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sudS Spirit

Quarterly Newsletter



THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED
IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

All those that were
killed in an explosion
on March 24, 2023
at the R.M. Palmer
Chocolate Factory
in West Reading, PA.

SUMMER 2023

Volume 15, Issue 4

Dominic Murgido - Editor

Welcome *from the Editor*

It's Summertime!

Another season, another transition. It is also a time to say Thank you! Thank you to those of you reading this newsletter right now, this instant. Thank you for supporting my writing and my personal mission to help others with their grieving process through these newsletters, my support group, speaking engagements, and my books concerning a significant loss I experienced. Thank you for caring enough to write to me and share your thoughts and words of encouragement. A special thank you to those of you who wrote to share memories of loved ones you have lost. It's my honor to read those memories.

Social media posts concerning **sudSSpirit** are now on my personal facebook page: www.facebook.com/dominic.murgido.

sudSSpirit was founded in 2008 to help provide a place of comfort, compassion, and hope for those that have experienced a sudden unexpected death of their spouse or significant other. Meetings are held monthly in Reading, PA. All meetings are Free and No registration is required. Additional information is within this newsletter. **sudSSpirit** stands for "Sudden Unexpected Death of a Spouse – Survivors in Participation to Inform, Renew, Improve, and Triumph"

If this is the first time you have heard about us and are in need of some help through our support group chapters, please see additional information inside about our chapters. We also have a list of resources for support inside that may be helpful to you. Additional resources and books for suggested reading on the grieving process can also be found at www.dominicumurgido.com. Current issue is also available at www.dominicumurgido.com as well as past issues that have been archived. You may also contact the editor/founder directly at 717-866-2401 or sudsspirit@gmail.com or dmurgido@gmail.com or www.dominicumurgido.com.

Thank you to those that have been long time supporters of our group and thanks to all of those that we have helped along the way for believing in **sudSSpirit** and yourself to help you in your time of grieving. *Together We Can Help Each Other Heal.*

Manuscript Accepted by Publisher



Christian Faith Publishing has recently announced the acceptance of a manuscript for publication by Dominic Murgido. This will become his third book. The title will be *Life Changes while Grieving: Three significant changes. One ultimate outcome.* Expected release and publication will be the end of 2023 or early 2024.

Mission Statement

- **sudSSpirit** wants to provide you with a supplemental group experience in addition to professional therapy and / or counseling sessions that are currently happening in the lives of those interested.
- **sudSSpirit** does not take the place of professional guidance and we encourage you to seek therapy as required.
- **sudSSpirit** wants to provide a comfortable setting with a sense of community among those in attendance. People should feel free to communicate and share feelings as it pertains to their journey through the grieving process.
- **sudSSpirit** wants those in attendance to realize that they are not alone with this problem and the group is available to provide infinite support.

For additional information
www.dominicumurgido.com

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Quarterly Quote

- Editor

"There are moments in my life -just a few of them- when the present and the future seem to bleed into each other and I see everything from the strangest perspective, understanding before I even know what's happening, that from here on in, nothing will be the same."

Alison Gaylin,
The Collective

Resources

- Editor

www.dominicmurgido.com

St Joseph's Spiritual Care
www.thefutureofhealthcare.org
 610-378-2297

Family Guidance Center
www.familyguidancecenter.com
 610-374-4963

Clear Water Wellness
www.cwwellness.com
 610-750-9096

Promedica / Heartland Home Health Care and Hospice
www.heartlandhospice.com
 610-373-6898 or 866-380-5874

www.grasp.org (grief recovery after a substance passing)

Circle of Life Coalition
www.circleoflifecoalition.org

www.save.org (suicide loss)
www.griefshare.org

Diakon / Lutheran Home at Topton
www.diakon.org/fls/NPLoss.asp 610-682-1337 / 877-342-5667

Bennington Area VNA & Hospice
www.bavnah.org
 802-442-5502

Bayada Hospice Services
www.bayada.com
 888-790-3025 610-367-1608

Pathways Center for Grief & Loss
www.pathwaysthroughgrief.org
 800-924-7610

www.211.org

www.speakinggrief.org

www.grief.com (David Kessler)

www.opentohope.com



Anything Goes *by Dominic Murgido*

I'm four hours into a long seven-hour ride to New Hampshire when I decided to take a break to fill my gas tank and my stomach and stretch my legs a little bit. I was in Newtown, Connecticut and realized that I knew that town from somewhere, but where? It didn't take long to immediately connect it to the horrific tragedy of the school shooting on December 14, 2012 at Sandy Hook Elementary school where 20 children aged 6-7 years old and 6 adult staff members lost their lives to a gunman who later took his own life.

