-940-6405 or SDardis@aol.com The Minnesota Coalition for Death Education and Support (MCDES) is a nonprofit, 501(c)3 interdisciplinary organization dedicated to providing education, networking opportunities and support to professionals and volunteers who are involved in the care of dying and grieving persons.

Sometimes it's a photograph that draws me in. Loving kindness is often visible on the faces of those who have practiced and lived kindness. If it's true that eyes are the window to the soul, then kindness peeks out from so many of those smiling, tender photographs. I skim and scan the pages, drawn to a catchy opening line, an inspirational life of service, or a loving comment from a grieving loved one. If the obituary speaks to me, I clip and save it. I re-read them. I hold them up as examples of lives well-lived. Someday, my kids may find stacks of yellowed obituary clippings in my files. They will no doubt question why their mom collected strangers' obituaries. Quite simply, the stories inspire and remind me that goodness and kindness still exist in our world. Sometimes we just have to look for it and then, yes, it's comforting to be reminded there is goodness in each of us.

This past spring, I came across an obituary posted in the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* for Cory Spencer Brown. He was described in the first paragraph as showing “unparalleled courage in facing life challenges with compassion, grace and unrelenting kindness and even bouts of raucous humor.” The accompanying photo of his joyful face reinforced those words. He looked kind, likeable and full of joy.

Although I didn't know him personally, as I read his obituary, I wished I had. His mother was quoted as saying,

“He was born good.” His obituary noted how his “acts of kindness and deep caring drew people to him and formed lasting bonds.” When, in his late fifties, Cory received a brain cancer diagnosis, his obituary said he approached the problem as he typically had all problems throughout his life. He said he wanted to “always be part of the solution.”

Along with his adult son, Trevor, he delved into research-based data that focused on the correlation between high empathy output from people in patient-facing roles and positive patient outcomes.” I soon discovered, buried in this wonderful obituary, that Cory and his son had gone on, even in the face of Cory's illness, to create an organization called, “Voices of Empathy!” It sounds to me like kindness in action! Their non-profit mission is to make “compassion and empathy” synonymous with the patient experience (<https://www.voicesofempathy.com>).

If you visit their website, you can listen to three podcasts they've produced, focusing on patient/caregiver mental health, meaning-making in the face of suffering, and a conversation between Cory and his brother, Harry, MA, LMFT, about “radical acceptance.” I guarantee you'll find tender empathy and kindness in every word.

There are so many stories in both the present and the distant past of those who have suffered great illness

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From the Chair

by Florence Wright, MCDES Chair

Dear Readers,

It's hard to find the right words. I will be the first to acknowledge that my words will be imperfect. I would be remiss to say nothing. I'm going to be brave enough to say something, albeit imperfect, knowing that saying something is better than nothing.

For me, it has been a deeply troubling time wrought with emotion. The world's eyes have been on Minnesota as many have experienced anger, anxiety, confusion, and complicated grief. I was heartbroken by the untimely and tragic death of Daunte Wright. The pain heightened, deepened, multiplied, by the loss of George Floyd, Philando Castile, Jaslyn Adams, Ma'Khia Bryant, Jordan Davis, Trayvon Martin, Jacob Blake, Alton Sterling, Adam Toledo, Breonna Taylor, Michael Brown, Walter Scott, Tamir Rice, Ahmaud Arbery, and far too many others. I am grieving with the black community and the families who are profoundly affected by these tragedies.

Recent forward progress, while significant, does not negate generations of pain, trauma, injustices, harassment, discrimination, dehumanization, and violence that my BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) friends, neighbors, colleagues, and fellow humans have suffered; there is still a long journey ahead in the charge to undo deeply-rooted racial injustices. Although I feel pride and promise that the tide in Minnesota seems to be turning, I, too, am humbled by the enormity of the work that remains.

While attempting to unpack complex emotions and mourn the loss of lives that should be lived, I referred to the

article, "The Great Grief: How to Cope with Losing Our World" by Per Espen Stoknes (Thank you for directing me there, Ted



Bowman!). Although Stoknes writes specifically about climate change in this piece, there is much that speaks to me regarding the ways in which communal sorrow, mourning, and despair can forge needed change and healing. Stoknes writes that what is needed in the face of this "Great Grief" is "a shared process that leads onwards to public re-engagement in cultural solutions...To cope with losing our world requires us to descend through the anger into mourning and sadness, not speedily bypass them to jump onto the optimism bandwagon or escape into indifference. And with this deepening, an extended caring and gratitude may open us to what is still here, and finally, to acting accordingly."

Stoknes posits that in order to mourn and subsequently respond, "the presence of supportive voices and models are needed. It is far harder to get acceptance of our difficulty and despair, and to mourn without someone else's explicit affirmation and empathy."

Although there are no quick fixes for our collective grief and no simple solutions, MCDES is resolved to being an organization where all professionals encountering death, dying, grief, and bereavement can be embraced, feel safe, and find support in the difficult, yet important work they do each day. We are especially holding space for all of the professionals of color helping

those impacted by these tragic events sort through the cascade of emotions and trauma, all the while trying to understand what this means for themselves.

To all of our members and friends: on behalf of MCDES, I am sending you solidarity, alliance, peace, and healing today and as time moves forward.

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or injustices and who then decided, as Victor Frankl states in *Man's Search for Meaning*, "to focus on the ability to choose one's own attitude toward suffering." Cory Brown seems to have done that. With the help of his son, Trevor, his legacy of kindness and empathy lives on.

Another example is Etty Hillesum, who died in 1943 at age 29. She is remembered as a holocaust victim who reacted to her own suffering with kindness, reaching out, not only to her fellow prisoners in Nazi death camps, but even to her capturers and tormentors. According to her journals, written between 1941-1943, she found meaning and comfort in her ability to control her own reaction to hardships and severe suffering. She was kind. And as she recognized kindness in herself, she said she found peace. She also said she "came to terms with life"....that she was able to confront her own death. A woman of deep faith, she wrote, "by excluding death from our life, we cannot live a full life, and by admitting death into our life, we enlarge and enrich it (life)." All that matters, she said, was to be kind.

As you peruse this latest issue of *Coalition News*, you are certain to find many more examples of kindness

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and discussing meaning-centered grief therapy, identifying sources of meaning, and core concepts as a framework to meaning-making grief therapy.

