

March/April 2021

caring & sharing news

Helping rebuild lives following the death of a child

Volume 18, No. 2

Springtime Grief

From COPE Clinical Director Amy Olshever, PhD, LCSW

How do you feel when you see the purple and yellow of new crocuses? Or at the arrival of the first robin? The beginning of spring might make you feel better and feel new hope. And when we are grieving, feeling better and hopeful may also make us feel as if we are betraying the memory of our lost loved one. It is normal to experience new heightened grief or anxiety related to your grief in spring, just as it is in other seasons of the year. Although warmer, sunnier months can be nurturing and inspire new hopefulness, grief does not suddenly go away just because seasons change.



Spring generally brings a sudden flurry of change and things begin to move faster all around us. There is rebirth and renewal in nature as flowers and trees bloom and everything turns green again, and people quickly begin to flock to their favorite warm-weather activities. Try to take time to sit down and make some plans that can nurture you and help you cope with your losses and grief.

A helpful way to respond to anxiousness about spring and summer is to remind yourself about those things that YOU are in control of. Warmer months offer other opportunities for nurturing activities such as walking in nature, planting gardens, photography, family gatherings, stargazing, and many other things. When you are outside, take a moment to inhale and then to exhale. To be in control of the one moment you have control over. And give yourself permission to experience the warmth of spring on your face and in your heart.

Annual Picnic & Lotus Flower Lantern Release



Sunday, May 16, 2021

5:00 p.m.

Locust Shade Park – Marigold Pavilion

On Sunday, May 16, 2021, join us at our Annual Picnic and Lotus Flower Lantern Release to remember all the children who died too soon but are still in the hearts of family and friends. As we release lotus flowers on the pond we are reminded of the beauty that our children brought into our lives.

Please bring a dish to share for our Pot-Luck Picnic. Chicken, Hot Dogs and Drinks will be provided by the chapter.

Each person registered will receive one lantern unless you send an email to: bpusanova@gmail.com to request additional lanterns.

Monetary donations are appreciated to cover the cost of the lotus flower lanterns and picnic expenses.

RSVP: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/annual-picnic-lotus-flower-lantern-release-tickets-136239878143?ref=estw>

For more information contact Jodi Norman at 703-656-6999 or email: bpusanova@gmail.com

*Social Distancing and masks are recommended. Bring your own chairs if you would like to spread out more during the picnic.

Coping with Loss and Grief During the Coronavirus Crisis

Vitas Healthcare

Grief is a natural response to loss, and feelings of loss can be compounded during a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic. Sometimes, grief-related pain and symptoms—which can be emotional, physical, cognitive, and spiritual—can feel overwhelming, especially for people who are already mourning the death of a loved one.

Keep in mind that grieving during non-crisis times is a highly individual experience. [There is no right or wrong way to grieve](#), no “normal” timetable for grieving. Healing happens gradually and cannot be hurried. In times of crisis, however, key factors and reactions can intensify your grief and hinder your ability to heal and recover from it. These include:

- **Heightened anxiety**, linked to uncertainty about the future, the loss of familiar routines, and concerns about your own or your loved ones’ health/well being
- **Heightened sense of loss**, linked to the death of a loved one or pandemic-related losses that leave you feeling overwhelmed, wondering how to put life’s pieces back together
- **Increased isolation and intensified grief**, whether from stay-at-home orders or social distancing measures that have compromised the critical, valuable support provided by funerals, memorials, and religious services

If you are in mourning, the intensity of your reactions will vary, depending on the nature of the loss and its meaning in your life, the nature of your relationship with the person who has died, other life stressors, and your personality, coping style, and life experiences.