As I sat in a nostalgic diner of yesteryear just off the interstate looking at the menu, I began to reflect back on that fateful day. Looking beyond my table I observed the many others that were there to enjoy a meal as I was. I couldn't help but wonder what that day in 2012 was like right here in this diner when the news hit about what was happening a few short miles down the road.

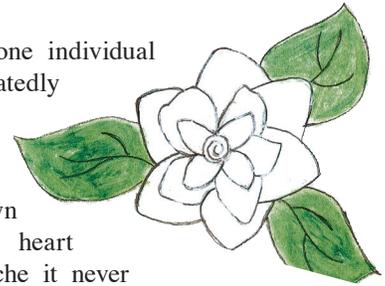
What did the current patrons think about and how did they respond to this. What about the employees of the diner? Were any patrons' locals with ties to the school? Any employees that had sons or daughters or grandchildren there? Did anyone know a teacher that frequented the diner on weekends. The diner appeared to be that kind of place where people hung out from the community.

After providing my lunch request to the waitress, I said a silent prayer thinking of all the families that are living with their sudden unexpected tragic losses and still trying to deal with living life without the loving presence of their loved ones.

This incident is bigger than one person, one family, one community. Another tragic loss of young innocent lives adding to the list of school shootings combined with random shootings throughout our country at parks, malls, businesses, movie theatres, concerts. Nowhere is it guaranteed safe anymore and apparently anything goes anytime, anywhere.

I have become more sensitive to loss of life since my wife was killed in a vehicular accident many years ago. Any loss of life is a tragedy, no matter the cause or the age of the deceased, but I must say that when the lives of twenty toddlers are ended at

one time by one individual who premeditatedly carried out this plan after killing his own mother, my heart suffered an ache it never felt before.



The many friends, families, the entire community that are burdened with that kind of loss is unimaginable. An incident like this is one that any loving compassionate human being would want to be able to fix so that it would never be able to happen again. And yet we've been trying ever since and failing. Through the years it has often been said that "enough is enough". It was enough a long time ago. Loss of life that was preventable is the worse kind of loss. Something failed along the way for that kind of fatality to occur. Was it by machine or human or both? Regardless, death happens and we all grieve.

Death is a part of life and grief is a part of love. Where there is death and grief, there was love.

An Entry From My Journal

"I cherish the memory of what my life once was."

-Editor



Find *your* Support

Pursue *your* Strength

Fuel *your* Spirit

dominicmurgido.com



How To Deal With Grief During The Summer

by James Killian, LPC, Principal Therapist & Owner of Arcadian Counseling in New Haven, CT

Figuring out how to deal with grief can be tremendously difficult. Sometimes the littlest things can trigger a memory and an unexpected wave of emotions can send us into a tailspin. Summer is no exception.

Here in New Haven, Connecticut, many of us are absolutely chomping at the bit to get out of our indoor cocoons and get our butts in the sunshine and fresh air. As we head into summer, many of us are already getting our backyards and patios ready for BBQs, birthdays, and bonfires. Summer is a time for relaxing and having fun with friends and family outdoors. But for some, the summer get-togethers can be extremely hard to handle when you're dealing with grief. Many people aren't sure how to handle the dichotomy of wanting to have fun around those they love, while still feeling the sadness for their loss.

TIPS FOR HOW TO DEAL WITH GRIEF IN THE SUMMER

FEEL YOUR PAIN

If you want to get past your grief, you have to go through it. Avoiding painful feelings never ends well.