Dr. Lichtenthal walked us through what meaning-making, grief-centered therapy sessions would look like. She shared professional experiences she had with grieving parents and how these interventions helped create a loving legacy of their children. These parents were encouraged to continue building a loving relationship with those children who had passed on. In this work, it is so important that those who are grieving know that it's okay to feel what they feel, to grieve in a way that best supports their emotional health, and that each grief journey is unique. As those working with these grief-stricken loved ones, we need to verbalize these sentiments, and more importantly, normalize the grieving process, and all that it entails.

The value of using creativity to help those express their grief was evident throughout the presentation. Examples included writing a letter to the loved one and expressing all you need to, examining and creating a personal legacy before passing on, or creating your personal story, and how you will continue to live your life in a meaningful way. The power of creativity and its benefits were profound.

The afternoon was spent identifying ways to assist survivors to continue moving forward in a healthy, safe way. We examined an intervention that included psychoeducation on survivors' guilt, and how to co-exist with grief and its related sufferings. I believe this is one of the most important things we can do as providers, to help those who are grieving to move forward and hopefully, one day enjoy their lives, be

happy and continue to dream, as their loved one would certainly want them to.

Dr. Lichtenthal shared some of the feedback from participants who were provided with meaning-centered grief therapy. Many expressed how meaningful this therapy was to them and their loved ones. As she shared this feedback, she allowed her own emotions to be witnessed. As she wiped away her tears, I thought how strong she was to be open and vulnerable. This is powerful, important work. We must give it the proper respect by learning as much as we can about best practices; sharing ideas, insights and most importantly, continuing to practice compassion, in our Minnesota Coalition for Death Education and Support community.

I am currently attending the MSW program at Augsburg University, and am just wrapping up my foundation (first) year. I am on the clinical track, and want to work in and with my indigenous community, the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. When I am done with my program, I want to work as a therapist and group facilitator, and use art therapy in my interventions. Creating meaning-making for those who are dealing with end-of-life is so important to me. This conference helped me gain invaluable insights into this topic, and most importantly, gain more confidence in helping those in these end-of-life situations.

Catherine Colsrud's Bio

Catherine Colsrud is pursuing her MSW at Augsburg University, and is a LGSW candidate, beginning her concentration year in fall of 2021. Catherine is currently employed by the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe in their workforce development



Catherine Colsrud

department. She recently completed her foundation year internship at Beechwood, Inc., providing ARMHS services to clients with serious and persistent mental illnesses. She has an interest in trauma informed care, historical and intergenerational trauma, unresolved grief issues and using art to assist clients in self-expression and in creating meaning. Catherine is currently exploring the intersections of cultural relevant care and psychodynamic therapy, with a transpersonal human development lens. She is a certified facilitator of ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences), Mothers of Tradition (culturally relevant traditional teachings), PIP (Positive Indian Parenting) and Freedom From Smoking (American Lung Association) trainings, and is currently conducting Mothers of Tradition group sessions for her Native American community members.

As the COVID-19 pandemic data has shown to disproportionately impact communities of color, Catherine has seen firsthand how these necessary protocols have impacted her community and the traditional ways grief and funeral services have been conducted.

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Without the traditional ceremonies where the community comes together to help the healing process begin, there is significant amounts of unresolved grief. She wants to learn more about practical ways she can assist community members process these grief experiences and begin to make meaning from it. She is focusing on blending best practices in the grief work field, with Indigenous cultural practices.

Catherine is working fulltime, pursuing her MSW degree fulltime, successfully performing and learning in a part-time internship and conducting groups in her community. She has won a handful of art grants, in which she was able to bring art-making classes to her local community. In her spare time she enjoys spending time with family and friends, pursuing creative expressions such as traditional quilt making, gardening, photography, creative writing and playing with her dog Chili.

“Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way.”

from *Man's Search for Meaning*
by Viktor E. Frankl

Zoom...A Change in Meaning

By Sarah Kroenke, LSW, FT

Co-founder The Grief Club of Minnesota, Co-owner Grief Care Counseling

Zooming from school to school. Zooming from office buildings to funeral homes. Zooming from private homes to nursing homes. Zooming all over the metro area and beyond is what I have done for over the past 26 years as a social worker and grief counselor. Over time, my professional career has allowed me to facilitate thousands of in-person grief support groups, engage in one-on-one counseling sessions and respond to death-related trauma and crisis events.

As we all know, life as we knew it changed in March, 2020 and along with that, a change in the meaning of Zoom. When COVID-19 hit, I, along with so many others, were forced to re-think in-person grief support groups and individual counseling. Rather, I needed to learn about an unprecedented area, at least to me; virtual support platforms. Due to the isolation brought on by the pandemic, it was imperative that those whom I was supporting still felt supported, connected and cared for despite not being able to meet in the same physical space.

Zoom seemed to be the best fit for my needs and the platform that I have used most frequently over the past year. Therefore, I was no longer zooming around the highways from location to location, but instead Zooming from the comforts of my home and virtually being welcomed into the homes of my clients. While I met with clients of all ages, a majority of them were children and teens. Energy, effort, creativity and planning on my part was necessary to keep the kids engaged, interested and wanting to come back from week to week, month to month. Many of the virtual platforms have a built-in whiteboard which is an easy to use tool for collaboration on activities and games. Online apps, such as Kahoot, were a bonus to my virtual sessions.

Like so many aspects in life there have been good experiences, entertaining experiences, and frustrating experiences, while doing online grief support. Dropped calls, frozen screens, difficulty reading the client’s body language have been a few of the frustrating scenarios. As for the entertaining experiences, meeting the family cat as it sat on top of the clients laptop, witnessing the “annoying” brother as he walked through the room making obnoxious sounds, and helplessly witnessing a dog eat the client’s school work while he momentarily stepped away were some of the highlights. Thankfully, though, the good experiences have far outweighed the others. For clients, the gift of simply being able to see people (although through a screen), talk with someone and feel less alone was significant. Having clients be able to show me momentos of their deceased loved one, including photos, clothes, their urn and how they have displayed the art therapy projects they have created while working with me, provided good and unique opportunities that in person sessions do not allow.

