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The Seasons Through Your Grief



Fall’s transformations are remarkable. Trees change into a symphony of color and movement. The transition from summer to autumn is stunning and obvious. The transitions in grief are less obvious but equally stunning.

As leaves tumble down, branches are left empty. People in grief may feel this emptiness in every level of their being.

The empty chair, the unheard laughter, and the absence of touch are painful reminders of loss. An array of feelings from fear, loneliness and anger to guilt, shock, and relief may move through us like a powerful wind.

It takes great strength to turn into this gale, facing these feelings of loss and bending with them until they begin to subside. This storm of emotion may leave us feeling exhausted, but ultimately clearer about what brings meaning to the present.

Autumn is a time of balance, when light and dark and heat and cold find equilibrium. We, too, can find balance in fullness and emptiness, pain and appreciation, work and rest. We gradually begin to see the possibilities of a life with meaning and hope.

The other side of grief is seeing what it is to live

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Complicated Grief Or Unresolved Grief Understanding the Symptoms, Causes and Solutions



Complicated grief or unresolved grief is when someone has been bereaved for over a year and still seems to be in the depths of acute and intense grief, but does not seem able to recover. They may be depressed and unable to act in their own lives.

When this happens, it is often necessary to have professional help and support.

Grieving and mourning after the death of someone we love is important. If for some reason we avoid doing this, we can suffer from complicated grief. Sometimes people are so determined to avoid depression that they actually avoid the process of grieving and this can cause problems.

Developing an addiction or reliance on alcohol or drugs can inhibit our grieving process.

Withdrawing emotionally into a shell and losing communication with others as a way of protecting ourselves can cause problems.

Whatever the reasons for complicated grief arising, it is more likely one of these has happened in your life:

Conflict, sadness and trauma in your relationship with the person who died, especially if this was unresolved and ongoing.

A second major crisis in your life at the same time as the loss of a loved one.

Two or more deaths occurring close together.

A lack of support from your own family or from your own social network, for whatever reason.

A refusal by the bereaved to allow any others to give them support and a determination to remain isolated.

Traumatic memories from the past or previous bereavements which cause unpleasant memories.

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Complicated Grief Or Unresolved Grief Understanding the Symptoms, Causes and Solutions

Even understanding that these causes may affect you could begin to help you deal with complicated grief.

To emerge from complicated or unresolved grief takes great courage and effort and here are some brief ideas to help guide you:

Look for help to make sense of your loss and accept that it is real. It is necessary to move away from anger and denial.

Spend some time to unravel the complex emotions with you and understand what is going on in your life.

Look for support to help you consider how to live without the one that you loved.

Look for a way to actually find time to mourn and grieve. If you are too busy, make time.

Do not be afraid to explore what has happened in the past and previous suffering. Understanding this can help us come to terms with our future.

Above all, look for some professional help and support if necessary.

Here In My Heart...

*I dreamed about you,
and your sweet
kiss, and when I awoke,
I yearned to touch you,
but I couldn't...*

*I saw us strolling along my street
where the maples had
turned crimson,
and I wanted to point out
their beauty to you,
but I couldn't...*

*I struggled through a stressful day,
wishing I could see your smile,
hear your voice,
feel your reassuring touch,
but I couldn't...*

*I sat on the couch,
yearning to talk to you,
to share the happenings of the day,
to feel your hand curve so perfectly
and smoothly into mine,
but I couldn't...*

*And before I went to sleep,
I wanted to hold you and love you,
and tell you how much I love you,
but I couldn't...*

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Understanding Grief



The following series of articles are designed to help the readers to understand the pain that they are feeling when they are going through the grieving process.

It is hoped that a better understanding of the grieving process will help these persons to cope with their pain in a more positive way.

Grief Is About Loss

Grief is more about loss than it is about death. When a loved one dies we are saddened at their passing. However, the pain of grief that lingers for days and months is caused by the losses that we experience at the passing of our loved one. This is one of the reasons that grieving becomes so difficult for the hurting person.

When a grieving person seems to be having a good day, sometime after their loved one has passed; a reminder of another loss causes him/her to feel the pain of that loss all over again. Just when they felt that they were finding healing, they go back to square one. "Why can't I get past this?"

Confusion added to the pain of grief causes the person to feel that there is something wrong with him/her. Holidays become very difficult because holidays are about memories. The memories are a reminder of things that will never be the same again more loss. During a season when everyone is suppose to be jolly, the painful memories often cause the grieving person to feel guilty for not feeling up to celebrating with the rest of the family more pain.

Another problem caused by the fact that grief centers on loss is that no one can completely understand another person's grief. While several family members may be related to the person who has passed on, the fact is that the losses caused by his/her passing will be different for each family member. Aunt Susan will feel the loss of her nephew, but it will likely not be the same loss that her sister feels at the passing of her son. This means that Aunt Susan will need to understand that her grief is different than her sister's if she is going to

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She cannot expect that her sister will cope with her grief in the same manner that she has. No one can tell another person how he/she should grieve.

There is another factor that we should consider when realizing that grief centers on loss. The losses that we face in life may not have anything to do with someone's death. The loss of a job; the loss of friendships due to moving from one location to another; divorce that brings about many losses in a family setting; the empty-nest syndrome that suggests a role change for caregivers—these are but a few causes for grief that many different people face on a daily basis. Understanding the source of our grief can help us deal with that grief. Everyone will experience the grief in a different manner and therefore, will deal with it differently.

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Why Can't They Accept It And Move On?

When observers seek to understand the actions of a grieving person, they must be reminded that they are attempting

to do the impossible. As a grief counselor, I have observed numerous ways that people deal with grief. As a human being, I have experienced different ways that I deal with grief. The fact is that no one can ever say, "I understand what you are going through." Even when I have faced similar grief myself, I cannot understand the grief that another is facing.

There are too many variables when it comes to the losses faced by the grieving individual as well as the background experiences of the grieving person. While a strong faith background may help a person deal with death and loss by focusing on the after life, not experiencing this kind of loss may require him/her to use this faith in a different way than ever before. The person may even have encouraged others in a crisis similar to the one that they are facing. However, one's personal experience will always be different. While the focus of their faith on the life after death can help tremendously, the grief focuses on the very present losses and the pain that this causes.

