



# The Grieving Journey

from Greene County Council on Aging Fall 2023

## Grieving

When we are grieving, we feel many different emotions. Some emotions can be very difficult to handle, and we want to push them away instead of feeling them. Men and women may vary in the way they express their feelings. Women are known to be more apt to talk and express their emotions, while men are thought to hold things in and not show that they are hurting. Unfortunately, our society has given men a tough road to traverse if they feel they shouldn't express their grief.

Grieving well requires that we, in all our human manifestations, feel our sorrow, our anger, our despair, and our loneliness after a loss. If we don't allow ourselves to feel these feelings, we may hurt ourselves in the long run because bottling feelings up only causes that painful stress to move to other parts of our body. Not relieving the stress and hurt of grief can develop into physical illness, depression, and other symptoms of trauma.

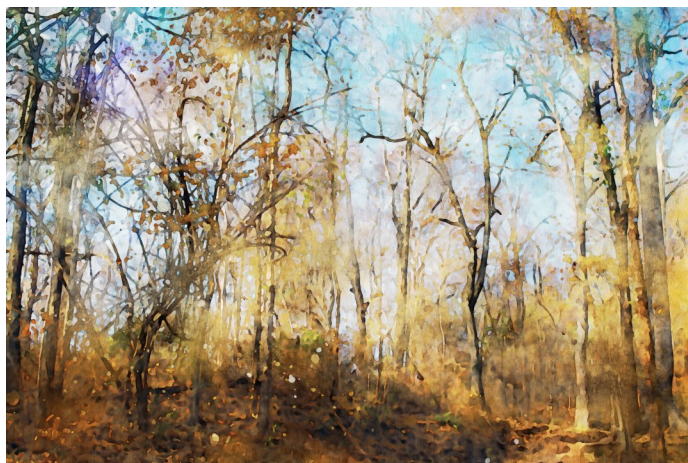
Here are a few steps you can take to help you feel safe expressing your grief.

**Join a support group:** Be with others who are grieving and allow yourself to be vulnerable in the presence of others who are going through something similar. What others share may be

helpful to you. Learn about the stages of grief and what to expect from this painful journey. The more you know the less you will fear your feelings.

**See a therapist:** Talk to a professional regularly in order to delve into your grief on a different level than in the support group. A therapist can give you tools to help you cope with difficult feelings and fears. Therapists listen, they will not try to talk you out of how you are feeling; they will validate your experience and help you know that what you feel is normal.

**Tell your story:** After a significant loss, we need to tell the story, sometimes repeatedly. This is partly why support groups are helpful because you can share your story with others. Working on your story alone can also be very beneficial, especially if



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## Grieving Continued

you put together a journal or write a paragraph to go along with photos that you have – you can write about the day, why you and your now deceased loved one were dressed up, who else was with you, how did you feel, and so on.

**Reestablish connections:** Seek out family and friends who you can call when you are having a difficult day. Join a club, a class, or faith community to meet others. Volunteer at an animal shelter and find a pet. Put some effort into what would bring you small bits of joy or help pass the time. Picking up a hobby can be very fulfilling, especially when it is done with others.

**Exercise:** Moving our bodies is good for our brains and mental health. Many doctors are prescribing exercise for depression now instead of medication. Get out there and walk, hike, bike, swim, golf, or play pickle ball. Do some solo exercise and some with others.

You deserve to care for yourself while going through something difficult.

## The Mourner's Code

10 principles to empower you on your grieving journey by Alan D. Wolfelt, PH.D.

1. You have the right to experience your own unique grief.
2. You have the right to talk about your grief.
3. You have the right to feel a multitude of emotions.
4. You have the right to be tolerant of your physical and emotional limits
5. You have the right to experience “griefbursts.”
6. You have the right to make use of rituals.
7. You have the right to embrace your spirituality.
8. You have the right to search for meaning.
9. You have the right to treasure your memories.
10. You have the right to move toward your grief and heal.



*The Grieving Journey is a Greene County Council on Aging quarterly publication to accompany you in your time of bereavement after the loss of a significant person in your life.*

We hope you find this publication helpful, and welcome your comments and ideas for future issues.  
Let us know if you no longer wish to receive this newsletter.

## GCCOA Grief Support Group

Group meetings are open to all those who have lost a loved one. Meetings are on the 2nd Monday of the month, 10am until noon, Peace Lutheran Church, 3530 Dayton Xenia Road, Beavercreek (lower level). Participation is limited and advance registration is required. Please call the Council to learn more.