With the pandemic restrictions being dialed back over the past several months, my caseload has increased to above pre-COVID-19 numbers. I have found myself doing less Zooming from my home office and am back to more Zooming on the highways. While I am tremendously grateful to be seeing clients in person again, I am also grateful that there were and are meaningful and effective tools available to support the healing hearts of those who are grieving.

The Grief Club of Minnesota

by Sarah Kroenke and Cara Mearns-Thompson

“My heart and my whole body hurt because I miss my dad so much. It’d be nice to have a place to go where someone could understand how much I miss him and help me feel better.” - Tommy, age 11

A Place to Be Belong

It’s human nature that we all want a place to go where we belong. A place where we feel accepted, welcomed and understood. A quote from Jane Howard depicts this thought so eloquently, “Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family. Whatever you call it, whoever you are, you need one.”

As grief counselors, we call our place “a club”...The Grief Club of Minnesota. It’s not necessarily a club that you choose to be a part of because you didn’t choose for your loved one to die, but it’s a club nonetheless, no matter where you are in your grief journey.

Supporting Grieving Children and Teens

As-founders of The Grief Club of Minnesota, we understand the sense of wanting to belong; to be understood as a grieving young person. We both experienced the death of significant family members when we were young. Our grief journeys inspired our dedicated 40+ year professional careers as social workers in the field of death, dying and bereavement, with a special emphasis on supporting grieving children and teens.

We both have a long history as hospice social workers, school, grief counselors and are co-founders of Grief Care Counseling, a private grief therapy practice. We are certified Field Traumatologists and have counseled thousands of grieving children, teens, young adults and families in grief support groups, individual and family

counseling. As highly skilled crisis and trauma specialists, we are frequently called upon during death-related events for schools and in the community. We have both have written and published numerous grief support curriculums, books, memory journals and have spoken locally and nationally on the topic of childhood bereavement.

The Dougy Center; Sarah’s visit

One of Sarah’s first times as a presenter was at the National Alliance of Grieving Children Conference was in Portland, Oregon, over twenty years ago. While in Portland, she visited the first grief center in the country, The Dougy Center. Their philosophy of bringing children and families together to grieve and heal, not only as a family unit but together with their peers, was deeply inspirational and admirable to me. It was then that Sarah knew in her heart that one day, she and other like-minded people, would open a grief center in Minnesota...a club where grieving people, of all ages, would feel connected and supported.

A Shared Vision

Years later, we met and discovered that we shared the same vision of a grief center. In our quest for developing a grief center in Minnesota; together, we toured many centers throughout the country, gathering information and ideas on programming, policies, building layouts and budgets. Through in-person visits and countless emails and phone calls, we developed important and meaningful relationships with

many executive directors of other grief centers throughout the United States.

One of those relationships was with Brook Griese, Ph.D, Licensed Clinical Psychologist and Co-Founder of Judi’s House in Denver, Colorado. We remain grateful for her trusting words:

“Cara and Sarah have the professional experience and bereavement expertise to make The Grief Club of Minnesota a safe and powerful place of healing and growth. Perhaps more importantly, they have a personal passion and energy for this mission that is vital to the success and sustainability of what will undoubtedly be an invaluable asset for the state.”

The Grief Center of Minnesota Vision

So, what is a grief center and how does it differ from traditional grief counseling? For starters, The Grief Club will focus services and programming on whole-person, whole-family care at no cost to participants. The Grief Club of Minnesota’s mission is “to provide a place where grieving children, teens and families find connections, share their experiences and heal.” It will be a one-of-a-kind place surrounded by the tranquility of nature and has been specifically designed to allow and enhance the processing of grief through multiple modalities of healthy grief expression for all ages. The Club will have art and music therapy rooms, dedicated space for yoga and meditation, a large kitchen for gatherings and many

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other amenities to process memories and make new ones. Licensed mental health counselors will provide wellness education, resource information and, most importantly, comfort and care as they foster healthy grief responses one child, and one family, at a time.

We recognize that grief support programming needs to begin before we will have a permanent location. Given the rising numbers of death in our state by suicide, homicide, opioids and COVID-19 and the fact that 1 in 14 children in the United States will experience the death of a parent or sibling by the age of 18*, it is imperative, now more than ever, that grieving kids and their families have a place to go to receive compassionate whole-family care from licensed mental health counselors.

Non-profit Partner and Board of Directors:

With that noted, The Grief Club of Minnesota is grateful to have partnered with a large and respected non-profit organization to utilize their space for upcoming programming until The Grief Club has its own space. Because grief doesn't end, participants will be welcomed into the programming whenever it feels right for them...days, months and even years after the death.

The Grief Club's Board of Directors are committed, dedicated and compassionate individuals who bring a wide range of skills, talents and personal grief stories to the forward movement of the nonprofit. They, along with the two of us, are working collaboratively with community leaders and community members to assure that the plans are strategically and methodically in place to ensure the successful implementation and long-term sustainability of The Club.



Sarah Kroenke and Cara Mearns-Thompson

There are, and will continue to be, so many big and small, beautiful and meaningful ways to support kids like Tommy, and his family at The Club. For more information, to sign up for The Grief Club of Minnesota's newsletter and to watch a two-part, seven minute video on the mission and vision, please visit the website: www.griefclubmn.org.

*Judi's House. (2020). Childhood Bereavement Estimation Model. Retrieved from www.judishouse.org/CBEM.

Editor's Note: Thanks to Sarah Kroenke, LSW, FT and Cara Mearns-Thompson, LICSW, FT for introducing us to The Grief Club of Minnesota. For more information, Sarah and Cara invite you to contact them at connect@griefclubmn.org or www.griefclubmn.org.

Every child deserves the opportunity to grieve in community, with peers who understand and caring professionals who are able to support their individualized needs after a loss.

~ Brook Griese, Ph.D.
Co-Founder
Judi's House/JAG Institute

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and empathy in action. MCDES and its members are bursting with high standards of humanity and compassion that continues to make a difference in so many lives. We just need to keep spreading the good word and works! A good example is our most recent Dorothy Geis award scholar, Catherine Colstrud. Thanks to her for her willingness to write a brilliant spring conference review. Catherine's article offers a comprehensive look at our day together on Zoom. Reading Catherine's bio, I was struck by her many involvements. She is a busy woman. Yet, it is apparent her kindness, generosity and determination will be making a big difference in the community and the world. Thank you, Catherine for sharing your thoughts with us. Welcome to MCDES.