When considering the grief cycle the stage of shock or denial most often appears first on their list. The fact is that facing grief in nothing like following a list of instructions.

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In the first stages of one's loss there are many questions that go unresolved. One moves ahead in feelings of numbness as he struggles with caring for the needs that present themselves. In the loss of a loved one, the funeral procedures, legal requirements, insurance claims, the many notifications, and so much more become overwhelming to the grieving person. Many people are there to help them the funeral director, a compassionate insurance agent, the pastor, close family members, and others. The person kept it all together during the funeral and everyone marveled at how well the grieving person was taking the loss.

Now alone, this individual cannot bring himself/herself to part with the loved one's clothing. One suggests that family members come in and dispose of these things for the bereaved person. Shock and denial start all over again as the person stares at an empty closet where the loved one's personal things used to be kept. Family questions, "Why can't they get past this stage and move on?"

Every grieving person needs to go through the stage of denial at his/her own pace.

The greatest help that loved ones can provide is to support grieving persons by affirming their feelings while they struggle making their own decisions. When the difficult tasks present themselves during this painful journey called grief, it is best to allow the person to make their own choices if they are able. Don't force them to move too quickly, but don't take over the tasks that they can do for themselves. Feelings of guilt, anger, and depression can be more intense if the persons later feel that they were robbed of making choices.

[Loneliness Has Never Felt Like This Before.](#)

One of the problems that comes with understanding grief is the many different feelings that come to the grieving person in the days, months, and years that follow his/her loss. As a matter of fact, the term "grief" came into being as a result of the need to label the variety of feelings that come with loss. When the death of a loved one is the cause of grief, many friends and family members gather around the hurting persons to help them accomplish the needed tasks to get them through the immediate crisis.

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Depending on the culture and size of the family these tasks can vary from finding a gathering place and caterers to serve a meal to sending out thank you cards to those who expressed their thoughts of support. The changing of names on deeds, and in some cases, the driver's license, along with probating a will can fill up hours and days of a person's time. Plans to move to a more affordable housing arrangement and dealing with creditors also occupy the time of these hurting individuals.

Months later, when all of the stressful tasks are completed and the communication has ground to a halt, the grieving person sits alone in the new living quarters and wonders about this heavy feeling of loneliness that has settled in. The busyness was so helpful. There was a reason to call all of those people when searching for answers to questions. Now, no one calls him and he must look for an excuse to call others. The penetrating thought suggests, "They were so kind to help me, I don't want to bother them now." "He must be busy helping others and won't have the time for me"

On the other side of the system, the guiding thought suggests,

"She has been through so much, I don't want to call her and open old wounds." The hours stretch into days and weeks. The loneliness becomes unbearable.

When the lonely person meets a friend in the store, she does not dare to tell them how she is feeling. It would make them feel bad because they chose not to call or visit. The word "fine" comes out automatically when someone asks, "How are you doing?" the allusion goes on.

Assuming is one of the worst things that can happen to a grieving person or family. The hurting person assumes that no one wants to be bothered while the friends assume that the grieving person is either doing fine or does not want to talk about it. The caring person should mark dates on the calendar and make a point of calling, visiting, or offering invitations to the hurting person. The hurting persons should realize that their friends would likely be offended if they knew that they would not reach out to them when in need. Joining a grief support group could be of great help here. When the person feels up to it, they might consider becoming a volunteer in a program that cares for individuals needing assistance—the I interaction can do wonders to relieve the loneliness.

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I Don't Know What To Say

One of the most difficult feelings that grieving people face is that of abandonment. Some of their closest friends did not call to offer condolences. Strangers were there to help them when they needed companionship. In some situations, new relationships were established while old ones are abolished "If they did not have time for me when I needed them the most, I don't want to have anything to do with them anymore." There is an anger stage that goes with the grief cycle and this is one of the areas where anger is expressed most often.

On the other side of this scenario you will find the individuals that are feeling their own kind of grief. They have lost a friend and cannot imagine what the grieving person is going through. "Why do these things happen to such good people?" a plaguing question for which they have no answer. "What if they ask me this question? What will I say? I don't want to be in such a situation so I'll send a card later. If I avoid them, I can avoid the difficult questions that I cannot answer."

The fact is that no one can answer many of the questions that come during a time of loss. In most cases the person asking the questions does not expect an answer. The asking is simply their way of expressing the feelings that lie within. If there is no one willing to listen to the questions, the hurting person does not get to express those feelings. If a stranger is willing to be a listener, he/she becomes a friend in time of need.

The friend that becomes so important during the time of grief is the one who is willing to put aside his/her feelings of inadequacy and identify with the hurt of a loved one. True friends may not understand the pain of the grieving person, but they can express a willingness to feel the pain of helplessness as they stand by and allow the grieving persons to express their hurt with questions that have no answers.

The best answer that has ever been given to an unanswerable question comes in three words, "I don't know." Statements like, "I can't begin to understand what you are feeling. I just want you to know that I am willing to be here for you," can bridge the gap that allows both sides to feel free to be themselves in a time when neither knows what to do or say.

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Grief is multiplied when friendships are broken because of a misunderstanding that arises during the time of pain.

The loss becomes greater on both sides. A willingness to be present without answers or comment can help to prevent these misunderstandings.

The Unanswerable Why Question

Do you remember the last time you chose to explain the universe to a child? When you told them that the sun came up in the east, they asked “Why”. Explaining that the earth rotates on its axis was met with the question “Why”. Clarifying, “That’s the way that God made it” simply provoked another “Why”. You finally gave up and changed the subject.

When it comes to unanswered questions relating to grief the “Why” question is one that so often remains a mystery. Certain facts concerning the circumstances of the death of a loved one, the loss of a job, the need to leave friends and family behind to make a move, and other grief producing situations might be information that needs to be gathered and shared.

