Welcome to the summer issue of the Caring Connections Newsletter. We have been busy with many projects and new areas of service. The mission of Caring Connections is to provide excellent evidence-based bereavement care to grieving persons in the intermountain west through clinician facilitated support groups; and, in keeping with the academic mission of the University and the College of Nursing, to provide opportunity for clinical education in grief and loss to students in the health care professions, and to conduct research which promotes greater understanding of loss, grief and bereavement. We have exciting new initiatives in each of these areas. We have two research studies underway to evaluate complicated grief group therapy in two populations of persons with complicated grief: suicide survivors and bereaved dementia caregivers. These studies are described on pg. 3. We have been providing instruction in Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction for our grief group facilitators, and will host a retreat for professionals who care for the suffering, dying and grieving in late summer. Our Seeds of Remembrance event was edifying and well attended, and the annual Race for Grief was a great success. We strive to be active and engaged in our community and want to be of service to those who are grieving and those who care for the grieving. We extend a warm invitation to you to participate in our programs and services.

Kathie Supiano, PhD, LCSW
Director, Caring Connections: A Hope and Comfort in Grief Program

“Three things in human life are important. The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind. And the third is to be kind.”

– Henry James

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11 Upcoming Events
SALT LAKE CITY
September 10 - October 29 • 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.
Weekly meetings on Wednesday evenings for 8 weeks
University of Utah College of Nursing
Annette Poulson Cumming Building
10 South 2000 East

MIDVALE
September 11 - October 30 • 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.
Weekly meetings on Thursday evenings for 8 weeks
UUHC Greenwood Health Center
7495 South State Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84047

OREM
September 10 - October 29 • 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.
Weekly meetings on Wednesday evenings for 8 weeks
University of Utah Parkway Health Center
145 West University Parkway
Orem, UT 84058

LAYTON
Adult grief group for those adjusting to the death of a loved one
to suicide beginning Tuesday, July 1 through Thursday, Aug 19,
6:30 pm – 8:00 pm
Wingman Advocate Program Suicide Survivors Group in Layton
at the Weber State University Davis
WSU Davis, Building D2, Room 303

SPANISH GRIEF GROUPS
Date to be announced, starting in the fall, 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm
University Neighborhood Partners – Hartland
1578 West 1700 South, Salt Lake City, Utah 84104
**BOOK REVIEW**

**“LIFE REFLECTIONS: CREATE A VIDEO HEIRLOOM”**

*By Pamela S. Clark and Janet R. Kinneberg*

Pamela Clark and Janet Kinneberg began their nonprofit company, Parting Thoughts as hospice volunteers. Their unique contribution to the care of the dying was to record a Life Reflections video for a hospice patient. They experienced the gratitude of families and peace and relief from patients as a video legacy of a dying person was created and shared, knowing that his or her life will not be forgotten. As demand for their service grew, Pamela and Janet realized they could not keep up with requests and so created this practical and compassionate guide for families to create, share and archive their significant heirlooms.

This valuable guide is available in print and as an e-book. Contact Pamela Clark at 801-867-9687 or email pamela@partingthoughts.org.

**NEWS IN BEREAVEMENT RESEARCH**

**Complicated grief** is a state of prolonged and ineffective mourning. Persons experiencing complicated grief experience intrusive thoughts of the deceased, preoccupation with sorrow, excessive bitterness, alienation from social relationships, difficulty accepting the death, and perceived purposelessness of life.

In our original study, we developed and evaluated complicated grief group therapy (CGGT) in older adults with complicated grief. CGGT is a group adaptation of complicated grief therapy, created by Katherine Shear and colleagues that has established effectiveness in treating complicated grief. Compared to those receiving conventional grief support groups, participants in our specialized CGGT groups attained significantly greater improvement. Our findings suggested that CGGT participants benefited from a shared experience of unresolved grief, reduction in social isolation, mutual support in goal setting and goal attainment and mutual encouragement with difficult avoidance behaviors and relationship issues.

Dr. Kathie Supiano is now conducting two research studies to evaluate CGGT. One is evaluating CGGT in survivors of suicide, and is funded by the Groups Foundation for Advancing Mental Health. The second study will evaluate CGGT in bereaved caregivers of persons with dementia, and is funded by the National Alzheimer’s Association.

**PARTICIPANTS WANTED FOR GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP STUDIES**

Adults who have experienced the death of a close friend or family member by suicide more than 6 months ago and are struggling with grief or experiencing distress are invited to contact Caring Connections: A Hope and Comfort in Grief Program to discuss participation in a research study. For information contact Kathie Supiano or Shawna Rees at 801-585-9522.