The Board and Education Committee members were thrilled with the overwhelming positive reviews of our spring conference. Comments indicated Dr. Lichtenthal was well-received as an "engaging, knowledgeable, compassionate and effective" speaker. One reviewer wrote that Wendy was "one of the best presenters I've seen in years." Everyone appreciated her handouts and slides. Her actual case study videos were also excellent. There were a few glitches to the day. Apologies from MCDES for the slight delay in getting the Zoom started. As always, a sincere thank you to Verla for her outstanding work throughout the conference process, from flyers to registrations and beyond. MCDES is grateful for her administration skills, patience and kindnesses!

Two well-respected grief educators join us for our fall virtual conference on October 1st. See page 15 for a brief overview.

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From the Board: Reflections on Beginning To Re-open After a Year With COVID-19

Editor's Note: A year ago, our June 2020 newsletter included thoughts from the MCDES Board on how they were “maintaining positive health during COVID-19.” A year later, here we are, emerging from a pandemic, looking toward the future with hope but also, with some “uncertainty and fear.” I recently raised the question to my fellow board members: After the past year of isolation, how does it feel to be going back to “normal?” What difficulties are you maybe noting regarding re-entry with yourself, your clients, or your colleagues? Do you have any helpful suggestions for ways to mitigate the anxiety of this “new normal?” It is noteworthy to mention here that your hardworking volunteer board, like all front line workers and healthcare providers, over the past year, have been pushed to the max. Thanks to those who were able to respond; and to all of them, let's raise a collective cheer for a job so very well done. Please stay well!

From Kay Johnson

Reflecting on the past year and living through this pandemic has caused me to pause, take note of and lean on the lessons I've learned from dying patients, while working in the hospice field. The reflection brought a greater, deeper appreciation for those I serve in hospice. They have given me far more than I could have ever given them.

- Living each day in uncertainty takes energy, strength and can be exhausting.
- Living through awkward moments when emotions are running high takes understanding and grace.
- Riding the roller coaster of ups and downs takes courage and adaptability.
- The ability to remain in the moment is a gift and can minimize becoming overwhelmed.
- Counting on others to care for us, love us, advocate for us is critical and sometimes others are just unable to be there for us.
- It's okay to be selfish.
- It's important to make our needs, wishes, desires known.
- Humor can be the best medicine and laughing at ourselves is healing.
- Hope always exists even though it may not look the way you desire it to look.
- Live life with a grateful heart as it fills us up and keeps us going.

WE ARE ALL ENOUGH. WE ARE ALL BRAVE. WE ARE ALL INDIVIDUALS WITH OUR OWN UNIQUE COPING SKILLS. WE ARE ALL LOVED.

Eunie Alsaker

As an introvert, I am finding the gradual reentry into social contact as challenging as the sudden pandemic lockdown. It is amazing to be with people again, yet I will take forward an increased clarity of what recharges me and give myself permission to maintain a slower pace. Most of the young adult clients I serve are more than ready to be active and engaged. The last year held many lost opportunities for them. Socially anxious clients are relearning how to be with people, and we focus on strategies for being in community again. Yet the resilience of young adults shines through! Almost without exception, they move forward with a sense of gratitude for what the last year taught them. May it be so for all of us.

From Florence Wright

The last year has been full of stress and loss. I lost a beloved family member to COVID-19, and many close to me have suffered from pandemic-related anxiety, depression and substance misuse. I've sat with countless patients as they endured illness in the hospital alone without their support circles. The

challenges of the last year aren't lost on me. However, as I reflect and prepare for the next chapter, I'm aware of how lucky I've been to have maintained my health, career, and nourished my most important relationships. I am privileged to say that as I consider reintegration back to “normalcy,” there are actually things I will miss about days of quarantine. I'm a bit of a homebody and love an excuse to stay in with an open agenda. I have a young child and have had the opportunity to watch him grow and change throughout the first two years of his life in ways that would not have been feasible outside of the pandemic. I hope to continue my appreciation for the little things in life, and perspective on what matters the most.

From Chris Lewis

April 2021 haiku
So much suffering...
So much un-funeraled grief...
Yet, they refuse shots??

Sharon Dardis

It's almost impossible to grasp the magnitude of loss the world has suffered in the past 15 months. We all suffer from some version of “collective trauma.” There is much work and healing to be done. Every day of emerging from the effects of the pan-

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demic, brings new and ever-changing perspectives. What was true yesterday, or last week, or even last year, is suddenly in flux. Even though I listen to local, state, and national mandates, I am as confused as anyone. Even though I am “fully vaccinated,” I wonder, if it is really safe, or wise, or even socially responsible to remove my mask? For now, for me, it feels safer to continue its use.

My mask feels like my kids’ security blankets from years ago! I have masks stashed everywhere! I see many others masked around me, in stores, restaurants and even outdoors. I think doing this “coming-out” gradually, doing it as we are comfortable, is a good thing. I continue to try to follow the science and experts’ advice. I want to be part of the common good; part of the solution to “getting back to normal,” helping our country and the world move forward toward herd immunity.

A quote from Ellen Hendrickson, a clinical psychologist says, “Re-entry is an experiment, not an exam.” In other words, we are still trying to figure out how to do this! Be kind to yourself and others! This is going to take time!! Spring and summer makes things a little better. I try to get outside for walks or a bike ride. Exercise is always a game changer for me. I am beginning to re-connect with friends and family, some of whom I have only seen on Zoom. This social connection feels like good medicine. I also try to find time to meditate, to deep breathe, to pause often and look around me, to read and always strive for a solid 8 hours of sleep. I try to stay optimistic that 2021 be better. Check out this comprehensive article from National Geographic, “Why getting back to normal’ may actually feel terrifying.” (https://apple.news/A7p-sHimGvTrukIvX_pMaCYw) Be kind to yourselves, go slow and stay well!!

MCDES Announces the Appointment of Two New Board Members

The Board has weathered many changes and transitions during the last three years. We lost long-term board members through attrition, whose contributions were substantial and impactful. We also pivoted from in-person, community generating conferences that provided meaningful networking experiences, to hosting virtual conferences due to COVID-19. We will continue to be resilient and adaptable as a dedicated volunteer board. Our future is bright with the addition of these two outstanding new members. They both bring deep understanding of grief, as well as new perspectives and hope to the MCDES board.