However, satisfying the inner pain caused by grief is seldom accomplished with superficial facts and theories. The real question is “Why him or why me?” The question itself implies that it should have been someone else. Struggles with guilt feelings cloud the answers so that we dare not pursue the question further. Presenting an argument for their defense, the hurting persons might focus on the good life, the dedicated service, faithful sacrifices for others, and many other reasons why it should have been someone else.

An important fact that must be remembered suggests that you cannot make sense out of the senseless. One must also recall that life is not always fair. Of course, offering these kinds of platitudes may not always bring satisfaction. However, it will allow the individual to feel free to ask such questions without fear of criticism. The fact is that the questions are there and if not given a voice, they can cause more pain. The grieving person may likely apologize for asking such a question, but, at least, the opportunity was afforded that allow it to come to the surface and find expression.

A concept that has haunted me for years is the idea that it is a sin to ask God, “Why”.

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There is no biblical foundation for such a claim. As a matter of fact, the Scripture teaches that anyone lacking wisdom should ask God for answers. He/she is to do so in faith (James 1:5-6). Asked in a sincere way, the why question could be considered an expression of one's faith. It implies that God has not forsaken us suggesting that there may be a positive reason for the things that happen to us. The pain of grief often makes us focus on the negative. A sincere search for the answer to this question might help the grieving person to find some healing from the pain of grief in the days and months that lie ahead.

When Grief Has Nothing To Do With Death.

Grief is not about death—it is more about loss. There are many times when individuals experience the pain of grief and wonder what that pain is. A traumatic loss of a loved one would explain what they are now feeling, but this has not happened. “So, why am I experiencing these negative moods?”

Taking the time to list the many possible causes of grief related losses might explain the moody feeling if one can identify with any one of them. The loss of a job brings changes suggesting that things will never be the same again. The losses linked with employment changes might include: friendships related to the job; feelings of security that came with the regular paycheck; feelings of fulfillment when one took pleasure in his/her work; the positive self-esteem that came from a job well done; the lack of peace when the pains of a job search becomes overwhelming are but a few. If you have been there, you can likely create your own list.

Divorce is another way of losing a loved one. Some feel that it is more painful than a death. However you look at it, there will always be a certain amount of grief. Remembering that there are losses, think of the child who feels that all of his dreams will never come to pass—divorce brings a tremendous loss to children that they will need help to process. Think of the trusts that have been broken and the need to learn to trust all over again. The house that must be sacrificed and the move to a new location will bring many different losses to mind.

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A job transfer can be quite exciting for the breadwinner. He/she has been working for this promotion for years and it has finally arrived. The worker plunges himself/herself into the job and finds great satisfaction. The family struggles with making new friends, finding their way through a new school district, and discovering the places where the bargains are while shopping at very different stores. All of this serves to remind them that their lives have forever changed and these changes means losses.

Take the time to think of the losses faced by a child when he/she moves from one class to another. All of the children do not move to the same classroom friendships left behind. A new teacher at the front of the class will replace the one that the child has become attached to. The environment that provided a safe feeling will now be changed and the child will now be challenged to find comfort in a new setting.

Do not be surprised if feelings of grief/ depression are expressed during the latter end of the summer vacation. Take note if the child seems more anxious as the return to school nears. You should not protect children from grief, but journey with them through the grieving process.

Feelings of grief can come from many sources. Grief does not need to be feared, but they should be confronted. Don't bury the feelings process them.

[Why Do I Feel So Guilty?](#)

One of the emotional characteristics that shows up repeatedly is the feeling of guilt. This portion of the grief cycle gives evidence to the fact that the cycle of grief does not need to be followed in an exact pattern. This is one reason why grief is so hard to understand. Just when one feels that he/she is ready to move on with the healing process, one of the stages that he/she thinks has been conquered shows up again. The emotion of guilt often returns in different forms. A flood of "What if" questions come to mind at the first awareness of a loved one's passing.

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“If I had insisted on going to the doctor sooner”; “If I had not insisted on this trip”; “If I had insisted on driving the car”; and any other “if’s” that might have altered the situation will take control of one’s thoughts.

Obviously, the assurance that we cannot be responsible for outcomes that cannot be predicted would be the answer to such guilt feelings. However, it usually takes some time for the grieving person to come to this conclusion. Please, note the way that we phrased the last statement. While the caring person may reason with good logic and convincing arguments, the fact is that the grieving person must come to this conclusion for himself/herself.

Holidays create more guilt feelings. Holidays are about memories and celebrating. However, the survivors struggle with guilt feelings when they think of celebrating without their loved one. The memories of good times in the past that will never be repeated brings a dark cloud over the festive activities of the holiday. One might also feel guilty for not being able to celebrate with others. This person sees himself/herself as ruining it for everyone else.

When the person is able to put the “What if” questions to rest, a number of questions dealing with survivor’s guilt comes to mind. “Why am I still alive and not him/her?” This question becomes very painful when linked to cases where parents survive their children. It is not natural for parents to bury their children. The pattern of life focuses on the reverse of this role. The pain of grief is enhanced when survivors struggle with this guilt.

There are special things that can be done to help those who are struggling with guilt that comes with grief. It would be good for these grieving individuals to visit a grief support group or a grief counselor to discover some of the ways to deal with these conflicting emotions. When these guilt feelings are left unchecked, additional emotional problems can arise.

[When Grief Comes From Divorce.](#)

Some would suggest that the grief that comes from divorce is worse than the grief experienced by those dealing with the death of a loved one. The fact is that everyone’s grief is different. We cannot suggest that one grief is worst than another.

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Much of the severity of grief has to do with the ability of the grieving person to process that grief experience rather than the cause of the grief.

However, divorce creates some additional emotions that complicate the grieving process. While grief centers on our losses, the additional pain of rejection, betrayal, broken trust, blame, and the destruction of one's self esteem can cause many hindrances to the healing processes. As the grieving person is called upon to deal with painful emotions, it soon becomes obvious that he/she needs to deal with these emotions one at a time. When the pain comes from so many different areas, it becomes impossible to deal with them one at a time. This confuses the processing of one's trauma and results in complicated grief.