These Are Common Reactions to Grief

- Profound sadness, loneliness, emptiness
 - Crying over seemingly nothing
 - Despair about unrealized dreams
- Fear about getting sick (yourself or loved ones)
- Anger that the death occurred, that your loved one “abandoned” you, at healthcare institution/practitioner, at a deity or faith institution
- Short temper, irritability, or annoyance at others
- Guilt (e.g., feeling responsible for the death or suffering, regretting things that did/did not happen in the relationship, feeling guilty you survived)
- Insomnia or excessive sleeping
- Change in eating behaviors (eating less or more)
- Difficulty being with others
- Difficulty concentrating and retaining information; forgetfulness
- Re-living or re-experiencing prior losses

Generally, many grief-related symptoms will fade over time.

When and How to Get Help for Grief

If grief-related symptoms do not ease—and if you find yourself having difficulty functioning—it is important to reach out for professional help. Call your physician, a mental health professional, or your faith practitioner if you experience any of these profound symptoms:

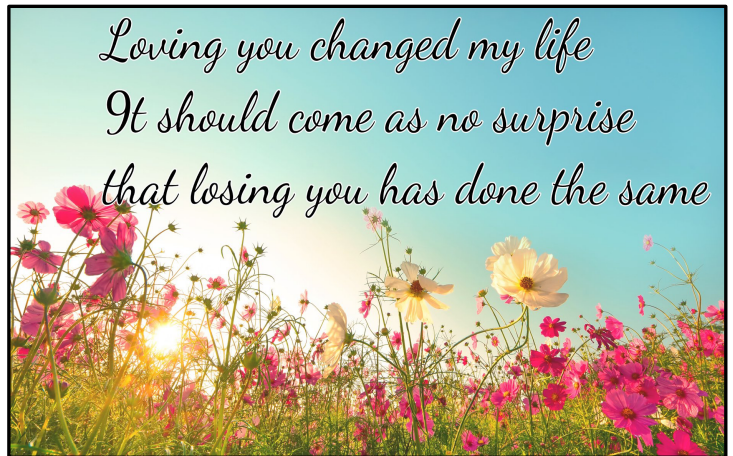
- Intense sorrow and painful rumination about your loss
- Increased alcohol or substance use
- Inability to focus on little else but your loved one’s death
- Excessive avoidance of any reminders of your loved one
- Intense and persistent longing or pining for your loved one
- Extreme difficulty accepting the death
- Numbness or detachment
- Extreme anger or bitterness about your loss
- Feeling that life holds no further meaning or purpose



How to Care for Yourself and Get the Support You Need

Calming your anxiety begins with learning how to process grief during a crisis. Consider these self-care tips:

- Minimize watching, reading or listening to news that causes you to feel anxious or distressed. Seek information only from trusted sources.
- Avoid unhelpful coping strategies and substances, such as tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs.
- Be careful with “what if” thoughts. Manage your worst-case scenario thinking.
- Engage in personal self-care activities that bring joy (e.g., phone/virtual communication with friends and family, reading, listening to podcasts, watching comedy).
- Practice relaxation, meditation and self-expression via books, apps and online videos (e.g., yoga, mindful meditation, relaxation, writing, music, art, dance).
- Stay in the present. Take one day at a time.
- Utilize spiritual faith resources.
- Consider telehealth for mental health support (online consultations, teletherapy).
- Eat sufficient and healthy food. Exercise when you can.
- Monitor yourself for prolonged sadness, difficulty sleeping, hopelessness.
- Remind yourself how you coped with past life challenges and enact those coping strategies today.
- Call 911 for any health emergencies or if you have [thoughts of harming yourself or others](#).



Spring Growth

by: Christie Gillett, Grief Support Coordinator

Spring is officially here. The periods of rain and sun are greening things up and tiny crocuses, violets and daffodils are beginning to pop up in our gardens and yards. New life is abundant in spring and the beauty that accompanies this new life, feels renewing.

When someone is grieving they may not feel this sense of renewal. The pain is still there, not melted away with the last of winter's snow. Grief doesn't go away with the seasons but spring can be a reminder that no matter what we are dealing with in life, nature's changes continue, and that can offer hope.