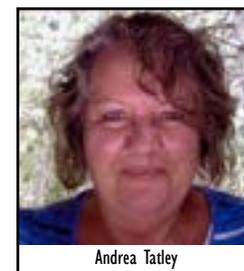
The MCDES Board of Directors are pleased to introduce you to our two new board members, Andrea Tatley and Dr. Ronald Bell. Their rich and deep education, work, and personal experiences will strengthen MCDES efforts, driving our mission forward. The board feels hopeful and excited about our future. Their addition brings the total number on our board to twelve.

Ronald Bell, MA, DMin, has been working in the field of grief, loss and trauma for 12 years. He is an ordained elder and senior pastor of Camphor Memorial United Methodist Church. As a pastoral counselor and community leader, Ron has worked with hundreds of individuals and families over the years, helping them navigate trauma and loss. Ron is also a writer and has written extensively on the subject of grief and trauma, including his book: *Is There Space for Me: Embracing Grief through Art*, as well as his just-published book: *4 Promises: Embracing Faith and Trauma*. Ron has a passion for journeying with individuals and families as they navigate their own grief and trauma.



Ronald Bell

Andrea Tatley holds an MDiv. in spiritual and personal formation. She has been in the field of grief and loss for 11 years through her work as a spiritual health provider and palliative care specialist. She has been a spiritual counselor for 20 years and as a writer and coach has authored a blog for 5 years, writing reflections on human formation, resilience and growth. Much of her coaching work focuses on nature-based therapy as it integrates with spirituality and in the use of creativity to lower stress and anxiety and process grief and loss. She appreciates time in the woods or by a lake with camera in hand, leading retreats and taking groups on heart-opening trips to sacred locations



Andrea Tatley

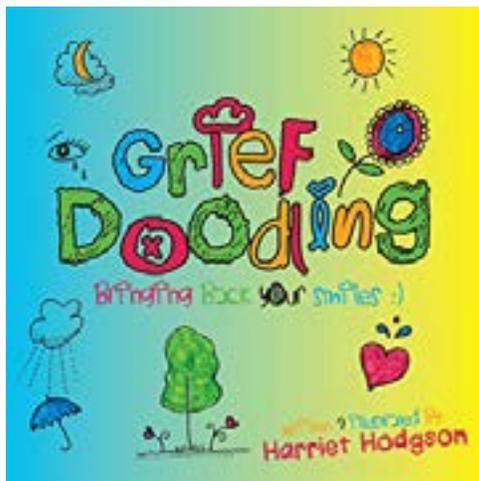
MCDES Nominating Committee
Diane Bauer, Kay Johnson and Tim Thorpe

Book Review: Grief Doodling: Bringing Back Your Smiles

By Harriet Hodgson
WriteLife Publishing, 2021
Reviewed by Eunie Alsaker

Harriet Hodgson, assistant editor of the Open to Hope website and MCDES member, is a health, wellness, and grief author. She is also all too familiar with personal grief. This past year as her husband was dying, she took up art doodling as a way to cope. In the end, she had a book which offers tips for doodling and touches on many vital grief topics. Hodgson presents helpful and hopeful ideas for pre-teens and teens as well as instrumental grievers of all ages.

Editor's Note: Harriet Hodgson has been a freelance, award-winning writer for over 43 years and is the author of 44 books. She has a BS from Wheelock College in Boston, MA and an MA from the University of Minnesota. Hodgson is a member of the Association of Health Care Journalists and Minnesota Coalition for Death Education and Support. In addition, she is a Contributing Writer for the Caregiver Space website, Open to Hope Foundation website, and The Grief Toolbox website. Visit <http://www.harriethodgson.com>, for a complete bio.



Book Review: Between Two Kingdoms: A Memoir of a Life Interrupted

By Suleika Jaouad, Random House, 2021
Reviewed by Eunie Alsaker

It has been some time since I began a book on a Friday night and cancelled all weekend plans so I could finish it by Monday. *Between Two Kingdoms* is that good. (Granted, with COVID I didn't exactly have plans, but you get my point.) It is a story of illness and recovery, of suspense (though as Jaouad says in her TED Talk, "Spoiler alert. I survive!"), of a cross-country road trip, and of identity, meaning, and purpose. And it is so very well written.

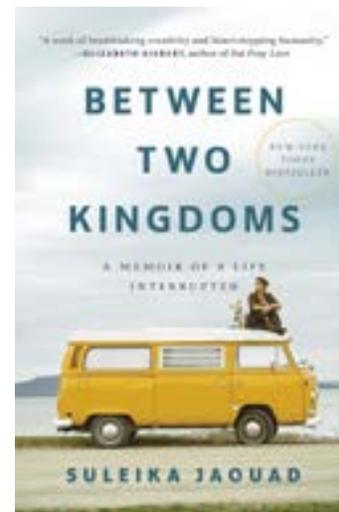
Suleika Jaouad is a 22-year-old recent college graduate living in Europe embarking on a new life and a new relationship when she develops unusual health issues. She will eventually learn that she has a rare form of acute myeloid leukemia and will be given a 35% chance of survival. Instantly, she goes from a confident, eager young woman launching into adult life to someone who spends the next four years in and out of the hospital, focused on the uncertainty and hope of survival. A turning point for Jaouad comes when she reads Frida Kahlo's diary and discovers that the artist started to paint following a serious car accident which left her bedridden for months. "I decided to reimagine my survival as a creative art," (p. 109) writes Jaouad. She began a 100-day project of journaling, which led to a blog, which led to a weekly column and video for the *New York Times*. Her project caught the attention of people around the country who reached out to her, and soon she had a new community of support.

After four years of treatment, "re-entry" was not nearly as easy as expected. Now in her mid-20s, who was she beyond a cancer survivor? And could she trust the cancer was gone? "To learn to swim in the ocean of not-knowing – this is my constant work." (p. 265) After failed attempts at finding peace, she takes off on a cross-country trek to meet some of the people she corresponded with during her illness. On the trip, she shifts her internal focus to the world beyond her cancer.