An additional complication comes to mind when we realize that the memories do not fade so easily. The loss of one's partner brings grief. When that partner keeps showing up on different occasions, rekindled memories of those losses are harder to deal with. Fighting over the custody of children, dividing properties, invasion of one's privacy by the court system, and many other painful interruptions to the routines of a home cause feelings

Noting that anger is part of the grieving cycle, consider the anger that often comes with a divorce. The anger is usually vented in a different way. The anger that comes with grief over the death of a loved one can not bring the loved one back. However, painful things that are shared out of anger during a divorce are often designed to make the other parties change their mind. When that doesn't happen, the anger intensifies. Anger hinders the healing process when the persons do not choose to deal with anger issues.

The fact that the divorce is a matter of choice is another hindrance to the healing process. The death of a loved one, with the exception of a suicide, is usually not a choice. This choice is often a self-centered one and that adds more pain to the grieving process.

Don't forget the guilt that comes with grief. In cases of divorce, there is so much blame being passed that the innocent party struggles with feelings of guilt wondering what they did wrong. The guilty party may try to bury his/her guilt feelings by justifying what he/she is doing and that can bring complication to the grieving process. Buried guilt often resurfaces with reminders that come back again and again.

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The Problem With Transferred Anger

Anger can be a controlling emotion. It should be noted that there is nothing wrong with becoming angry. The Bible actually teaches us to “be angry and sin not.” The problem with anger comes when the anger controls the person rather than the person controlling the anger. When the person is in control, the anger becomes a powerful motivator that encourages him/her to complete a task or right a wrong. When the anger is in control, negative things usually happen because the person does not stop to think of what he/she is doing.

Anger is considered a secondary emotion. It starts with a hurt. When a person nurses that hurt long enough, it often turns into anger. When the anger takes over, the first thing that it controls is the person’s intellect. He/she does not stop to think before reacting to the hurt. When this happens the reaction is usually motivated by the philosophy “I Hurt, I Want You To Hurt.” One says and does hurting things.

The grief cycle includes the emotion of anger. One of the reasons for this is the extreme hurt that is felt with the losses that he/she experiences.

This anger may motivate the hurting persons to seek answers to the questions that these losses bring to mind. When those answers are not forthcoming, the anger often intensifies. As this anger intensifies, it can control a person’s intellect to the extent that he/she losses perspective. Thus the person fails to realize who is being hurt by their negative responses.

The reason that we refer to anger expressed during a time of grieving as transferred anger is because the person expressing the anger usually vents the anger on people in an illogical manner. The grieving persons are hurting so much that they want to blame someone for their hurt. When the hurt is caused by the loss that is being experienced, the caregivers who could not prevent that loss may become the target of the vented anger. In some cases caring family members who seek to comfort the grieving person may become a target. This does not have to make sense. It is an expression of ones emotions and is not directed by reason or logic.

I recall a grief support group session where I served as facilitator. One of the group members stated that she did not have any anger regarding her loss.

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However, before the session was over, she began to vent about the lack of care that her loved one experienced at the hospital. I challenged her by asking if this was not some of the anger that she was experiencing but failed to recognize. It is not unusual for grief support groups to spend a great deal of time venting about hospital care. Transferred anger can be expressed in this way.

Preparing For a Loss

Have you ever heard the statement, “No matter how hard you try, you are never prepared for this.” Anticipatory grief is a term that is often used to describe the feelings of those who are looking ahead at a loss. When a family has been told of the terminal illness of a loved one, the grieving usually begins long before the loved one passes.

As human beings, we often find ourselves in need of making plans for the future. This trait is important for emotional stability. Imagine how dull life would be if we never looked forward to anything. Even worse, imagine if all we had to look forward to is negative. When a family learns of the terminal illness of a loved one, future dreams are shattered.

Family members might find themselves talking about next summer’s vacation when they suddenly realize that a loved family member may not be there for the vacation. One of the greatest values of a vacation is the planning and anticipation. However, the time of planning and anticipation has a dark shadow looming over it. That shadow is grief.

Remembering that grief is about loss, preparation for the death of a loved one focuses on all of the things that will no longer be. While it might be necessary to change plans for the future, the discussion that is required to make the changes may awaken the feelings of grief to the point that no one wants to talk about it. This makes preparing for the death of a loved one very difficult. Talking about the death itself would be too painful.

When dying persons want to talk about their feelings and no one wants to listen, their grief becomes more painful. Relatives in denial might rebuke the person for talking about death, suggesting that we are going to beat this. The desire of dying people to talk about their own death is seen as surrender giving up in the fight for life. Because the living relatives cannot face the pain of their own grief, they refuse to allow the dying person to share his/her emotional pains.

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In some cases, the dying person has come to accept his/her future and wants to offer comforting words to loved ones, but none will listen. In times like this, family needs to put aside their own pain and allow their loved one to share his/her feelings. Try to imagine this person sharing these feelings with a stranger because family won't listen.

Many times shared feelings from dying loved ones will help to bring healing from the pain of our grief. Knowing what they are thinking can afford the family comfort in their grieving moments after they have passed. The problem with anticipatory grief often focuses on one's inability to talk about anticipated losses. The fact is we will not know all the losses or how it feels to experience them until we live through them. The positive that can come from anticipatory grief can be found if the family members learning to talk about their grief. The most valuable tool that brings healing to the grieving process is the ability to talk about one's feelings. Feelings of grief must not be kept inside. If we have already learned to share those feelings before the death of our loved one, it will be easier to share them after they have gone.

Helping Children Grief

Children possess all of the same emotions as those experienced by adults. However, they do not use the same coping skills.

These skills are learned by experience and childhood has not afforded them the experience. Unfortunately, many adults want to rob children of the experiences that developing these skills. They feel that they need to protect the child from grief causing experiences. The fact is that children cannot be protected from grief and the greatest help that adults can offer the child is to walk with him/her through the grieving process rather than to isolate them from it.

Grief is about loss. Children will experience loss in ways that adults often fail to realize. My six-year-old grandson graduated from kindergarten to first grade. While this can be an exciting experience for his grandparents, my grandson discovered that a large percentage of the children that he had developed a friendship with in kindergarten went to a different first grade classroom. The first teacher that he knew and had become fond of would not be moving up with him. He would not be returning to the classroom that had become a safe zone for him. Each of these facts would become a grief causing loss for him.