Adults who have been caregivers for a family member or close friend with dementia, and are struggling with grief or experiencing distress since the death of the person with dementia are invited to contact Caring Connections: A Hope and Comfort in Grief Program to discuss participation in a research study. For information contact Kathie Supiano or Shawna Rees at 801-585-9522.
We sit around the table with aching hearts, talking and listening to each other, telling our story, in our own way. Tears and even laughter flow, as sentimental and bawdy tales are told. Slowly, our path emerges—where we must go; what we must do now that our true love is gone.

Our commitment—still as deep as the ocean, and endearing as our sacred vow to love, honor and cherish till death do us part.

We knew what we were, but now a dark cloud has descended, blocking the light. Our emotions—turmoil, laughter—no longer easy.

Tears flow like early morning rain falling on rose petals, bleeding our sorrow, slowly, washing our souls.

Each of us contends with grief that takes us to our knees in supplication and prayer. Hoping to find solace and peace.

We grieve as deep as the love we have. Excruciating pain. If that is the price. so be it.

The easy path—join them. But this is not what they would want. Nor, what we really want. We go on.
My name is Holly McKay I received my MSW from the University of Utah in May 2013. In January of 2013 my internship provided me with the opportunity to participate as a co-facilitator of the suicide survivor bereavement group. Ann Hutton Ph.D, was the facilitator of this group and was extremely knowledgeable in the area of grief and loss amongst suicide survivors.

Going into this experience as a co-facilitator I didn’t know what to expect and what I could offer. I experienced the loss of my beautiful little sister Carly, when I was a child. I remember observing others who loved her, and noticing how different we all experienced the same loss. Each experience was very unique in how it impacted us at the moment of the loss, and the many years that would follow.

Co-facilitating this group reaffirmed of how the grief process is unique and very individualized for everyone that experiences loss. Each experience may be different yet bringing individuals that have experienced loss into a group experience was very life changing. This group provided a very positive experience. It provided a safe sharing venue for those who had lost someone dear to their lives.

I think about this experience often in my current professional and personal life. The lessons from this group gave me insight into personal loss and the bereavement process. Bereavement is a process that takes time, and is very dynamic and isn’t ever going to be the same for any one person. I appreciate the opportunity I had to serve as a co-facilitator of this group for Caring Connections.

I was born and raised in a small town in Florida. After graduating from high school I went to Brigham Young University where I met and married my husband. I spent the next 20 years raising my children and then at age 40 went back to school and got my Master’s degree in Social Work from the University of Maryland. I have spent the last 10 years of my career primarily working with seniors in a variety of settings and currently I work at the Intermountain Senior Clinic as a social worker care manager.

I was drawn to Caring Connections because I had heard many good things about their program and grief and loss has always been a strong interest of mine. Prior to coming to Intermountain Senior Clinic I worked as a hospice social worker for three years. During that time I learned a great deal about grief and loss and developed a strong desire to improve my skills in this area. Finally a good friend of mine mentioned my name to the director and I jumped at the chance to volunteer for Caring Connections when I had the opportunity.

I have loved being a facilitator for this great organization and have appreciated the wonderful learning experiences I have had so far. I believe that grief support groups are the best way to help someone who is grieving because they are surrounded by people who completely understand what they are going through. I have felt privileged to observe the healing that happens in these groups as members reach out to comfort each other. Being able to help people who are grieving has been the most personally satisfying experience of my social work career.
Every day. Just consider how, in “normal life,” our lives are run by the clock and the calendar. Some of us have a clock in every room so we can keep close track of time. Few of us have the courage to live without wearing a watch because we’re afraid we might be late for something. Time is precious to us. We live in a society that reminds us that every moment counts, and some of us are masters at cramming as much activity as possible into every moment. And when we are grieving our experience still has much to do with time.

Time Stands Still.
When we are grieving we may feel like the rest of the world is going on as usual while our lives have stopped. Just last week, after my friend died, I passed a neighbor who was watering his lawn. He seemed totally unaffected by (and most likely unaware of) Sarah’s death. How could that be? He only lives a block away. Didn’t he feel the same shift in the universe that I felt when she died? Doesn’t he realize someone really special is missing?