Expectations are high in spring. Just as the gardener has to till the ground, fertilize and plant seeds to see new growth, those who grieve also have work to do to see growth. Reach out to others for support, be gentle and patient with yourself, go for walks and enjoy the affirmations of spring. Be open to letting some of the hope that spring has to offer into your heart.

Grief, like spring, has its own rhythm that is often unexpected. One day it may be warm, the next cold. It may rain one day, be sunny the next. In grief, one day we may be energetic, laughing and feeling some sense of normalcy and then the next burst into tears, feeling the deep loss and sadness of our loss. But what we do know is that spring will come and with it change. Grief doesn't just go away but it will change. Just like spring it takes time.

Janice Heil sums this up in her poem, [A Prayer for Spring](#), when she writes *"Like Springtime, let me unfold and grow fresh and anew from this cocoon of grief that has been spun around me. Help me face the harsh reality of sunshine and renewed life as my bones still creak from the winter of my grief. Life has dared to go on around me and, as I recover from the insult of life's continuance, I adjust my focus to include healing and growth as possibility in my future. Give me strength to break out of the cocoon of my grief, but may I never forget it is the place where I grew my wings, becoming a new person because of my loss."*



There is a meeting for everyone! Join us at one of these meetings!

Caring and Sharing Support Meetings:

**3rd Thursday @ 7:00 p.m.
ZOOM Meetings until
further notice**

For more information contact:
Jodi Norman, Chapter Leader
703-656-6999 (cell)
bpusanova@gmail.com

AMORe

(All Murdered Offspring Remembered)

3rd Wednesday @ 6 p.m.
3182 Golansky Blvd, Suite 101
Woodbridge, VA

A support group meeting for parents whose
children have been murdered.

For more info contact:
Beverly Ruane
540-628-4758 (h) or 703-395-9546 (c)
ruane.beverly@yahoo.com

Support Group for Parents with No Surviving Children

2nd Saturday of each month at 2:00 p.m.
North County Government Bldg.
Reston Police Station
12000 Bowman Towne Drive
Reston, VA

For more info contact: Nancy Vollmer
703-860-8587

Overdose and Substance Abuse Support Group

No Meetings until further notice

A support group meeting for parents whose
children have died from Drug Overdose or
Substance Abuse.

For more information please contact:
Jodi Norman at bpusanova@gmail.com
or call 703-656-6999
or
Kathie Kelly at tcffred@gmail.com
or 540-220-4325

Sibling Support Group

Our National BPUSA Sibling Coordinator,
Katie Alger, will be facilitating a
Zoom Support Meeting for
any bereaved sibling over the age of 18.

**Zoom Meetings will be held on the
last Thursday of each month**

If you or your surviving children are interested in
participating in the Sibling Support Group, please
send Jodi an email address to
bpusanova@gmail.com so the Zoom link can be sent
to you prior to the meeting.



Life After Loss Support Group for Suicide Survivors

"Shining A Light for Those in Darkness"

**1st Sunday of Each Month
1:00~2:30 p.m.
Meetings held at ACTS
9317 Grant Ave, Manassas, VA**

For more information contact: Kimberly Fleming
Office: 571-377-8134 or Cell: 703-349-9184
email: kimberly.fleming@djcfoundation.org
website: www.djcfoundation.org

*Our sincere sympathy to the
Woodward Family on the death of Franklin
Conner's mom, Cheryl Woodward.
Cheryl leaves behind her husband, Ricky
and sons, Wyatt and Andrew.*



We rely upon the generosity of our donors to help us provide support to families who've suffered the death of a child. These gifts help cover expenses and, most importantly, to reach out to newly bereaved families in the community.

**Thank you to the following for
your generous donations:**



Memorial Donation in memory of David Terrill

Please Check E-mails & Facebook

Almost all of our Chapter Communication is done via email. Please check your emails at least once a week. Everything from the newsletter to Chapter Announcements are sent through email. It would also be helpful to respond to all emails sent regarding the Chapter. That lets me know that you did see the email and that I have a correct email address – a simple “got it” would be better than no response at all!