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It would mark a time when things would no longer be the same this is called loss.

An adult cannot imagine the number of losses that a child faces when he/she becomes the victim of a divorce. The divorce rate in America hovers around the fifty-percent mark. The children in these homes will experience changes that would cause their life to be forever different. One parent will be missing from the home setting the home will never be the same again. They are told that they may need to move into a different house the children lost the bedroom that was their comfort zone while the parents argued. The new house is in a different school district and another neighborhood, friends, teachers, and environment will be forever different. The list goes on.

When focusing on loss due to the death of a loved one, there is another matter that must be considered if we are to understand the grief of a child. At different age levels the child will understand death in different ways. During early childhood the child believes death to be temporary. When you tell the child that his grandfather has gone to heaven and he will not be coming for a visit anymore,

the child will likely nod the head to suggest that he understands what you are saying. In reality they do understand the death of the loved one to suggest that things will be different. However, they may soon be asking when grandpa is coming again death is only temporary.

A couple of years may pass and the adult feels that the child finally has grasp the concept that grandpa will not be coming home—he is no longer asking questions about grandpa. The parents suddenly discover that the child is very sad and wonder why. Is it because the child now understands that death is permanent and that grandpa will never be coming back?

The coping skills that a child does use are often misunderstood. Children may go into the world of play when a traumatic circumstance becomes too difficult for them to deal with. Their play world is a safe zone for them. They can control the things in their world of play or make believe. The adult may then assume that the loss is not affecting the children. As a result, no one takes the time to help them process the pain that they are feeling. When they ask questions at a later time, no one takes the time to help them find answers. This method of dealing with children's grief often leaves the children with lasting emotional conflicts that can affect them for the rest of their lives.

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Understanding Grief

Adults need to help children process grief when the children are ready.

The other side of this misunderstanding can lead to a scolding. Adults may feel that children are being disrespectful when they are taking the time to play during a moment of crisis in the family. They're simply trying to cope in the only way that they know how and adults need to understand this is a coping skill.

The grieving process is a journey and children need to know that adults will walk with them on this journey by helping them process their feelings. Allowing the child to talk about the hurts he/she is experiencing in their own way and at their own time would be one of the best ways to teach a child positive coping skills for their grief.

Congratulations On Your Promotion!

Grief can be caused by changes that cause things to be forever different. The excitement that you feel when you finally get the promotion that you had worked so hard for can mask many negative feelings that will surface later. The new job may take you to a distant location where you will need to start life over.

The flood of changes that come with new work related responsibilities keep you so focused that you will likely be living on an emotional high for some time to come.

When you finally develop the routines that cause you to feel in control, you suddenly find that the excitement gives way to times of sadness. Routine causes boredom. It becomes difficult to stay focused on the reason that you longed for the promotion in the first place. You can hardly wait for your vacation so that you can go back to visit the place that you worked so hard to get away from. When the vacation is over, you do not want to go back to the location of your new job.

What you are feeling is grief and these feelings will likely pass. However, they are feelings that need to be processed if you are going to reach a place of satisfaction with your new job. You need to talk about your emotional struggles rather than bury them inside. Grief from any source should never be buried. A visit with the right counselor can do wonders to help you work through these feelings. If you do not process these feelings properly they will affect your production at work.

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Any organization that operates with employees who transfer from one location to another should be aware of the possibility of grief during a time of transition. It would be to the advantage of the organization to have an employee assistance program in tack that would enable them to deal with these emotional struggles. If not, the production level of the organization can be hindered. Relationships within the company can be strained and this will also cause problems with the production level.

The long-time employee that has lost his favorite boss to a stranger who will be coming in with new ideas can also struggle with feelings of grief. It is easy for management to say that he'll need to get over it, but the truth is that satisfied employees perform better in the work force.

What do you do with the family? The laborer with the promotion will have a busy schedule to keep him/her focused. The spouse who is sitting at home missing all of her friends, or struggling to find new places to shop for the family's needs will be repeatedly reminded of how comfortable things used to be. There will be many hours when this person will long to go back to what was once considered home.

The battles with depression felt by this person must also be considered a part of the grief system.

Children who are forced to make new friends in an unfamiliar school system will likely be telling the laboring parent that things were so much better at home. I was told of two children who had developed a philosophy that asked, "What's the use of making friends? You only have to say good bye to them anyway."

The problem for children faces an additional hurt when they are reminded that they have no say in the matter. An inability to control life changing events, can cause feelings of helplessness. Helplessness is the next door neighbor to depression. We have already noted that depression is part of the grief system.

When the laborer begins to struggle with his/her own losses, he/she needs to find a comfort zone where support is given. However, going home to a family that is also struggling with the pain of grief that has been caused by the choice of the laborer is not much of a comfort zone. This family needs to talk with one another about the feelings of each. Again, grief needs to be processed by talking.

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Understanding Grief

Management needs to provide help for the family this will help the worker and, in turn, will make the organization run smoother.

What Do I Do Next?

The term grief covers a variety of negative emotions—everything from shock and disbelief to severe depression. Some of these emotions can also be caused by different experiences. Some psychologists consider that depression can be a secondary emotion. While depression can come from grief, it can also come from stress. The grieving process can cause a great deal of stress. In the midst of the shocking news of one's loss, the major question, "What do I do now" can cause confusion and/or stress. It is important that the person take control of as much of this confusion as possible in order to prevent added stress/depression as the grieving process goes on.

If you are helping the grieving person or if you are the grieving person, in the initial shock stage of one's feelings, taking a moment to make a list of what needs to be done at this point can be very helpful. The list should include all of the resource persons that can help with the controlling process.

A list might include contacting the pastor, the funeral director, the insurance agent, a family lawyer to keep the persons informed about taxes and a will when an estate is involved, the social security office if benefits are involved, and other possibilities as the individual need requires. This list can serve as a guide to make the person feel more in control and a checklist so the persons do not need to keep all of this information on their mind at the same time. Thinking of too many things at once can be stressful. One of the symptoms of stress is memory slips fear of forgetting something is another stressor. Thus the stress cycle continues.

