Putting Love into Action
By Gina Dixon, M.A.
Licensed Psychologist
GSS Program Manager/Grief Therapist

Putting Love into Action

In a recent live TV interview I was asked about the work of helping those who have experienced traumatic grief. Because I had no time to reflect on my answer, as I might if I was giving a professional presentation on treatment models and therapeutic strategies, I spoke the first thought that surfaced: “Grief therapists help people put love into action”. Having time to reflect since the interview, I still stand by this answer. For those grieving a non-traumatic loss, putting love into action through rituals of remembrance tends to flow naturally over time, often with the understanding and support of family or friends.

However, grief can be much more complicated when the death was traumatic due to being violent, unexpected, disfiguring/painful or the death of one’s child. Grief is also more challenging when the relationship was complicated due to addiction, mental illness or abuse. Traumatic grief is not well understood by most people and can be a very frightening and lonely experience. Intense anxiety, guilt, anger or feelings of powerlessness can block one’s ability to process and share memories with others. In complicated grief, we are likely to either avoid reminders of the traumatic events or replay as flashbacks that resurface beyond our control.

Grief therapy can assist traumatized individuals in understanding and regulating waves of pain and communicating their unique needs with other’s close to them. Putting love into action may mean working daily on self care tools such as diaphragmatic breathing, eating breakfast, or progressive relaxation. Some grievers may need time and space to develop a new relationship with the person who died and work through a sense of survivor’s guilt. Other’s may honor their loved one by living well and seeking new activities like taking a cooking class or volunteering. We can put love into action through advocating for improved mental health services, medical research, legislative changes in gun safety, or public awareness of addiction and treatment options. With the arrival of Spring, may you also find healing and renewal by putting your love into action for those who have died, but also for those who remain.

“Every loss is unique. The truth is, the worst loss is the one that is happening to you, the one that has picked you up and thrown you down and left you struggling to put your life back together.” Elizabeth DeVita-Raeburn
Living With Grief Teleconference: Supporting Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) Through Serious Illness, Grief and Loss
Thursday, April 13, 2017

AGENDA FOR THE PROGRAM:
8:30 Networking/Registration
8:45-11:30 Program/ Panel discussion
St. Mary’s Medical Center, Auditorium
407 East Third Street, Duluth MN

ABOUT THE PROGRAM:
This 2.5 hr. continuing education program (2 hr. DVD and 30 minute local panel discussion) is designed to assist health and human service professionals and volunteers to understand the critical challenges of providing optimal end of life care and bereavement support to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families/caregivers.

The program will feature the following national experts:

Kenneth J. Doka, PhD, MDiv, Professor of Gerontology, Graduate School of The College of New Rochelle, Senior Consultant, Hospice Foundation of America

Tawara Goode, MA, Director, National Center for Cultural Competence; Associate Director, University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Center for Child and Human Development, Georgetown University.


Local Panelists:

Laura Plys is the mother of 5 children, the youngest of whom, Jonah age 17, has Down Syndrome. In 1995 her husband Patrick was diagnosed with brain cancer and died 17 years later. Since that time she has sought to be a resource to families of children with Down Syndrome or living with a terminal diagnosis.

Kirstin LeSage, MD She attended University of Minnesota Medical School, Duluth with an interest in Native American Health and Rural Health. Her residency focus was on internal medicine at Gundersen Lutheran Health System in LaCrosse, WI. From there, she completed her fellowship in Palliative Care at Providence Alaska Medical Center. She is currently the Medical Director for Palliative Care at Essentia Health East.

Registration is limited. The early registration fee is $30 ($40 after April 5th) and includes morning refreshments and 2.5 CEU’s for Social Workers and nurses. A certificate of attendance will be provided for all others. There is not a companion book available for this program. Contact Essentia Health Grief Support Services for further information or to register by calling 218-786-4402 or email us at griefcenter@essentiahealth.org.

Learning Objectives
1. Describe critical issues that emerge in the medical management of life-limiting illness in individuals with IDD.
2. Describe ways that grief is manifested in persons with IDD.
3. Identify national and local resources and initiatives for individuals with IDD and family members who are ill or grieving.
4. Discuss intervention approaches and strategies to assist people with IDD and their families who are ill or grieving.
Welcome
Georgiann Kuberra, MA
Grief Support Services
Bereavement Specialist
and Volunteer Coordinator

Georgiann’s role as a Bereavement Specialist and Volunteer Coordinator includes: Senior and Young Persons grief support group facilitator, inpatient grief support, community outreach, assistance with educational materials, conferences, and coordinating and supporting the many wonderful volunteers who serve in GSS. Georgiann’s philosophy is that if we forget that we belong to each other, then we have forgotten what it is to be human. Therefore, Georgiann’s work in grief is an extension of this philosophy recognizing that we all grieve and need someone to whom we can share our story.