Suleika's original hope was to put her pain and grief behind her, but instead, she transforms her relationship with pain. "What if I stopped thinking of pain as something that needs to be numbed, fixed, dodged, and protected against? What if I tried to honor its presence in my body, to welcome it into the present?" (p. 312) For Jaouad, healing was about creating a way to coexist with this pain – a quest for anyone living with grief.

"There is no atlas, charting that long, moonless stretch of highway between where you start and who you become."

~ Suleika Jaouad



Death & The Arts: Poetry

Editor's Note: Didi Jackson is the author of *MOON JAR* (Red Hen Press, 2020). Her poems have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *New England Review*, and *Kenyon Review*. She lives in Nashville, TN and teaches creative writing at Vanderbilt University. Ms. Jackson's poem is reprinted with permission.

Bobolink

by Didi Jackson

In a meadow
as wide as a wound
I thought to stop
and study the lesser stitchwort's
white flowers lacing up
boot-level grasses
when I was scolded in song
by a black and white bird
whose wings sipped air,
swallow-like, until he landed
on the highest tip
of yellow dock,
still singing his beautiful warning,
the brown female
with him in fear.
The warning was real:
the anniversary of my husband's suicide.
What was the matter with life? Sometimes
when wind blows,
the meadow moves like an ocean,
and on that day,
I was in its wake—
I mean the day in the meadow.
I mean the day he died.
This is not another suicide poem.
This is a poem about a bird
I wanted to know and so
I spent that evening looking

up his feathers and flight,
spent most of the night
searching for mating habits
and how to describe the yellow
nape of his neck like a bit
of gothic stained glass,
or the warm brown
females with a dark eyeline.
How could I have known
like so many species
they too are endangered?
God must be exhausted:
those who chose life;
those who chose death.
That day I braided a few
strips of timothy hay
as I waited for the pair
to move again, to lift
from the field and what,
live? The dead can take
a brother, a sister; not really.
The dead have no one.
Here in this field
I worried the mowers
like giant gorging mouths
would soon begin again
and everything would be
as it will.



Didi Jackson

Sundries

A Superhero Confronts Her Grief

Marilyn A. Mendoza, Ph.D., writes: “With the recent release of the Marvel Cinematic Universe Disney+ television series *WandaVision*, I once again turn to Dr. Jill A. Harrington, creator and lead editor of the new textbook, published by Routledge, *Superhero Grief: The Transformative Power of Loss* to help answer the question, ‘What lessons in spousal/partner bereavement can grief counselors learn from *WandaVision*?’ Access the article in *Psychology Today* at <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/understanding-grief/202102/what-grief-counselors-can-learn-wanda-vision>.

How To Cope With COVID-19 Survivor’s Guilt

Recovering from COVID-19 can lead to complex feelings of grief, better known as survivor’s guilt. Experts are saying this is a growing issue as the pandemic hits its one-year mark in the U.S. Read the article from *Healthline* at <https://www.healthline.com/health-news/how-to-cope-with-covid-19-survivors-guilt>.

The Art of Processing Our Collective Grief

We have heard the phrase “grim milestone” so often in the past year that it now falls into the realm of journalistic cliché. The recent news that the U.S. has surpassed half a million COVID-19 deaths should not, however, be any less poignant for its morbid familiarity. These are the moments in which individual and shared grief intersect, but as we struggle to take stock

of societies’ losses, what does coming to terms with grief, as a culture, really look like? Access the article at <https://www.cnn.com/style/article/grief-grievance-culture-queue-wellness/index.html>.

Understanding Therapy For Grief And How It Can Help

We’ve surpassed 530,000 COVID-related deaths in the U.S., and many people are grieving a loss related to this pandemic. Whether you’re dealing with a pandemic-related loss or grieving a loss related to something else, finding a way to cope is critical. Read more at <https://www.healthline.com/health/mental-health/therapy-for-grief>.

How Has Travel Helped Us Process Our Grief

In the past year, we’ve all dealt with various levels of grief, both personal and collective, centered around the pandemic. For many, it has also resurfaced familiar emotions and struggles experienced over previous losses of friends and family. For more, go to <https://www.cntraveler.com/story/how-travel-has-helped-us-process-our-grief-women-who-travel-podcast>.

Three Questions for Midwest Faith Leaders

Faith community leaders play a critical role at the end of life for their congregants and loved ones. Join in a virtual panel discussion on June 15th. It will explore how various faiths view the end-of-life and the dying process, the importance of advance care planning, and the role of faith leaders in serving those at the end of life. The discussion will be moderated by Dr. Jeff Gardere, a Board Certified Clinical Psychologist and ordained Interfaith Minister with a

Doctorate in Divinity from The New Seminary. Registration is required at: <https://join.compassionandchoices.org/a/0616web?sourceid=1069832>.

Black Table Arts

Following the death of George Floyd and a summer of unrest and sorrow, a south Minneapolis arts advocacy and education organization organized a physical space for healing, the arts and furthering the narrative. Read Drew Wood’s interview here with founder, Keno Evol. Thanks to the *Mpls.St.Paul Magazine* for this hope-filled article, <https://mspmag.com/arts-and-culture/black-table-arts-artist-cooperative/>.

Seasons of Love COVID Grief Tribute

There is a touching tribute from the Broadway cast of *RENT*. The Covid Grief Network, and their community gives a powerful glimpse into the lives we’ve lost to COVID-19 and those left grieving. Find them at <https://www.playbill.com/article/watch-final-cast-of-broadways-rent-honor-covid-19-victims-with-passionate-seasons-of-love>.

Pieces of You

“Pieces of you” is a podcast about life through the lens of four fearless and resilient women who lost their moms “too damn soon.” Hosted by Christine Friberg, founder of She Climbs Mountains, a nonprofit serving women and girls who have experienced mother loss, as well as other hosts, Shadia Tonkin, Sarah Weismantel, and Erin Ditmarson. Find them at <https://www.piecesofyoupodcast.com/>.

End In Mind

End in Mind is “leading a movement to change how our culture engages with loss, dying and death.” Their

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mission statement is “to take the universal experience of dying to help you reimagine what it means to live fully at any stage of life.” Their website, www.endinmindproject.org, includes podcasts, a blog, resources and inspirational stories.