When the funeral is over, life needs to go on. Remembering that loss is a life changing event means that life will never be the same. What does one do in this very different life? More losses will be discovered and more changes will be necessary each day. The important thing to remember is that the grieving persons need to know their own limitations. They must get involved rather than let others do all of the work for them, but they must also be willing to reach out for help in order to prevent overwhelming experiences. The help can also provide some companionship for talking about the grief, security to know that two minds can think better than one, to keep focused on a task as each person guides the thinking of the other, and many other benefits.

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Understanding Grief

A list of important dates and deadlines and another list of friends and family members with their expertise can prove very beneficial.

The grieving persons must not allow other people to do for them what they can do for themselves. None involvement can cause more depression. It may also create more stress if they do not know what is happening or that things are being cared for. While becoming too busy and not allowing time for the grieving process can be dangerous, a total lack of involvement can enable the grieving persons to become involved in a pity party that will be self destructive.

It should be noted that some individuals fear becoming a burden to friends and loved ones. The other side of this scenario suggests that friends and loved ones often become offended when they discover that the hurting persons won't reach out them.

[The grieving persons and the helpful friends should also be aware of the dangers of removing memorial items.](#) Some individuals think that they are being helpful when they send the grieving persons away while they rid the household of personal items that they feel will cause grief with the memories that are stirred by them.

When the grieving person returns home to discover the empty clothes closet, the shock can start the grieving process anew. Anger often becomes the reaction to this kind of help. These tasks should be done by the grieving persons at a time when they feel that they are ready. If they want help, allow them to ask for it, but they should be a part of the task in order to allow them to use this task as part of their processing of the grief.

Setting goals for the days ahead can be helpful. Having something to look forward to can be important when the need to refocus presents itself. Setting goals for the days ahead can be helpful. Having something to look forward to can be important when the need to refocus presents itself. This can be especially true when it comes to holidays. While grief is about loss, holidays and anniversaries are about memories. As the grieving persons look ahead to anticipated grief for holidays and anniversaries, planning ahead can help them to avoid some of the unnecessary pain.

They must remember their own limitations, know when to say "no" to certain activities, and accept the possibility that they might not be up to the expectations of others. A simple explanation should be acceptable to allow the persons to cope while they are discovering new losses with each holiday.

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How to Cope with Grief and Sleep Alone



Nothing will ease your grief—at least, not for a while. But these tips will help you sleep, and sleep will help you heal.

Grief is hard. There is no easy way to move through it. Most of us will lose someone we love, will feel bruised right down to our soul. We'll feel worry, fear, sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, confusion, and loneliness. Some say that those feelings are stages through which we move. But the truth is, moving through these stages is circular. We'll begin to move forward, spot a glove or a book left behind, and slip right back into a puddle of despair.

Unfortunately, a consequence of these uncontrollable feelings is something that makes it even harder to handle: Most of us simply don't sleep. We lie down, turn out the light, close our eyes—and our minds remain sharply alert.

And when we finally slip into unconsciousness, we frequently wake through the night.

Disrupted sleep makes it harder to handle our grief, our lives, and even the day-to-day duties of making the bed or paying the bills. And it may also affect our health. In a study of 4,395 married couples, for example, when one spouse died, the risk of the other spouse dying from anything ranging from heart disease, stroke, and cancer to accidents and violence increased by 27 percent.

1. JOURNAL.

Limit writing to 15 minutes a day, and just write about how you feel. Periodically read back through what you've written. Over time you'll be able to see how you've moved through the grieving process. Somewhere around 80 percent of us will move through the worst of our grief within a year.

2. NURTURE YOURSELF.

Pay attention to your body's needs. Prepare balanced meals, and serve them on your best china and linens. Exercise for 30 minutes every day, even if it's just a walk with the dog. And every morning center yourself in a prayer of gratitude for the people in your life, the sunshine outside your window, and the fact that you can make a difference in the lives of others.

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How to Cope with Grief and Sleep Alone

3. CONSULT SOME EXPERTS.

Check with your attorney and a financial consultant about the effects a death has on your legal and financial situation. No, you don't want to deal with it. On the other hand, you'll sleep better knowing exactly what will or won't be coming at you in the months ahead.

4. USE GUIDED IMAGERY.

"Mind/body stuff really works in helping you get to sleep," "The imagery has enough cognitive recruitment to seduce the brain into seeing and thinking about other things, while the voice tone, pacing, music, and images will persuade your parasympathetic nervous system that it's time to calm down. It will shut down the adrenaline and shoot some calming hormones into your nervous system." Slip a CD of guided imagery into your CD player, snuggle into bed, turn out the lights, and follow the imagery into sleep.

5. BAN THE BOTTLE.

Alcohol simply prolongs the grieving process and makes it harder to get good, restorative sleep.

6. SCHEDULE A MASSAGE.

"Massage interrupts the neurohormones connected with sleeplessness and almost manually imposes sleep on you," "If you can't afford a massage, go to a massage school. You can get one there for \$15."

7. GET WHAT YOU NEED.

"For some people six months of Ambien is a good thing," "If you need to take medication to interrupt the adrenalization of your life, so be it."

8. FIND NEW FRIENDS.

Preferably other widowed and non-widowed. Providing an understanding and caring for one another that soothed their adrenalized state.

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How to Cope with Grief and Sleep Alone

9. READ.

Books on grieving, particularly memoirs of survivors, can reassure you that many of the intense feelings keeping you up will someday ease.

10. WRITE A LETTER.

What would you tell your partner if you had a chance? Even if you don't share the letter with anyone, the process of writing it may help you unload some of that adrenaline. If you're angry, feel free to vent.

11. ACCEPT YOUR GRIEF.

Allow yourself to move through all the emotions associated with grieving sadness, longing, guilt, anger, betrayal, the whole range of passionate emotion that allows you to be the loving, caring person you are. Don't try to stiff upper lip it. You'll only make getting to sleep harder, prolonging the grieving process.