It would also be helpful if you would join our private Facebook page. Please check this page on a regular basis. A Facebook page has been set up for our chapter. Members can join our group at Bereaved Parents of the USA/Northern VA Chapter. This is a closed group for privacy purposes, so nothing posted here will go into your regular News Feed for your regular FB friends to see. Request to join the group and approval will be sent to you.

Help Needed to Update Website
<http://www.bpusanova.com>

Our website has a “We Remember Our Children” section and we need your help to update this page. Please write a bio for your child and submit a photo or a collage of photos. We would like to have all the children of our chapter included on this page. Please send submissions to Jodi at bpusanova@gmail.com.



There are dozens of tasks that go into running our chapter and our special events. If you feel you are now in a place in your grief journey where you can help and give back to the chapter in any little way, we would love your help. Most of us find that when we reach a point of giving back to those who come after us, we gain far more than we give.

I could really use volunteers to plan our special events (Picnic, Butterfly Release and Service of Remembrance). Other areas of need are in Fundraising, Publicity, Outreach, and helping at the Memorial Garden.

If you would like to volunteer to help our chapter, please contact Jodi at bpusanova@gmail.com or 703-656-6999.

Book Club

There has been a suggestion of starting a book club for the Chapter. We would pick helpful books on the subject of Grieving.

We would start out in a Zoom Format (like our support meetings) and then when it is safe to do so we would meet in homes.

So, I need to know if there is any interest in this type of group. Please, let Jodi know, if you have an interest by emailing bpusanova@gmail.com.



Your Help is Needed

**I am looking for submissions
for a booklet to give to
newly bereaved parents.
If you would be willing to
write about how BPUSA
has helped you on your grief
journey, it would be greatly appreciated.
Please email submissions to Jodi at
bpusanova@gmail.com.**





Garden News

Hello Everyone!

Longer hours have come and soon Spring will have sprung! You know what that means? Gardening! The growth of the leaves and beautiful flowers will appear. Along with that comes the care of the Memorial Garden.

Before everything gets the best of us and so we will be able to enjoy the garden in all of its beauty, we need to prepare it. There are weeds left over from last season that we were unable to completely pull up and now new weeds are joining them. We need to pull up those weeds and start applying mulch. Normally, we put down the mulch all at once if possible. This time we want to pull the weeds under the trees and bushes and put the mulch there before the bushes begin to spread out. Then we will follow with the rest of the garden. We will also be planting some annuals and perennials that didn't make it over the Winter.

As always, there is continued maintenance of the garden not just the initial care. There will be work days, but you don't have to wait for those days. If you live close by or just go to visit, please pull some weeds or water. Pulling any number of weeds is a help. One less weed to pull! If you don't know if it's a weed or not just leave it, but most of the weeds up there are obviously weeds.

Watering is also part of the maintenance. We have been fortunate the past couple of years that we've had enough rain that we didn't need to continuously water. In the past we've had summers where daily watering was needed. There is a pump we can use. It's a little tricky but not hard. Jodi or I will gladly show you. We need volunteers to water when we need it.

With everyone working together we can continue to have the beautiful garden we always have. It's difficult for only one or two people to care for it. We have volunteers come that have been a great help but not everyone can come every time. Please consider being one of those volunteers.

A work day is scheduled for Saturday, April 3rd at 10:00. You can also arrive earlier if you would like. Please join us to make the Memorial Garden for all of our children as beautiful as always.

Our annual Butterfly Release will be scheduled for Sunday August 15th at 5:00 p.m. Come and celebrate!

You can contact me by calling my home phone 540-628-4758, texting my cell 703-395-9546 or my email ruane.beverly@yahoo.com. Jodi can be contacted at 703-656-6999 or her email at bpusanova@gmail.com.