Georgiann holds a Masters degree in Counseling Psychology. In addition to her role with G.S.S. she serves as a Chaplain with Miller Dwan Behavioral Health Units. On a personal note, she and her husband, Thomas, are empty-nesters of 4 children. In addition to enjoying her two grandchildren, she enjoys reading multiple books at any given time, camping, spending time with family and friends, and nurturing her spirituality in many ways not the least of which is daily Mass and time for solitude and silence.

If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.”

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Supporting a Grieving Friend or Family Member

To be a caring presence, we must continue to show up, listen and learn from the individual griever. Meet them where they are at, and follow-through on your promises. There is not one perfect recipe for grief support, but here is a possible list of ingredients and things to avoid.

Helpful things to say:
• I’m here for you.
• I’m thinking of you.
• I’m a good listener when you are ready to talk.
• Use the name of the person who died/share positive memories.

Take Positive Action:
• Make a meal, offer assistance with chores, shopping, or childcare.
• Donate time off/PTO.
• Wear a symbol of support such as a ribbon or lapel pin.
• Join with others to support a cause.
• Honor/offer support on anniversaries, birthdays and other significant days.
• Continue to ask “How can I help?”
  (Offer a walk, a hug, a prayer)
• Help create a scrapbook, quilt or memorial garden.

Avoid:
• Giving advice unless you are asked.
• Pressuring the griever to “move on”, dispose of possessions, etc.
• Taking offense: if they decline social invitations, continue to ask.
• Clichés which diminish the grievers right to mourn in their own way:
  “Be strong”
  “I know how you feel”
  “It was God’s will”
  “You just need to keep busy”
  “You shouldn’t feel... guilty/angry/worried”

Volunteers Needed: Person-to-Person Peer Support Program

The yearly Person-to-Person Volunteer Program training will be offered Wednesday, May 3, 2017 from 8:00-4:00pm

Person-to-Person Volunteers have themselves experienced the death of a family member and offer peer support to bereaved individuals. This program matches volunteers with newly bereaved persons who have experienced a similar loss.

Volunteers provide one-on-one support through personal visits, phone calls or email. They serve as compassionate, confidential listeners who offer ongoing support to bereaved individuals, generally 2-4 hours a month.

This 8 hour training is free to qualified volunteers. A one-year commitment to the program is requested. Training is provided by various disciplines and addresses topics such as communication, companionsing the bereaved, and grief support.

Bereaved parents, widowed persons, and those who have experienced the death of a family member to suicide are especially encouraged to apply.

Please contact Georgiann at (218) 786-4085 or email: Georgiann.Kuberra@essentialhealth.org if you are interested in becoming a volunteer, or if you would like to meet with a Person-to-Person Volunteer. There is no cost to participate.
Tree Of Lights

Many thanks to St. Mary’s Auxiliary & Essentia Health Foundation for sponsoring the 23rd Annual Tree of Lights which raised $7,940 for Grief Support Services. A Big thanks as well to the 146 Individual Donors to the Tree of Lights! 100% of funds raised are used to provide free individual & group support, literature & other materials for grieving families as well as to provide outreach, education & crisis support in local schools and our community.

Pictured from Left to right: Georgiann Kuberra, Gina Dixon, Carla Waldholm, Jean Pessenda, Diane Hadrich, Mary Skalberg.

Volunteers Needed

Whether you are interested in one-time annual events or more ongoing volunteering, please contact us:

• Planting and maintenance of the Calvary Garden (contact Linda McCubbin if interested 218-728-3701)
• Health fair/outreach – distributing grief support resources.
• October pregnancy and child loss Events: assist with service and making white ribbons.
• Grief Support Group Facilitators.

If you are interested in any of the above, please call Georgiann at 786-4085 or email georgiann.kuberra@essentiahealth.com

Essentia Health Young Person’s Grief Support Program & Teens Can Cope

Our Spring program begins the week of April 10, 2017.

These free groups are for young people ages 6-12 & 13-18 who have experienced the death of a family member or friend. All groups meet from 3:30-4:30 pm and are led by experienced Grief Support Services Staff. Snacks and fun activities to explore healthy options for coping with grief are included.

Both age groups meet for 5 weekly sessions and a pre-registration meeting is required with a parent or guardian. For more information or to register please call (218) 786-4402 or email griefcenter@essentiahealth.org.

