



LIONS WITH LOSS

Your Wednesday Weekly from Student Counseling Services



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COUNSELOR CORNER

*From Meghan Muse, ALC
under the supervision of Jennifer Berry, LPC-SC*

Hey Lions!

When thinking about the current state of affairs in our world, nation, state, and university, I wondered if there was a way that a connection could be maintained with our Life After Loss group. As we all seek ways to cope with our new normal brought about by the pandemic, I thought that providing a weekly newsletter might be a great way to share down-to-earth *musings* on grief (see what I did there?) and to provide resources for our group members as well as those who have recently experienced grief and loss. It is my hope that this newsletter provides some sense of camaraderie and normalcy as we all attempt to navigate this uncertain time. Thank you for reading!

Be Well & Roar Lions!
Meghan



GRIEF BRIEF

Surfin' in the USA

Spring semester, 2020: New Year, New Me! Here we are, going to class, going to work, tackling our to-do lists (or attempting to), and just trying to do this thing called life.

Some of us have already been living with grief and navigating the murky, and often confusing, waters of our emotions. Some of us have just been living moment to moment—and BOOM! Corona-whaa?

So we've tried to wrap our minds around living life with grief and now we have to contend with a global pandemic? "No big! I'm sure it will be over soon! It's mainly in the Eastern Hemisphere, right?" These may be a few examples of thoughts that washed through our mind just a month or two ago.

Things likely look and feel much different now. The university community is adapting to an online learning environment. Many people are contending with the loss of life, or just the collective loss of life as we knew it. For students, this could be the loss of attending campus events, hanging with friends at the GUC or Commons, walking this May at commencement, and other missed milestones.

In attempting to swim through the current of emotions that comes with grief and loss, labeling our emotions and stage of grief can help us avoid getting pulled into the undertow. Some find it helpful to utilize Elizabeth Kubler-Ross's Stages of Grief as a context for what feelings we tend to cycle through, visiting one stage at certain times and going back and revisiting other stages at other times.

As described earlier, we likely have experienced the stage of Denial with feelings of disbelief. The stage of Anger may involve waves of outrage and blaming others. These feelings are normal and natural and tendencies to label feelings as "good" or "bad" are discouraged. Instead, listen to your feelings and ask what information it is trying to present to you.

Another stage of grief is Bargaining, or making trade-offs, such as thinking "If we engage in physical distancing and shelter in place now, maybe we can flatten the curve and benefit moving forward. I'm willing to compromise."

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GRIEF BRIEF

Continued

In the Depression stage, many may experience feelings of hopelessness and disempowerment, "What's the use, we're all going to get the virus eventually. Why should I even worry about my responsibilities right now? How will I pay my bills?" The reality of this situation hits hard for so many, however there are supportive resources that may help to get through this difficult time (see Resources on next page).

Finally, there is the Acceptance stage where some may feel an ability to move forward and create a new normal. We can explore options and feel a sense of empowerment and resolve to act upon things that are in our control. "I know that this might take a while. I'm settling in to my new routine."

Building upon the work of Kubler-Ross, grief expert David Kessler has since added a sixth stage of grief--Meaning. Kessler often explains that meaning is something we cannot force or seek out intentionally, but with time and awareness meaning often finds us. As Kessler says, "If you don't feel it, you can't heal it," and with healing we often experience meaning on the other side.

Moving forward, keep in mind that none of us have a handbook on how to deal right now and that's OKAY! Try asking yourself, "What do I know for sure right now in this moment?" When living in the present, we can begin to create moments of connection and find gratitude with each given experience--and that's something!

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If you don't feel it, you can't heal it.



WELLNESS WEDNESDAY

Today's tip:
Movement and expressive arts are a powerful healing modality for grief, so...

Put on your favorite song & dance like nobody's watching!

RESOURCES & SUPPORT

Grief Support:

David Kessler:

Book: "Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief"

Website: www.grief.com

David Kessler Facebook page: Daily live videos

Facebook group:

"Grief: Releasing Pain, Remembering Love, & Finding Meaning"

Campus Resources:

(this list is not exhaustive)

Student Counseling Services: <https://www.una.edu/counseling>

University Case Management: <https://una.edu/case/>

Feeding the Pride: Assistance with food insecurity

<https://www.una.edu/students/Food-Pantry/index.html>

Success Center: Online tutoring & advising- <https://una.edu/successcenter/>

Disability Support Services: <https://www.una.edu/disability-support/>

Mitchell-West Center for Social Inclusion: <https://www.una.edu/socialinclusion/>

Moment of Zen

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*You can't stop
the waves, but
you can learn
to surf.*

*Jon-Kabat
Zinn*