Looking forward to seeing everyone! Beverly

Attention Gardeners

If you like to spend time in the sunshine, love fresh air, don't mind getting dirty and have some extra time on your hands, we could really use your help. We would like to have a list of members who would like to help us with our Memorial Garden. Please let us know if you are interested in helping so we can add your name to our data base. We would like to know who is interested. Whether you can give a few hours during our scheduled work days, can go out to water the garden, or available on short notice to help out, we need you! Contact Bev at ruane.beverly@yahoo.com or Jodi at bpusanova@gmail.com.



Wings of Hope Butterfly Release



Sunday, August 15, 2021

5:00 p.m.

BPUSA Memorial Garden



We miss
you and
love you!
Mom, Dad, and
family

Matthew Allan Ruane
9/07/83 ~ 4/29/02



We Remember Our Loved Ones

Who have Birthdays and Death Dates
in March and April

Simi Abrol	9/12/84 ~ 4/01/18	Thomas Langston	4/05/92 ~ 8/04/18
Emily Andrews	8/02/97 ~ 3/14/16	Robert Andrew Larson	3/14/94 ~ 6/30/10
William Bruce Austin II	5/11/84 ~ 4/10/18	Glen Irvin Leonard II	4/13/71 ~ 12/07/09
Pounch Bahri	10/25/88 ~ 3/04/14	Henry Lewis III	2/16/74 ~ 4/15/02
Chad Michael Bailey	9/14/77 ~ 3/25/20	Erika (Brummett) Lott	4/6/77 ~ 11/05/13
Bryan Christopher Bingel	1/08/80 ~ 3/04/08	Kyle Ludeman	4/12/93 ~ 8/27/13
Matthew Bingel	4/23/87 ~ 4/23/87	Derek Meffert	4/21/95 ~ 8/15/10
Christopher Wesley Blok	3/21/80 ~ 2/25/09	Christina Morgan	7/30/80 ~ 3/13/02
Abigail Jane Buckley	4/25/15 ~ 11/17/16	Nicholas James Nelson	7/16/90 ~ 4/19/18
Amy R. Buckley	3/13/86 ~ 11/17/16	Thomas Parker	8/26/92 ~ 4/15/19
Danielle Mae Burmeister	3/26/11 ~ 3/26/11	Stephen P. Ramos	4/24/87 ~ 11/11/19
Autumn Marie Coffie	4/16/88 ~ 12/29/14	Kira Marie Nicklas Rippy	10/23/82 ~ 3/22/18
Sarah Beth Cole	8/06/80 ~ 4/23/11	Matthew Allan Ruane	9/07/83 ~ 4/29/02
Jason Michael Colson	3/09/84 ~ 10/01/08	Lionel Andres Salvador	3/30/13 ~ 3/30/13
Christina Lynn Curtis	3/01/74 ~ 12/25/07	Klee Simmons	3/27/89 ~ 8/09/15
Forrest Grant Dotson	8/25/79 ~ 4/19/17	Jacqueline Simoes	11/05/66 ~ 3/15/06
Michael A. Doyle	9/17/81 ~ 3/12/18	Karl Dewan Smith	11/20/83 ~ 4/25/04
Bryan Eastes	8/18/80 ~ 4/18/17	Ananth Vignesh Sridhar	11/12/94 ~ 3/20/18
Antonio Ford-Flores	2/25/89 ~ 4/15/10	Kevin Michael Stanphill	3/12/80 ~ 5/09/09
Dillon Adam Foley	11/16/98 ~ 4/02/20	Daniel "Cody" Starr	4/13/88 ~ 7/30/20
Jacob Thomas Fulton	4/15/03 ~ 1/11/15	Graham Stevenson	3/30/85 ~ 9/22/07
John Alexis Giandoni	3/21/77 ~ 3/15/18	Margaret Jane Suliga	4/23/87 ~ 9/02/19
Raven Gileau	6/23/90 ~ 4/23/10	Beckett Josef TePaske	4/04/12 ~ 5/12/15
Ahmad Givon Glenn	3/06/83 ~ 12/04/06	Bill Thompson	9/14/51 ~ 4/19/17
Dwayne Eddie Gonsorcik	5/26/74 ~ 4/26/13	Linda Thompson Plewes	7/16/51 ~ 3/21/02
Justin Green	3/28/94 ~ 3/28/94	Neale Thompson	4/07/71 ~ 4/09/93
Kourtney Michelle Hale	5/29/80 ~ 3/14/10	Austin Trenum	3/26/93 ~ 9/27/10
Kristin Marie Harkness	3/19/89 ~ 2/22/08	Anthony Joseph Turchiano	8/04/79 ~ 4/29/17
Kimberley Hellandbrand	11/03/69 ~ 4/27/19	Ruben Chavira Urbina	4/22/02 ~ 9/15/17
Kyle Irwin	07/27/92 ~ 4/21/20	Brian Floyd Weakley	1/20/80 ~ 4/19/07
Cody Darrin Johnson	9/11/02 ~ 3/06/09	Kyle Robert Wilson	5/25/82 ~ 4/16/07
Kashif Johnson	3/15/87 ~ 5/01/07	Baby Woods	3/15/16 ~ 3/15/16
Leslie Ann Kramer	4/20/71 ~ 12/17/06	Noah Woods	4/19/16 ~ 4/19/16
Kwadwo Amoako Kusi	3/20/06 ~ 7/26/08	Jakari D. Wright	3/31/97 ~ 8/18/18
Adriana Therese Ladino	10/31/02 ~ 3/23/19	Neil York	4/29/93 ~ 4/25/15