These programs are available at no cost through the generous support of the Essentia Health Foundation - Grief Support Fund & St. Mary’s Auxiliary -
There is a chapter dedicated to tips for those supporting grieving college students and young adults. The authors have separated the chapter into general tips for supporters and a few additional specific tips for parents, non-grieving peers, counselors, college personnel and professors, and support group leaders.

What this writer has found extremely helpful is a table in the back of the book that provides specific information about each bereaved young adult that has contributed to the book. The information includes the student’s name, age, who died, cause of death, time since the death loss, ethnicity and page number where to find their story.

Whether you are a grieving college student, young adult, parent or counselor, the stories shared in this book will provide insight into the unique grief experiences of young adults after the death of a parent or sibling, as well as tips on how to be helpful.

Life runs in cycles
The wheel never stops turning
No matter how dark the night
Morning comes, no matter how cold the winter, spring comes
When you feel despair know that the wheel is turning
Joy will come

(Author Unknown)

**DONATION WISH LIST**

Please contact us at 218-786-4402 or email: griefcenter@essentiahealth.org if you are interested in donating any of the following items to our youth programs:

- Crayola markers or colored pencils
- Memory boxes (wooden)
- White pillow cases (new)
- Glitter glue
- Michael’s Gift Cards
- Gas cards ($15)
- Flameless Votive Candles
- Cash donations to support a variety of free programs and services to grieving families are also greatly appreciated.

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**GSS LIBRARY NEW BOOKS FOR LOAN**

**For Parents:**
*For Better or Worse*
By: Maribeth Wilder Doerr @2004

**For Professionals:**
*Loss of the Assumptive World*
By: Jeffrey Kauffman, @2002

**For Kids:**
*Healing Your Grieving Heart for Kids*
By: Dr. Alan Wolfelt @2001

**General:**
*We Get It: Voices of Grieving College Students and Young Adults*
By: Heather L. Servaty-Seib, David C. Fajgenbaum @2015

To donate grief related books or money to be used to purchase additional library resources, please call 218-786-4402.

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**GRIEF SUPPORT**
**LIBRARY HOURS**
St. Mary’s Medical Ctr
2E Classroom

Wed & Fri 1:00-3:00
Or by appointment: 218-786-4402
St. Mary’s Grief Support Services provides support groups, individual and family counseling and volunteer opportunities to people of all ages who are grieving prior to and after the death of a loved one. Because every person is unique, so is their response to death. We are here to support each person in a way that best fits their individual needs. No one is denied services due to their ability to pay.

Contact Us:

St. Mary’s Grief Support Services:
407 East Third Street
Duluth, MN 55805
(218) 786-4402

Email:
griefcenter@essentialhealth.org

Please visit our Website
For a list of our services and free downloadable grief booklets for youth and adults:
www.essentialhealth.org/griefsupportduluth

Grief Support Services Fall Conference
November 10, 2017 8:45-4:30

Meaning-Making in Bereaved Families:
Making Sense of Death
Janice Nadeau, PhD

Few events impact families more than the death of a family member. However, most of what we know about grief is from an individual perspective. Using a family systems view we can see that families have unique characteristics such as their structure, interactive patterns, communication style, loss histories, belief systems and much more. At no time are these variables more important than when a family member has received a terminal diagnosis, is in the process of dying or has died. When we examine the internal world of each grieving family we expand our understanding, sharpen our assessment skills and become able to tailor our interventions when appropriate.

In this presentation Dr. Nadeau will bring together her 30 years of experience in working with grieving families as a surgical intensive care nurse, psychologist and marriage and family therapist. She will use her family mobile visual aid to explore both the structure and the processes of bereaved families. We will look at how pre-death family characteristics affect how families cope and how family members engage in the struggle to make sense of their loss. Dr. Nadeau will use real life examples from her doctoral research and clinical practice. This program will provide practical and effective strategies for assisting grieving individuals and families. The format will be lecture and audience participation with ample time for questions. Content will include the use of poetry and will be sprinkled with humor.

This program is intended for social workers, psychologists, alcohol and drug counselors, clergy, healthcare and hospice staff, physicians, marriage and family therapists, educators, and others who provide support to grieving families. This program is possible thanks to the Essentia Health Foundations Katie Poirier Memorial Fund.

Objectives:

1. To compare and contrast individual grief with family level grief.
2. To identify the role of meanings as they are attached to death of a family member.
3. To develop an appreciation for family meaning-making processes commonly employed by bereaved families.
4. To identify variables that impact meaning-making within grieving families.
5. To discuss interventions in which professionals can work in meaning sensitive ways in the care of individuals and families who are grieving.
6. To name one personal consideration that may influence your work with grieving families.