Memorial Day

Remembering all the service men and women whom we honor this Memorial Day, who died in service to our country. Thanks, too, to their loved ones who also paid the “ultimate price.” The red poppy has become a symbol in many Allied countries to honor those fallen. “In Flanders Field,” was written by a Canadian soldier and doctor, John McCrea, in 1915, after witnessing first-hand the brutal fighting of WW I. The poppy, which McCrea saw surrounding his own battle location in Belgium, was one of the first plants to re-seed and re-emerge in war-torn battle fields. This much-loved and often memorized poem below is available at <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47380/in-flanders-fields>.

In Flanders Fields

By John McCrae, public domain

In Flanders fields the poppies blow

Between the crosses, row on row,

That mark our place; and in the sky

The larks, still bravely singing, fly

Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago

We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,

Loved and were loved, and now we lie,

In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:

To you from failing hands we throw

The torch; be yours to hold it high.

If ye break faith with us who die

We shall not sleep, though poppies grow

In Flanders fields.

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Thanks to Florence Wright, MCDES chair for sharing her heart-felt sadness over the past year’s complicated grief and loss. It is good, as Florence says, to acknowledge our “collective grief” and resolve to support one another in the important work we do. I believe we can each strive to continue to be kind, supportive voices and role models for one another. Florence, we thank you and are grateful for your kind and compassionate leadership of MCDES.

Sarah Kroenke gives us a peak into how the pandemic and the past year changed the look of grief groups. How grateful we are for therapists like Sarah, who continue to “zoom,” in a multitude of ways, to compassionately continue to meet the needs of those who grieve. Thank you, Sarah, for sharing your expertise and insights.

Sarah and her colleague, Cara Mearns-Thompson, were also kind enough to take the time to introduce us to the new Grief Club of Minnesota. They welcome you to connect with them on social media, their website, or email if you would like more information. Again, thanks for the good work you both are doing for grieving young people and their families.

Don’t miss the chance to read about our new board members, Ronald Bell and Andrea Tatley. Both bring a wealth of experience and “heart” to the board. Please join us in welcoming and thanking them for agreeing to serve in this board capacity.

Once again, poetry finds a place in our newsletter. Thanks to Didi Jackson, from Nashville, Tennessee for granting permission for us to reprint her beautiful poem, “Bobolink.” You can find more of Didi’s poetry in her newest book of poems, *Moon Jar*. Didi current-

ly teaches creative writing at Vanderbilt University. Thank you, Didi.

Eunie Alasaker kindly contributes once again to *Coalition News* with two very different, but interesting book reviews. I had already read *Between Two Kingdoms: A Memoir of a Life Interrupted* but Eunie’s review actually made me want to read it again. The theme of kindness can be found within these pages as the author discovers a loving community of strangers, ready to offer her support. This memoir and author will steal your heart! Thanks, Eunie for your great review.

Thanks, too, to MCDES member, Harriet Hodgson for making us aware of her newest grief resource book, *Grief Doodling: Bringing Back Your Smiles*. Harriet tells us that although she originally wrote *Grief Doodling* for teens, grief counselors and readers are saying it is for “all ages.” She is co-presenting a grief doodling workshop in Rochester, MN this spring and also speaking to The Compassionate Friends about grief doodling. Mitch Carmody, author of “Letters to My Son” shared this endorsement, “What Harriet has created is brilliant and I heartily endorse its use by all who grieve or have experienced trauma in their lives.” Learn more about Harriet’s work and how to order her book at www.harriethodgson.com.

Once again, we asked board members for their personal reactions. A year ago it was, “How are you managing with the shutdown and pandemic?” Now we ask, “With this gradual re-opening; how are you managing the reemergence back to some semblance of normal?” You’ll find their responses varied and thought-provoking. As always, please take time to explore the extensive Sundries page. Thanks to everyone

Editor continued on page 15

The Coffee You Won't Get to Drink (A Reflection On Dying)

By John Pavlovitz

Editor's Note: June 20th, 2021 is summer solstice. It is also Father's Day, when we here in the United States honor all fathers, living and dead. This reflection seems appropriate to share. Thanks to John Pavlovitz for permission to reprint. John is an American Unitarian pastor, blogger, speaker, and author and can be reached at <https://johnpavlovitz.com/>. This article is reprinted from <https://johnpavlovitz.com/2021/05/04/the-coffee-you-wont-get-to-drink-a-reflection-on-dying/?fbclid=IwAR3x0kdKmQtEwLX3oh7s9Z3vdnRECoaVITVq1WDscvMS0e2xf1h-nB1Q8Wo>.

Seven years ago my parents went on a cruise to celebrate my father's 70th birthday.

My family and I happened to call them just as they were sailing away. We could hear the ship's booming horn blasting out as we quickly wished dad a happy birthday and them a wonderful trip and told them to call us when they were back in port.

They spent the next few hours exploring the ship, having a birthday dinner, and then they went to bed, excited for the week ahead of them.

The following morning, my mother had gotten up early and snuck out of the room and went down to the cafe to get coffee for them, so they could enjoy the morning view from the balcony. Just as she'd done countless times over their nearly five decades together, she made his coffee just the way he liked it. When you've been with someone most of your life, these things are part of the muscle memory of your relationship.

When she got back to the room she was surprised that he was still asleep, and after setting the cups down on the side table, she said, "John, get up, I got us some coffee."

When he didn't stir up right away, she assumed he was playing. "C'mon, get up!" she said louder and with a smile.

He didn't move.

She went to rouse him awake and

when she touched him she realized he was gone. He was cold.

A couple hours later when news reached us and I was able to get her on the phone, she told me that story through tears, and the world I knew when I went to bed the night before (much like hers) caved in: a tidal wave of emotions and questions and thoughts flooded in and altered my life irrevocably.

One of the images that flashed in my mind that morning and has remained to this day, is of that cup of coffee sitting just a few feet from my father's body, coffee that was lovingly made for him, coffee that he would never get to enjoy, coffee that went cold.

I wondered how long it sat there on that table, if it was still there long after they'd removed him, if anyone even noticed it, if my mom had thought about it.

Every day that full cup of coffee reminds me of the way death interrupts our plans without warning. It leaves so much unfinished.

When my father took his last breath, there were so many things that were now forever undone: activities he'd planned for the ship the next day, flights back the following week, business trips he'd scheduled after he got home, golf outings with friends, meals with my siblings, retirement plans, and a billion infinitesimal decisions and

intentions that were now permanently incomplete.