We apologize if there are any mistakes in the "We Remember Our Loved One" section. If we spelled any names incorrectly, have any dates incorrect or your loved one's name is not listed and has a birthday or death date during the months of March and April, please provide us with your loved one's information so they can be included correctly in future newsletters.

Welcome,

You are not alone...

We are the parents whose children have died. We are the siblings whose brothers and sisters no longer walk with us through life. We are the grandparents who have buried grandchildren.

We come together as Bereaved Parents of the USA to provide a safe space where grieving families can connect, share our stories, and learn to rebuild our lives. We attend meetings whenever we can and for as long as we find helpful. We share our fears, confusion, anger, guilt, frustrations, emptiness, and feelings of hopelessness, knowing these emotions will be met with compassion and understanding. As we support, comfort and encourage one another, we offer hope and healing. As we confront the deaths of our loved ones, our shared grief brings us to a common ground that transcends differences, building mutual understanding across the boundaries of culture, race, faith, values, abilities, and lifestyle.

Together we celebrate the lives of our children, siblings, and grandchildren, sharing the joys and the heartbreaks as well as the love that will never fade. Together, strengthened by the bonds we create, we offer what we have learned from one another to every bereaved family, no matter how recent or long ago the death.

We are the Bereaved Parents of the USA. We welcome you.

Chapter Contact Information

Jodi Norman, Leader

P.O. Box 7675

Woodbridge, VA 22195

Phone: 703-656-6999

bpusanova@gmail.com



Bereaved Parents of the USA

www.bereavedparentsusa.org

Someone Cares About You

If you are receiving this newsletter and have never attended one of our meetings, it is because someone who cares about you feels that our newsletter may help you on your journey through grief. We're sorry for the reason you are receiving this newsletter but invite you to attend our monthly meetings. We cannot take away your pain but we can offer friendship and support.



Attention: If you do not wish to continue to receive this newsletter or be on our mailing list, please let us know by mailing back the address label from this newsletter, by emailing bpusanova@gmail.com or calling Jodi at 703-656-6999.

Bereaved Parents of the USA
Northern VA Chapter
P.O. Box 7675
Woodbridge, VA 22195