If you want to learn how to deal with your grief, you have to recognize that grieving is an important part of healing. Shoving your feelings away will only prolong your grief. Your instincts may be to simply avoid any summer social activities in an effort to not feel your pain or possibly the guilt of having a good time. But may want to rethink your decision.

The most important part of the grieving process is to actually allow yourself to feel your feelings. Sometimes you can't control when unpleasant feelings show up, but you can control how you react to them. When you're in the company of friends and family it can be helpful to manage the wave of emotions with supportive and caring people near you.

CHOOSE EACH EVENT WISELY

Grievers don't have to attend every summer event. If you want to learn how to deal with grief, you have to learn how to choose the events you attend wisely.

While you shouldn't completely avoid being social with your loved ones, you don't necessarily have to attend every summer fiesta. Choose the

events you think you can handle and say *no* to the ones you think will be more difficult for you to handle. Depending on your normal social appetite, it might be helpful to commit to one per weekend or one per month in advance and then choose as your options present themselves.

If there are annual events or parties that you normally don't enjoy or even dread, then skip them for sure. Cancel or RSVP early and ahead of time to simply remove it from your mind so you can focus on yourself and what you'd rather do instead.

HAVE AN ESCAPE PLAN

Planning ahead for travel after summer events is always recommended especially when coping with grief. I don't know about you; I always like to have an escape plan when I'm at a social event. When you're trying to figure out how to deal with grief, this is no exception. Be sure to drive yourself so you can leave when you want or need to. If you have to get a ride, try to hitch with someone you know will likely take you home when you need or want to go. Having the Uber or Lyft app on your phone and ready to go is another option.

DO SOMETHING TO HONOR THE MEMORY

A celebration of the memory of a lost loved one is often helping when dealing with grief. Find new ways to keep the memory of your loss alive during the summertime. Take advantage of the season and plant a shrub or tree in their honor. You could make their favorite dish or baked item to bring to a barbecue. You could also light and release sky lanterns. Creating unique and special ways to memorialize a loved one will help keep their memory with you as you grieve.

Coping with grief sucks. The reality is it doesn't matter what time of year it is, but being outdoors for many people can help bring us closer to our spirituality and with those we've lost. Taking advantage of the weather and social festivities can be a great way to nurture your soul and ease the pain.

If you're struggling to figure out how to deal with grief and can't seem to get off the roller coaster of emotions, find an awesome grief therapist you like and trust to help guide you back.

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sudSSpirit
Bereavement
Support Group
meets monthly.

Berks Chapter
Reading, PA.

4th Tues. of the month
6 PM

Exeter Community Library
4569 Prestwick Drive
Reading, PA 19606

sudsspirit@gmail.com
dmurgido@gmail.com

www.dominicmurgido.com
717-866-2401

Bennington Chapter
Bennington, VT

sudsspirit.vt@gmail.com
dmurgido@gmail.com

www.dominicmurgido.com
717-866-2401

-Editor



Grief vs. Depression: Which Is It? It's important to sort out the differences.

by Nancy Schimelfening

Grief and depression share similar symptoms, but each is a distinct experience. Making the distinction between the two is important for knowing how to treat and cope with your symptoms.

Clinical Perspectives of Grief and Depression

The fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) removed a “bereavement exclusion” from the diagnosis of major depressive disorder (MDD).¹ In the DSM-IV, the bereavement exclusion stated that someone who was in the first couple of months after the death of a loved one generally should not be diagnosed with MDD.

However, the DSM-5 recognizes that while grief and MDD are distinct, they can also coexist. What's more, grief can sometimes trigger a major depressive episode, just as with other stressful experiences.²

Studies have shown that the extreme stress associated with grief can also trigger medical illnesses—such as heart disease, cancer, and the common cold—as well as psychiatric disorders like depression and anxiety.

In addition, the DSM-5 text revision (DSM-5-TR) added a new diagnosis for people experiencing extreme grief after one year of the death of a loved one. This condition is called prolonged grief disorder (PGD). It is considered a trauma- and stressor-related disorder.