That sunset became my father's last.

That dinner became his last.

That phone call became our last.

The hug I gave him in the airport three months earlier became our last.

The goofy voicemail he left me a week ago became his last.

That after-dinner coffee became his last.

I know he could never have dreamed on that Friday night, that this would be his final cup of coffee in his 70-year journey.

I'm sure it never entered his mind.

Had it, I know he'd have savored it.

He'd have drank it slowly and let every sip be a celebration.

He'd not have taken it for granted.

He'd have paid attention to it, to everything around him, to my mom and the people with him, because the finality would have demanded it.

If only we could know when we were experiencing the last occasions and the last moments with people when we were, so that we could give them the gratitude and reverence and joy they deserve.

We would live differently.

We would be more attentive.

We would be more present.

Coffee continued from page 14

We would be more alive while we are living.

Friend, you will do things today that appear quite normal: perhaps things you no longer notice or that you take for granted or even that you are annoyed by because they seem like burdens: tasks and activities that seem so mundane and uneventful—but only because you're so used to them.

It's so very easy to assume that you will get to do them all again or experience them again or see people again, but you may not.

This may be your last cup of coffee,
your last night sleeping next to your beloved,
your last family dinner,
your last time embracing your child,
your last little league game,
your last dog walk,
your last kiss,
your last sunset,
your last breath.

And since few of these moments will come with a message telling you this, do your best to linger and enjoy and celebrate them all.

One day there will be a cold cup of coffee that you will not get to drink.

Savor the one in front of you.

Savor every breath.

Perfection of character is this: to live each day as if it were your last.

~ Marcus Aurelius

Editor continued from page 13

who continues to contribute content and leads for topics pertaining to death, dying, bereavement and loss. Without your kind support, this newsletter would never happen. Send your thoughts and submissions to SDardis@aol.com.

Like all my obituary clippings, Etty Hillesum's words stay with me, filling me with hope. If "all that matters now is for us to be kind to each other with all the goodness that is in us"...then that seems a good and hopeful place

to start. Maybe kindness can save the world. I believe MCDES has a head-start on the race, already and always flooding our community with empathy and kindness. I love the saying, "Kindness is just love with work boots on!" Keep up all your life-changing good work! Keep your work boots on and goodness, kindness, and love will surely overcome the darkness. Your kindness shines brighter than most! Stay hopeful, safe, and well. Thanks for all you do, so well, for so many.

MCDES Virtual Fall Conference: October 1, 2021

MCDES is pleased to announce our fall conference featuring local educators Pauline Boss, PhD, and Ted Bowman, MDiv.

Pauline Boss is an educator and researcher who is widely recognized for her groundbreaking research on what is now known as the theory of ambiguous loss. Dr. Boss is known as a pioneer in the interdisciplinary study of family stress. For over thirty years, her work has focused on connecting family science and sociology with family therapy and psychology. More about Dr. Boss and her work is at <https://www.ambiguousloss.com/>.

Ted Bowman is an educator, author and consultant who specializes in change and transition, whether it occurs in families, an organization, or the community. His emphasis is on aiding people in utilizing their strengths and the resources of others in facing change and transition. He is a frequent trainer, consultant, and speaker with many groups throughout Minnesota, across the United States, and other countries. Please visit his website: <https://bowmanted.com/>.



Pauline Boss, PhD

Ted Bowman, MDiv

Brief Program Description

'Tis a truism that the personal narratives of grief and bereavement counselors will be triggered when doing their work with others. Stories evoke stories. Shared accounts of loss can overlap with or evoke the personal loss experiences of the grief volunteer or professional. At those moments, the quality of grief care can be compromised or enriched. In this workshop, registrants will be presented with perspectives and tools for addressing the ambiguities of loss and of grief care, when also grieving.

More about this exciting conference will be available soon at www.mcdes.org.

Minnesota Coalition for
Death Education and Support
P.O. Box 50651
Minneapolis, MN 55405
763-391-3051

Coalition News

June 2021

MCDES Board Members

Eunie Alsaker, Secretary

Diane Bauer

Ronald Bell, Jr.

Allison Chant

Sharon Dardis

Kay Johnson, Vice-Chair

Kelli Kinney

Christine Lewis

Andrea Tatley

Peter Thoreen, Treasurer

Tim Thorpe

Florence Wright, Chair

*MCDES membership does
not imply certification or
accreditation of its members.*

Grief Resources

Jewish Grief Education/Support Group:
www.jfcsmpls.org.

Pathways—A Healing Center: www.pathwaysminneapolis.org.

North Metro Grief Support Coalition:
763-413-2985.

Allina Support Groups: Search for “grief support” at www.allinahealth.org.

Capitol City Grief Coalition: Contact coordinator Lois Knutson, 651-227-4430.

Downtown Coalition for Grief Support:
www.mplsgriefsupport.com.

MN Network of Hospice & Palliative Care:
<https://www.mnhpc.org/grief-support>.

Children’s Grief Connection:
www.childrensgriefconnection.com.

Compassionate Friends:
<https://www.compassionatefriends.org/>.

Hastings Area Grief Coalition: <https://account.allinahealth.org/events/59327>.

Weathering Life’s Losses—Adult Support Group, and Kids in Grief Support Group. Thurs., Stillwater, 651-430-4586.

West Suburban Coalition:
www.westsuburbangriefmn.org.

Dakota County Grief Resources:

<https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/HealthFamily/MentalHealth/Training/Documents/GriefLossSupportServices.pdf>.

Youth Grief Services, Fairview:
www.fairview.org/youthgrief.

The Young Widowed Support Group:
mraem@parknicollet.com.

Center for Grief, Loss & Transition:
<http://griefloss.org> or 651-641-0177.

South Mpls Coalition for Grief Support:
www.trustinc.org/programs/grief-support

Bloomington-Richfield Grief Coalition:
www.brgriefcoalition.com.

Prince of Peace Grief Support, Burnsville:
<https://popmn.org/mission/support-groups>

Edina Coalition for Grief Support:
www.edinagriefsupport.org.

The Grief Project: www.griefproject.org.

Grief Support-Essentia Health-St. Mary’s Medical Center (Duluth):
www.Essentiahealth.org/griefsupportduluth

Crisis Text Line: Text “MN” to 741741.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255).