Time’s up.
Most people will allow us about a one-month grace period where we are permitted to talk about and even to cry openly about our loss. During this time, our friends will probably seem to be attentive to our needs. But when the month is up they may be thinking, if not actually telling us, that it’s time to move on, and that we need to get over “it.” They want us to get back to normal. We may be surprised how many of our friends (and our relatives too) will become uncomfortable with our need to dwell on our sorrow. They may not appreciate that it takes time to readjust our lives to the loss. Maybe what they are really saying is, “Time’s up for me to be able to be present to you in your grieving time.” Because of this we may need to redefine what is normal for us, and choose some new best friends—friends who are willing and able to walk alongside us on our personal journey of grief, and who will allow us to determine when our “time’s up.”

Doing time.
Grief may make us feel imprisoned in our own version of hell. We won’t like who we are. We won’t like it that our loved one has gone. We won’t like it that our friends can’t make us feel better. We just want out of here, and we’re not sure we want to do the work that grief requires in order to be set free from the bondage. Some of us will remain in this uncomfortable place for a short time, while others of us may feel like we have been given a longer sentence.

Wasting time.
Though in real life, I pride myself in being a master at multi-tasking, in the land of grief I’m much less sure of myself. I find it hard to make the right decisions, because, in my new situation, I don’t trust myself to make the right choice. I want someone else to be responsible if something goes wrong. Sometimes my wasting time is about not having the energy to get started. I am physically exhausted, and my body refuses to make an effort to reclaim my former self. I admit, quite frankly, that I’m not sure I even care enough about anything to make the effort. What’s the use, since it seems like everything I love sooner or later gets taken away from me.
Looking back in time.
When we grieve, we spend most of our time, at least at first, looking back. It seems safer that way. That’s where our missing loved ones are. If we were to look forward, that would mean we would have to imagine our lives without those we have lost. And that’s what we aren’t ready to accept—not yet. So we spend a lot of time thinking how we should have been able to prevent their dying, or wondering if we used our time with them well, as we remember the good times, bad times, silly and sad times. We think we have to keep those memories in front of us, or surely we will forget those whom we have lost.

First times.
It is natural for us to gauge our lives after a loss as we anticipate and then go through the first times—the first day, the first week, the first month, the first time we venture out in public, the first time we went back to school, or church, or work, the first summer, the first Christmas, the first vacation, the first time we laughed. These first times are like benchmarks, notches in our belt that prove we are surviving when we weren’t sure we wanted to, or didn’t know we could.

Dinner time.
There’s an empty chair at the table. There’s the conversation that seems to be just noise, having little to do with the absent one whom we are all thinking but not daring to speak. We still prepare more food than we now need because we haven’t figured out how to cook for one less person. Sometimes the food seems to have no taste, and is not able to do what we want it to do—to fill that huge hole within us.

Time out.
Sometimes what we need to do is to take a time out from our regular activities to reflect on what has happened to our personal world as we knew it before our great loss. To do so is not to run away from life but simply to realize that to act as if nothing has happened doesn’t work. This loss is too big to allow us to pretend that it hasn’t had a big impact on us. It’s in the quiet time, when we shut off our thinking, and empty out the chatter in our heads that the healing begins. Others will have to be okay with our need to bow out for a while. Remember that during grief our job is to take care of ourselves, not to take care of our friends. When it’s time to re-enter a normal routine, it’s our choice what we will reinstate and what we decide to lay aside. Loss tends to redefine our priorities. What used to be important may not be important now. And that’s not necessarily a bad thing.

Time heals what reason cannot.
In the end, time will change things. The intensity we experience when grief is new, where we can see nothing but our loss, and where every moment is filled with thoughts of the one who died will gradually diminish and become softer. Time forces the big picture of life back into our vision whether we like it or not. This happens in our lives all the time. Remember how when we first fell in love with someone, we were totally preoccupied with only that person, until gradually a more balanced existence is restored. Or when we did what we thought was some terrible thing, and we were sure everybody would never let us forget it, we came to find out a few months down the road that most people had forgotten the incident.

In the months (maybe years) following a loss, life will eventually start to re-emerge, and life on this planet will once again seem possible. This will not happen because we come to understand the death more clearly but because, with the passage of time, unanswered questions will become easier to live with.

Time will not remove grief entirely. The scars of grief will remain, and we may find ourselves ambushed by a fresh wave of grief at any time. But needing to know the answers to the “why” questions won’t seem quite as important as it once was.

Time is a gift that we have taken for granted. We’ve been given our lives one moment at a time. This is good.