For more information or to register, contact Grief Support Services at 218-786-4402 or www.EssentialHealth.org/griefsupportduluth. CEU’s will be included along with breakfast, lunch and emailed training materials. Registration fee before October 20th is $130. Registration fee after that time is $150. A discounted rate of $120 per person is available for groups of 3 or more who register before October 20th.
ST. MARY’S GSS
BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT
GROUP FACILITATOR
TRAINING

August 3 & 4, 2017
Time: 8:15 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
St. Mary’s Medical Center
Auditorium
Duluth, MN

Description:
The purpose of the Bereavement Support
Group Facilitator Training Program is to
train those who will be developing and facili-
tating bereavement support groups. This
comprehensive program is designed to teach
participants about the grief and bereavement
process, facilitation skills, group process and
learn how to develop and organize a support
group.

The training is led by Grief Support Services
Staff who together have more than 45 years
of experience developing and leading grief
support groups for youth and adults.

Intended Audience:
This program is intended for social workers,
healthcare professionals, volunteers, school
counselors, chaplains, educators, funeral
directors or other individuals seeking to
develop a grief support group or those who
are currently facilitating one.

To register or for more information call
218-786-4402 or email:
griefcenter@essentialhealth.org or visit our
website to download application materials at:
Essentialhealth.org/griefsupportduluth

The cost for the 2 day training is $250 per
person and includes breakfast, lunch, breaks,
all training materials, and CEU’s. Space is
limited!

What past participants have to say:

“ I gained so many ideas & resources for
grief group activities”.

“Mock group opportunities were very
helpful and the trainers were exception-
ally experienced and encouraging”.

Calendar Updates

Adult Grief Group—Superior, WI
St. Mary’s Hospital of Superior
1st and 3rd Thursday of each month 12:00 - 1:00pm
2nd Wednesday of each month 3:30 - 5:00pm
Contact Sara Lund at (715) 817-7015

Resolve Infertility Support Group
Third Thursday each month 5:30-7:30 p.m.
For meeting location please contact the group leader at
duluthresolve@gmail.com

Association for Death Education and Counseling
The Thanatology Association
ADEC 39th Annual Conference
April 5-8, 2017
Pre-Conference Institute April 5-8, 2017
Portland, Oregon
www.adec.org

Living With Grief Conference:
Supporting Individuals with IDD (Intellectual &
Developmental Disabilities)
Thursday April 13, 2017
8:45-11:15am
Register online at www.essentialhealth.org/griefsupportduluth
or call Grief Support Services 218-786-4402.

Registration is limited. The early registration fee is $30 ($40
after April 5th) and includes morning refreshments and 2.5
CEU’s for Social Workers and nurses. A certificate of attend-
ance will be provided for all others. (See page 2 for more
information)

GSS Fall Conference
Meaning-Making in Bereaved Families:
Making Sense of Death
November 10, 2017
8:45-4:30pm
Register online at www.essentialhealth.org/griefsupportduluth
or call Grief Support Services 218-786-4402.
(See Page 6 for more information.)

Teens Can Cope: April 2017
School based grief group sponsored by Essentia Health Grief
Support Services will take place at Denfeld High School.
Please call 218-786-4402 to register by March 29, 2017.
Grief Support Services
Group Information

Call Grief Support Services, (218) 786-4402 for further information.
ALL GROUPS ARE FREE OF CHARGE and meet in the 2E classroom (RM 2216) by the Chapel on the 2nd floor of St. Mary’s Medical Center, 407 East Third Street, Duluth, MN 55805.

- **Senior Citizen Grief and Loss Support Group**
  10:00-11:30 a.m. (Meets the second and fourth Wednesday of each month).

- **Adult Grief Support Group**
  7:00-8:30 p.m. (Meets the third Tuesday of each month).

- **Young Widow/Widower Grief Support Group**
  7:00-8:30 p.m. (Meets the second Wednesday of each month).

- **Parent Grief Support Group (Miscarriage/Stillbirth & Infant Loss)**
  7:00-8:30 p.m. (Meets the second Tuesday of each month).

- **Parent Grief Support Group (Child, Adolescent or Adult Child Loss)**
  7:00-8:30 p.m. (Meets the fourth Tuesday of each month).

- **Suicide Family Members Support Group** (For family members 18 and older of those who have died as a result of suicide.) 7:00-8:30 p.m. (Meets the third Monday of each month).

- **Young Person’s Grief Support Program** (pre-registration meeting required)
  Spring program begins in April 2017
  Fall program begins in October 2017
  Winter program begins in January 2018

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