

From the Chair: On Hope

by Kay Johnson, MCDES Chair

Dear readers,

“Change is the only constant.” I’ve heard this Benjamin Disraeli quote throughout my lifetime and it couldn’t feel more real than it does this year. 2020 is one for the record books. I am most certain that all of us could compile a lengthy list of changes and losses we’ve experienced since the pandemic started. The MCDES board has been riding that wave of change along with you. Our newsletter editor, Sharon Dardis, BSN, RN, quickly adapted and created a phenomenal “historic” June issue of *Coalition News*. She was overwhelmed with the positive response to submission requests. Our hope was that the content would serve to remind us that we are all in this together.

The MCDES board is definitely all in this together. Our conference planning committee, under the leadership of Ed Holland, MDiv, MFT, has stretched and worked outside of the comfort zone at times. The disappointment of having to cancel our spring conference with Wendy Lichtenthal, PhD, FT, led to the option of scheduling her for spring of 2021 in-person or virtual. The committee, along with the rest of the board, and Verla Johansson, administrative assistant, dove head-first into the planning of our fall virtual conference, *Untangling Intangible Loss in the Treatment of Traumatic Grief* with speaker, Kenneth V. Hardy, PhD. This virtual change is a first for us in over 40 years of service. We continue to focus on details that have created the premium educational content that keep our conference attendees coming back for more.

In addition to adapting quickly to the needs related to membership support and education, the board has hired a consultant to facilitate board discussion related to our vision and goals. We are all excited to see where this discussion takes us and realize the hopefulness of many options. The board remains dedicated to and present for the mission of providing education, opportunities for networking, and support to professionals and volunteers involved in the care of persons confronting death and bereavement. Our history is rich and we intend to faithfully carry this work into the future, even though it may look different. There is so much hope.

It has been a pleasure serving as the board chair alongside our vice chair, Florence Wright, MSW, LICSW, CAPSW, the past two years. I continue to learn from this board of deeply committed professionals with incredible skill and career history. I’d like to thank them all for stepping up during this time. We are all volunteers, we work as a group and we all have other responsibilities to juggle. We are all in this together and we are all better together.

Leaving you with some signs of hope I have noted recently on hikes and a road trip to Utah. Getting outside has been a positive influence in my life this year. I am grateful to be open to the signs as there is so much to be hopeful for. Wishing you all good health and peace.

“Hope and change are hard-fought things.” ~ Michelle Obama