12. BE CLEAR.

So many people will want to talk with you about your spouse and your grief. Friends will want to process their own grief by talking about it over and over. Be tough and tell them very clearly to leave you alone. Same goes for those whom who know only slightly. "I got very comfortable saying, 'I don't want to talk about this,'

13. COLLECT THE STUPID THINGS PEOPLE SAY.

Write them down, share them with close friends, and joke about them. "I had a friend a nurse whose husband died of a heart attack," . "I knew that she'd had a snootful of all the things people say. So I called and said, 'Wanna get together for dinner? I'm buying. And we can talk about all the stupid things people say to new widows!' " She laughs. "We had a blast!"

14. FIND SOLACE IN ONLINE COMMUNITIES.

When you simply can't sleep, talk to someone who can help you deal with the thoughts running through your head, such as another widow or widower. Log on to the Web site http://Safehavenforwidowed.org/for_widowed_and_non-widowed. Chat, get a cup of tea, then go back to bed.

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How Long Does Grief Last?



The short, over-simplified answer:
3 years.

The honest, complicated answer:
forever.

Here's the truth, as I've experienced it.

Grieving is incredibly painful. There are all sorts of advice columns aimed at teaching people how to deal with that loss, anger, and sorrow. Some of them are helpful; some of them are overly prescriptive; some of them are actually harmful. Don't ever let anyone tell you that you should feel a certain way, react in a certain way, or feel better by a certain time. No matter how well intended, some advice will just not work for you.

That's okay. But this is key: 3 years is not a guarantee. It is an average. It is a number to set in your mind's eye as something to look forward to the light at the end of the proverbial tunnel.

3 years might sound like a lot, especially if your loved one has recently died. All I know to tell you is that yes, it is a lot. And no, it is not impossible. You get through those 3 years in any way you can: wallowing when you need to wallow, denying when you need to deny, remembering when you need to remember, and celebrating when you need to feel joy. There is no shame in any of this. There is no right answer. Simply do what you must. I give you permission to grieve, heal, and survive in whatever way feels right for you.

So how can grief last 3 years and forever? The easiest way I know to explain this is that "active" grieving lasts about 3 years. That feeling like you're seeing the world through a shattered lens, or that you aren't really absorbing any of the things that happen to you – the deepest part of depression and the most tearful nights all come and go for about 3 years.

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How Long Does Grief Last?

So after the 3rd anniversary of your loved one's death, do you magically feel better? Yes and no.

Yes: A good friend told me the 3-year thing, and I admit that about a week after that day passed I did feel indescribably better. Lighter, cleaner, almost tearfully relieved and joyous. Some of that might have been the power of suggestion, but I don't see any problem with that. If you're reading this post, you might experience that same phenomenon. And if you ask me, that's a good thing. I welcomed it with open arms. 3 years is a long time to be sad.

No: Here's a harder truth to hear. Grief never goes away. I truly believe that when someone very close to you dies (as in one of your "special" people), you never get over that. When a little chunk of our heart is hollowed out, it doesn't fill back in. We simply learn to live around it. This sounds rather melancholy and morbid, but it's not. It doesn't mean we will never be happy again; it means that we will always carry a place that misses that person. Living with grief is our way of remembering – of honoring that person. It's not something to dread. It's something to embrace.

So how do you live with that subtle, post 3 year grief for a lifetime? Obviously, I haven't lived a lifetime yet. But I can feel the stillness in my heart where my husband used to be. It's a soft, strangely peaceful place, and I've learned that the best way to live with it is to acknowledge it. Don't hide it or ignore it or obsess over it. Just let it be.

Just let yourself, your grief, and your healing be what they are.

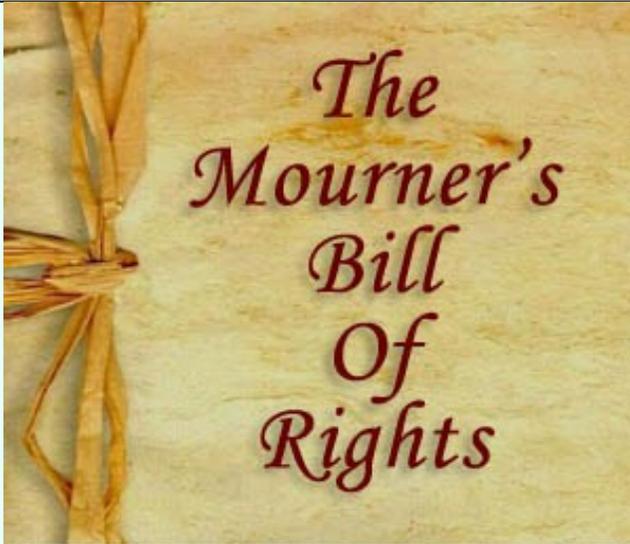
If you are in that first, overwhelming wave of grief, please don't give up. I know it seems unbearable and maybe it is but you will learn to adjust. You will make it to year 3.

There is hope. You will feel better. Hang in there.

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The Mourner's Bill of Rights



Though you should reach out to others as you do the work of mourning, you should not feel obligated to accept the unhelpful responses you may receive from some people. You are the one who is grieving, and as such, you have certain “rights” no one should try to take away from you. The following list is intended both to empower you to heal and to decide how others can and cannot help. This is not to discourage you from reaching out to others for help, but rather to assist you in distinguishing useful responses from hurtful ones.

1. You have the right to experience your own unique grief. No one else will grieve in exactly the same way you do. So, when you turn to others for help, don't allow them to tell what you should or should not be feeling.
2. You have the right to experience your own unique grief. No one else will grieve in exactly the same way you do. So, when you turn to others for help, don't allow them to tell what you should or should not be feeling.
3. You have the right to experience your own unique grief. No one else will grieve in exactly the same way you do. So, when you turn to others for help, don't allow them to tell what you should or should not be feeling.
4. You have the right to be tolerant of your physical and emotional limits. Your feelings of loss and sadness will probably leave you feeling fatigued. Respect what your body and mind are telling you. Get daily rest. Eat balanced meals. And don't allow others to push you into doing things you don't feel ready to do.

