

Hope Counseling Center June 2021



WE HAVE THIS HOPE AS AN ANCHOR FOR THE SOUL, FIRM AND SECURE. HEBREWS 6:19

A Time To Mourn...

Grief is Not an Absence of Hope

Becca Cox, LMFT, Executive Director

Often times for Christians there can be an expectation that grief cannot include sadness because that would signify an absence of hope. But



if Jesus is who we model our life after, then he has shown us that it is wholly appropriate to feel deep sadness as he did when his dear friend Lazarus died – when he wept (John 11). Sadness and hope can coexist.

“Missing” is a large component of grief and it can be strong and really painful and should be allowed to be painful. Grief can be more than missing a person from that part of your life or in past memories, it can also be missing them being a part of your future. Often, the greater the love the greater the grief. What can be triggering is constantly changing and can start the grieving process anew at any time. In *A Grief Observed*, C.S. Lewis shared “For in grief nothing “stays put.” One keeps on emerging from a phase, but it always recurs. Round and round. Everything repeats. Am I going in circles, or dare I hope I am on a spiral? But if a spiral, am I going up or down it? How often — will it be for always?”

It is important for us to give grief space to be what we need it to be. Feeling whatever we need to feel when we feel it without forcing the grieving process to look like what we think it should be. The grieving process is as unique as the individual and what works well for one person may not be appropriate for another.

Rebirth - A Fruit of Grief

Natalie Feller, AMFT

The tornado that was 2020 is now creeping it’s way into 2021 and I know that many people who sit in my office or show up on my telehealth screen are feeling defeated and tired. The past year has been burdened with so much anxiousness, pain, fear, unknown, and grief — a collective grief that has either tied us together in solidarity or divided us into a dual

reality. It has been difficult to navigate, but what I have also seen is a new awakening, a new desire for radical change and healing. This gives me hope. Dr. Nicole LePera (2021) sums this up beautifully, “There is such a thing as getting too comfortable. Healing rarely comes without difficulty. It’s painful at times and terrifying too. It means letting go of narratives that hold you back and harm you. It means letting a part of yourself die so that another part of you can be reborn.” This rebirth is the most profound part of the work we do. Confronting pain, leaning into vulnerability, being courageous enough explore the deepest parts of your psyche, and pursuing healing — these are some of fruits of grief. It can be difficult to see the light when you are in the trenches of loss, but we can teach ourselves that discomfort is temporary and a necessary part of transformation. The therapists at Hope Counseling Center are honored to sit in the discomfort in order to witness the beautiful rebirth of our clients. LaPera, N. (2021). *How to do the Work: Recognize Your Patterns, Heal from Your Past, + Create Your Self*. HarperCollins Publishers.



Grief as Inevitable and Even Good

Dr. Steve Rogers, PhD

Unfortunately, grief is too often seen as a state of being instead of a weave in the fabric of human experience. It has become associated with large-



scale losses, like the death of a loved one, rather than a regular occurrence with shades, degrees, and types. This misunderstanding can lead young and middle-aged adults to say, “I’ve never lost a loved one, so I’ve never had to grieve.” But what about the loss of a romantic or platonic relationship, the forfeiture of physical health and youth, the moments of play with our children that will never be captured? Every moment is one of grief. And this is normal. This

THErapy OFFERING HOPE AND HEALING THROUGH PROFESSIONAL AND CLINICAL COMPETENCE, FAITH-BASED WISDOM, WARMTH, AND COMPASSION.

means that grief is not a pathological state and something to be treated (unless it converts to clinical depression, but in this case, it could be argued that it's no longer pure grief). Even as clinicians, we can err toward encouraging clients to "overcome," "work through," "let out," or "get past" their grief, but all of these assume that grief should be eradicated. But what if grief is something to bear, accept and experience? What if grief is to be embraced as a pain inevitable to the human condition, alongside joy, surprise, disgust, loneliness, and wonder? What if it's an inescapable reality to which none of us are immune? If so, this means grief is not inherently bad, and it can also be good, a part of God's sagacious design. This is not to say that it feels good or that it should be pursued independent of an actual loss. But grief invites us to integrate a real loss and therefore change in response to the loss. So, embrace your grief, be it big or small, and let it change you.

Hope Counseling Welcomes Karis Kirchgestner



Hope is excited to introduce our newest therapist, Karis Kirchgestner!

Karis was born and raised in San Francisco, CA, and first moved to Santa Barbara almost 10 years ago to attend Westmont College. After receiving her MA in Counseling, MFT/PCC at Saint Mary's College of California, Karis has been practicing therapy in high school, college, and residential settings, serving clients with a variety of mental health concerns. Karis is passionate about providing

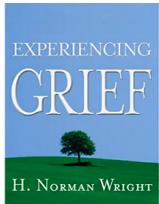
empathetic and supportive counseling centered on providing insight and gaining skills to be compassionately present to what is true. See more at www.hopcounseling.org/karis-kirchgestner-amft.

Resources



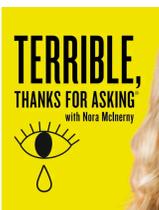
The Invisible String by Patrice Karst

The Invisible String is a great book to help children (ages 3-8) understand many types of separation and loss (death, moving, friendship issues, family problems, etc.). It reassures children that even though they can't always be with a loved one, they're connected in their hearts by love.



Experiencing Grief by Norman Wright

Sooner or later, we all face a dark journey - the passage through grief. Written to encourage anybody who's recently endured a loss, this brief, powerful book leads readers through five essential stages: shock, rage, despair, release, and finally, peace.



Podcast: Terrible, Thanks for Asking with Nora McInerny

Though not a faith-based resource, this podcaster talks about the reality of grief - fully embracing sadness, anger, denial, heartache; all while holding space to laugh and find life after tragedy.

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