This article was reprinted from Grief Digest Magazine, October 2003, Volume 1, Issue #2, pg. 16-17

Time is precious to us.
We live in a society that reminds us that every moment counts, and some of us are masters at cramming as much activity as possible into every moment. And when we are grieving our experience still has much to do about time.
APPRAッシNG A LOVED ONE’S DEATH WITH FLEXIBILITY AND FORGIVENESS

BY CAROLYN CAMPBELL

Relatives often say they want to be there when a loved one dies. While being present at the time of death is an important and sacred experience for many people, it can be difficult to accomplish. Kathie Supiano, PhD, and LCSW, is the director of Caring Connections: A Hope and Comfort in Grief Program. Supiano explains, “If someone tells you they can predict the time of death in a chronic illness, they are making a stab in the dark. When we talk about the actual death, we accept that we don’t always get everything we want, and we respond with flexibility and a fair amount of forgiveness. Although we want conversations where people voice their preferences and honor each other’s wishes, to translate these to promises is not fair to anybody.”

For example, despite the number of people who promise never to put their mom in a nursing home, the reality is that if you are over 60 and fracture a hip, you will go to a rehab setting of some sort. If someone says they don’t want to die with a breathing tube in their throat, if they happen to pass away during surgery, this wish can’t be honored. When someone dies, we don’t know both sides of the story—the earth side and the heavenly side. “We don’t even always know both sides from an earthly perspective,” Supiano says. “There are people who actually don’t want people to be there when they die. They don’t want to burden their family, or they feel the experience is too private, or they don’t want their last breath to be their wife’s last memory.” This could be conscious or subconscious thinking on the part of the dying person, and we need to give ourselves over to the mystery, realizing we won’t always have the answers regarding aspects of dying.

Flexibility and forgiveness need to apply in regard to the actual time of death. As a matter of practicality, not everybody can be there. Supiano has been at many deathbeds where family members are there. “We call that the vigil. There is the feeling that no one should die alone.” Yet she has seen many end-of-life stories where the family has been at vigil for many days, and even during the night. “Yet when they decided to go to the cafeteria for a break, the patient died during that short interval.” She adds that hospitals call families when they think it is time, but “we don’t want a family to drive dangerously and put themselves at risk. We do the best that we can with what we know.”

A good palliative care team will ask a family if they want to be present during at the passing, and some people will say no. People sometimes stay away from people who are dying, because they don’t know what to say. Many people are not comfortable with the idea of the end of their own lives. Even with a firm religious belief in an afterlife, people are still scared. Some question what they have been taught all their life. Some are just afraid of the process of getting to the other side. Will there be pain? Will someone be there for them?

If you pursue your own self-discovery and can come to terms with what you feel the end of life is for you, individually and spiritually, this understanding can help you be present for someone else who is experiencing this process.

If you pursue your own self-discovery and can come to terms with what you feel the end of life is for you, individually and spiritually, this understanding can help you be present for someone else who is experiencing this process. Along with consulting with clergy to acquire understanding, there are also spiritual guides who are unaffiliated with a particular religion who offer counseling services to those struggling with death. In any event, it is good to reach an understanding of your own theology regarding the afterlife in order to be present for someone else.

Since death is unpredictable, keep an open mind. Supiano concludes, “If you do want to be there, we do the best we can. It would be dishonest to promise that we know exactly when death will happen.” Still, spending time with a loved one before the end can assuage some of the pain that you may feel with his passing.

This article was reprinted with permission from Senior Review 2014
Helping someone who has suffered a loss

Most of the readers of this newsletter are intimately acquainted with loss and grief, and because of their life experiences, may be drawn to or reach out to others who are suffering. Yet, all of us can find ourselves at a loss for words, or uncertain about what to do when we learn of someone who has experienced the death of a loved one. We have learned from our group participants how frustrated they feel at the well-intentioned but often thoughtless things people say or do in the time of grief.

Taking care of ourselves as we take care of others

Some people seem to naturally be “helpers”. Most of us know these good people; some of us are these good people. Often we begin helping with the best of intentions, but soon find ourselves overwhelmed with burdens larger than we imagined, or problems we are ill-equipped to address.

Most of us are familiar with the airline flight attendants’ instructions before the plane takes off, but few of travelers attend to it. Those instructions have application for us as helper. The flight attendant says, “in the event the plane loses cabin pressure, oxygen masks will drop from the ceiling….before assisting another passenger, place your own oxygen mask firmly in place”. Rarely do helpers take care of themselves before reaching out to others; sometimes it seems “selfish” to do so. The most effective helpers will tell you that careful attention to self-care is the only way they can be effective in helping others over the distance. Refueling ourselves emotionally, physically and spiritually not only helps us care effectively, it prevents the resentment and frustration that comes with compassion fatigue, and permits us to continue to listen and support others with a heart of gratitude.