PGD is marked by intense and distressing emotional pain and yearning for the lost loved one, thoughts that are preoccupied with the loss, disruption in one's sense of identity, emotional numbness, and avoidance of reminders of the loss. PGD symptoms are disruptive to a person's everyday functioning and ability to reintegrate into life.³

Grief vs. Depression

Given the similarities between grief and depression symptoms, there are times when it may be tricky to distinguish between the two. A better understanding of their similarities and differences can help.

Similarities

Grief may have several symptoms in common with the symptoms of major depressive disorder, including: Intense sadness, Insomnia, Poor appetite, Weight loss.

If you are having suicidal thoughts, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 988 for support and assistance from a trained

counselor. If you or a loved one are in immediate danger, call 911.

Differences

Grief tends to decrease over time and occurs in waves that are triggered by thoughts or reminders of its cause. This is how it differs from depression, which is more pervasive and persistent throughout all situations.

In other words, a grieving person may feel relatively better in certain situations, such as when friends and family are around to support them. But triggers like the birthday of a deceased loved one or going to a wedding after having finalized a divorce could cause the feelings to resurface more strongly.

Depression, on the other hand, tends to be present no matter what the circumstances are. (An exception to this would be atypical depression, in which positive events can bring about an improvement in mood.⁴ A person with atypical depression, however, tends to exhibit symptoms that are the opposite of those commonly experienced with grief, such as sleeping excessively, eating more, and gaining weight.)

Additionally, grief usually causes a person to feel a longing for or an urge to see their lost loved one again; depression tends to result in the opposite. Someone with depression doesn't necessarily feel the urge to do anything or see anyone.⁵

Grief

Intense sadness, Difficulty accepting that whatever caused the grief occurred, Excessive focus on the episode of grief or avoidance of it altogether, Thoughts of “joining” the deceased, Sensation of hearing or seeing things related to the loss.

MDD (Major Depressive Disorder)

Feelings of sadness, emptiness, or hopelessness, Feelings of guilt not related to grief, Morbid preoccupation with worthlessness, Sluggishness or hesitant and confused speech, Prolonged and marked difficulty in carrying out day-to-day activities, Thoughts of suicide, Hallucinations and delusions, Anger and irritability can be potential signs of both grief and depression as well.

Treatment for Grief and Depression

There are treatment options for the symptoms of depression and grief. Of course, treatment varies based on a person's unique circumstances. Be sure to consult with a doctor or mental health professional to discuss what options are best for you.

Therapy

Psychotherapy is a treatment option for both grief and depression. It can be greatly beneficial in helping you process what you are feeling and teach you strategies that can help you cope.⁶

Grief-specific cognitive behavioral therapy may be helpful for some people with prolonged grief disorder. This therapy method uses similar techniques as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), like reframing negative thoughts and learning healthy coping mechanisms. In addition, this type of therapy can help you learn how to maintain a healthy attachment to your lost loved one.⁷

Interpersonal psychotherapy (IPT) is a treatment method often used for depression but has the potential for treating complicated grief as well. IPT focuses on resolving symptoms, building up relationships, and getting involved in mood-boosting activities.⁸

Complicated grief treatment (CGT) is a type of grief counseling made up of components of both CBT and IPT. In CGT sessions, you may repeat the story of how you lost your loved one as well as set personal goals for yourself and your relationships.⁹

Support Groups

Social support can be a powerful tool when you are coping with symptoms of depression or symptoms of grief. Many mental health professionals recommend attending a support group of people who are experiencing similar challenges as you.¹¹

Whether you find a support group for depression or a support group for grief, you may benefit from sharing your experiences with others, receiving their encouragement, and listening to others' stories.

While the symptoms of grief and depression are similar, it's important to talk to a doctor and/or mental health professional who can reach a diagnosis and help you pursue treatment options to cope with your symptoms. Remember, there is relief and there are resources that can help you heal.

Every person grieves differently and there is no right or wrong way to do it. Talk openly with a therapist or someone you trust, and remember that grief is not a sign of weakness.

Likewise, depression is an illness like any other. Reaching out for help when you experience depression symptoms is a sign of strength and can help get you on the road to effective treatment.

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