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The Mourner's Bill of Rights

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| <p>5. You have the right to be tolerant of your physical and emotional limits. Your feelings of loss and sadness will probably leave you feeling fatigued. Respect what your body and mind are telling you. Get daily rest. Eat balanced meals. And don't allow others to push you into doing things you don't feel ready to do.</p> <p>6. You have the right to be tolerant of your physical and emotional limits. Your feelings of loss and sadness will probably leave you feeling fatigued. Respect what your body and mind are telling you. Get daily rest. Eat balanced meals. And don't allow others to push you into doing things you don't feel ready to do.</p> <p>7. You have the right to be tolerant of your physical and emotional limits. Your feelings of loss and sadness will probably leave you feeling fatigued. Respect what your body and mind are telling you. Get daily rest. Eat balanced meals. And don't allow others to push you into doing things you don't feel ready to do.</p> | <p>8. You have the right to search for meaning. You may find yourself asking "Why did he or she die? Why this way? Why now?" Some of your questions may have answers, but some may not. And watch out for the clichéd responses some people may give you. Comments like "It was God's will" or "Think of what you have to be thankful for" are not helpful and you do not have to accept them.</p> <p>9. You have the right to treasure your memories. Memories are one of the best legacies that exist after the death of someone loved. You will always remember. Instead of ignoring your memories, find others with whom you can share them.</p> <p>10. You have the right to move toward your grief and heal. Reconciling your grief will not happen quickly. Remember, grief is a process, not an event. Be patient and tolerant with yourself and avoid people who are impatient and intolerant with you. Neither you nor those around you must forget that the death of someone loved changes your life forever.</p> |
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Friendship



Sometimes I think this is the best kind of friendship because I can come here and talk to you whenever I feel the need or have the time! I never have to get dressed up nor do I have to drive my car I do not have to run up my phone bill nor do I have to comb my hair!!

All I have to do is come here sit down. Turn on my computer or mobile device goto [Http://www.safehavengforwidowed.org](http://www.safehavengforwidowed.org) login to the chat room and abracadabra there you are!! Or goto the forum and look at the all the other resources knowing I am not alone.

Now how lucky am I to have such a great friends as you, to share my many days with to laugh and joke with when the day is good or to cry and feel sad with when the days are blue who understand and do get it and are non-judgmental or discriminating.

I can share all my troubles and cares tell you secrets that no else will hear and I can completely trust you to always be here to listen to share with and know you will you always care! WOW what a glorious feeling to have such good friends!

I can only hope that you know that I am that kind of friend to you.

I will always be here to share your day to listen, to care, and there will always be that very special place for you today and always!!!

Thank you for being my friend!
And being here for me.

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“Words From Our Administrator”

Well it seems as if no one is using the chatroom these days. I have noticed a severe drop off in users over the last few months and others have said the same thing.

I have to ask why this is and what can we do to rectify it?

We have one of the fastest, cleanest and safest chatrooms within the community, staffed by a dedicated team of moderators who ensure it stays that way so it can't be because people are afraid of what they might find in there.

Any thoughts, ideas, feelings etc on this would be gratefully received so we can rebuild the family in the chatroom. If only so the moderators don't get lonely sitting in the corner on their own.

Please contact myself at Director@safehavenforwidowed.org or Tracy@safehavenforwidowed.org

I will be looking for your replies and thank you.

Sincerely

Tracy Crain
Assistant Director
Safehaveforwidowed.org

Tell others about
Safehavenforwidowed.org

Support for widowed people of all ages, men and women, married or unmarried, straight or LGBT, of all ages, and religious backgrounds who have suffered the death of a spouse or life partner. Non-Discriminating, Non-Judgmental and where everyone understands and does get it.

Twenty four hours a day seven days a week, three hundred and sixty five days a year.

Have them meet others also on the same journey and path, who totally understand. Where they can find members to chat with in or chatroom and get support, we also have forums to participate in, and posts to read or write plus offer other resources.

Invite them to come to our website

Press Ctrl key and enter to refer

[Refer our site.](#)

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“Words From Our Administrator”

If there is a topic / poem or story that you would like covered or would like to share in an upcoming newsletter, please let us know. You can email it to: Thehaven@safehavenforwidowed.org to suggest the subject or you can write a piece yourself and submit it to be reviewed for possible publication. We appreciate all suggestions and inputs.

The newsletter is sent out on the sixth of every month, once a month.

Sincerely,

Tracy Crain
Assistant Director,
SHFW

As I mentioned earlier the traffic in the chartroom's. Please also don't be afraid to let me know of any complaints you may have or any problems you may have had in the rooms or with the site. You can go to forms on the front page and to "Suggestions and Feedback" and submit this to us. Or follow this link here [Suggestions and Feedback](#)

All information is private and confidential don't submit this in the forum as it is not confidential or private.

This is important to us and we value your suggestion and concerns and feedback here in making this website better too.

Thank You

Tracy Crain
Assistant Director,
SHFW

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“Words From Our Administrator”

As the season's changes are approaching and the nights will be getting longer we will all become cooped up into our homes more?

We would like to have more activities here for everyone to help get each and every one of us through the months ahead of us.

As we all know lonesomeness is one of the hardest things to handle on this journey.

We would like some input from the members new and old on ideas on what you would like.

We will have a section in forum for this for your ideas under Special Interest or under forms in the suggestion form.

We have no problem with team leaders for this either. If a member would like to start something on here we would be more than willing to help set it up for them too.

Sincerely,

Robert Greenfield
Public Relations Administrator
Safehavenforwidowed.org

This year is our fifth 5th year on the internet giving Bereavement \ Grief support to all those that have lost a loved one widowed or not widowed including youths.

We will continue on this mission giving support to all worldwide in a secured, safe, confidential environment where no one is judged, discriminated and don't have to be scared to talk for many years to come.

All members, moderators and administrators do understand and do get it we all are on this journey together and support each other through this journey.

Safehavenforwidowed.org now is located on Seven (7) plus different locations on the web now reaching out worldwide, giving support in secured, safe environments to members

Main Website Safehavenforwidowed.org or Safehavenforwidowed.com

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LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/Safehavenforwidowed>

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