“The capacity to give one’s attention to a sufferer is a very rare and difficult thing; it is almost a miracle; it is a miracle.”

– Simone Weil
Grieving Toward a Hopeful Tomorrow was held Tuesday May 20 at the University of Utah College of Nursing-Annette Poulson Cumming Building. Featured speakers, Reverend Yvonne and Reverend Eusang Lee shared the story of their son Sammy’s murder while traveling on a business trip in Indonesia, and their grief journey which followed. Attendees were edified with beautiful music performed by DJ Jones and Sonja Sperling. We presented our annual Carma Kent Heart of Caring Award to Chaplain Joe Novotne of Bristol Hospice, who was honored as facilitator of the year. The Kind Remembrance Award was presented to Lance Larkin in appreciation for the efforts of Larkin Mortuary to honor fallen American service men and women. The evening concluded with a time of remembrance where attendees received roses to honor their loved ones, provided by the Rose Shop. Our Memory Wall continues to grow as we added another panel of tiles to the Caring Connections Memory Wall. If you are interested in a tile for a loved one, contact us at 801-585-9522.

RACE FOR GRIEF 2014
Kathie Supiano, Shawna Rees, and staffer Claire Peterson joined nearly 400 other runners in this year’s Race for Grief, benefitting Caring Connections, Share and the Sharing Place. Organized by star runner and coach, Lora Erickson www.BlondeRunner.com, the race course is the flat and fun Legacy Trail in West Bountiful. Kathie and Shawna took first place in their respective age divisions—a fact which should inspire every reader to join us next year on Memorial Day for this very fun event. Strap on your running shoes, run off some of that grief and plan on running or walking next year’s event.

OUR MISSION
The mission of Caring Connections is to provide excellent evidence-based bereavement care to grieving persons in the intermountain west through clinician facilitated support groups, with particular attention to the care of families served by the University of Utah Hospitals and Clinics; and, in keeping with the academic mission of the University and the College of Nursing, to provide opportunity for clinical education in grief and loss to students in the health care professions, and to conduct research which promotes greater understanding of loss, grief and bereavement.

Visit us online at www.nursing.utah.edu/caring-connections
2014 LARKIN CHARITY GOLF CLASSIC

You are invited to the 2014 Larkin Charity Golf Classic to be held Wednesday, August 27, 2014, at Eaglewood Golf Course, 1110 E. Eaglewood Drive, North Salt Lake City, Utah 84054. You can participate sponsoring a hole ($400), as a foursome ($400) or both. This will be a great opportunity for people to learn about your products and services. We look forward to spending a morning on the golf course with you, as we benefit families and individuals in our community. The proceedings of this tournament will again go to benefit Caring Connections.

For more information, please contact Steven D. Kehl at 801.664.3693 or skehl@larkincares.com. Thanks for your support!

GOLF CLASSIC AGENDA

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00 am</td>
<td>Registration, Continental Breakfast and Range Balls included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00 am</td>
<td>Shotgun Start, Four Person Scramble, Cart and 2 Drink/Snack coupons included.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30 pm</td>
<td>Lunch, Awards Presentation, and Prize Drawings</td>
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MINDFULNESS RETREAT

FOR PROFESSIONALS WHO CARE FOR THE SUFFERING, THE DYING & THE GREVING

SATURDAY, AUGUST 9, 2014 • 8:30-3:30 PM

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH COLLEGE OF NURSING | ANNETTE POULSON CUMMING BUILDING
10 SOUTH 2000 EAST, SLC, UT 84112

PRESENTERS:
VICKI OVERFELT, MA, MBSR INSTRUCTOR
JONATHAN RAVARINO, PHD, LCSW
PAUL THIELKING, MD
DANA APPLING, LCSW
KATHIE SUPiano, PHD, LCSW

COST: $35.00 includes Continuing Education Credits (NASW)
REGISTER: PLEASE CALL 801-585-9522

“Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; On purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentall.” - Jon Kabat-Zinn

SPONSORED BY CAMBIA HEALTH FOUNDATION AND LIVASTRIDE FOUNDATION
Enjoy a great day of golf with the satisfaction that all the net proceeds are donated to University of Utah Health Care's Caring Connections, one of the most important grief support resources in our Intermountain West community. Every year Caring Connections assists grieving persons through support groups, education and research. Larkin is proud to be a sustaining partner for Caring Connections.