

Grief Matters

NEWSLETTER



Spring/Summer
Edition 2023

Springtime is often associated with vibrant blooming colors and decorative touches. However, when grief strikes, color can drain from our emotional landscape. Suddenly, we may not feel anything at all, or we may be swamped with a deluge of feelings that we've never felt so intensely.

In this issue, you'll see a large color diagram known as a feeling wheel. This tool, developed by Dr. Gloria Wilcox, can help us put words to emotions, especially when feelings are magnified or elusive, as with grief. David Kessler from Grief.com states that one of the six needs of grieving people is to express feelings. Yet have you ever been asked "How are you feeling?" and find that an emotion is hard to name? Read more and have a look inside.

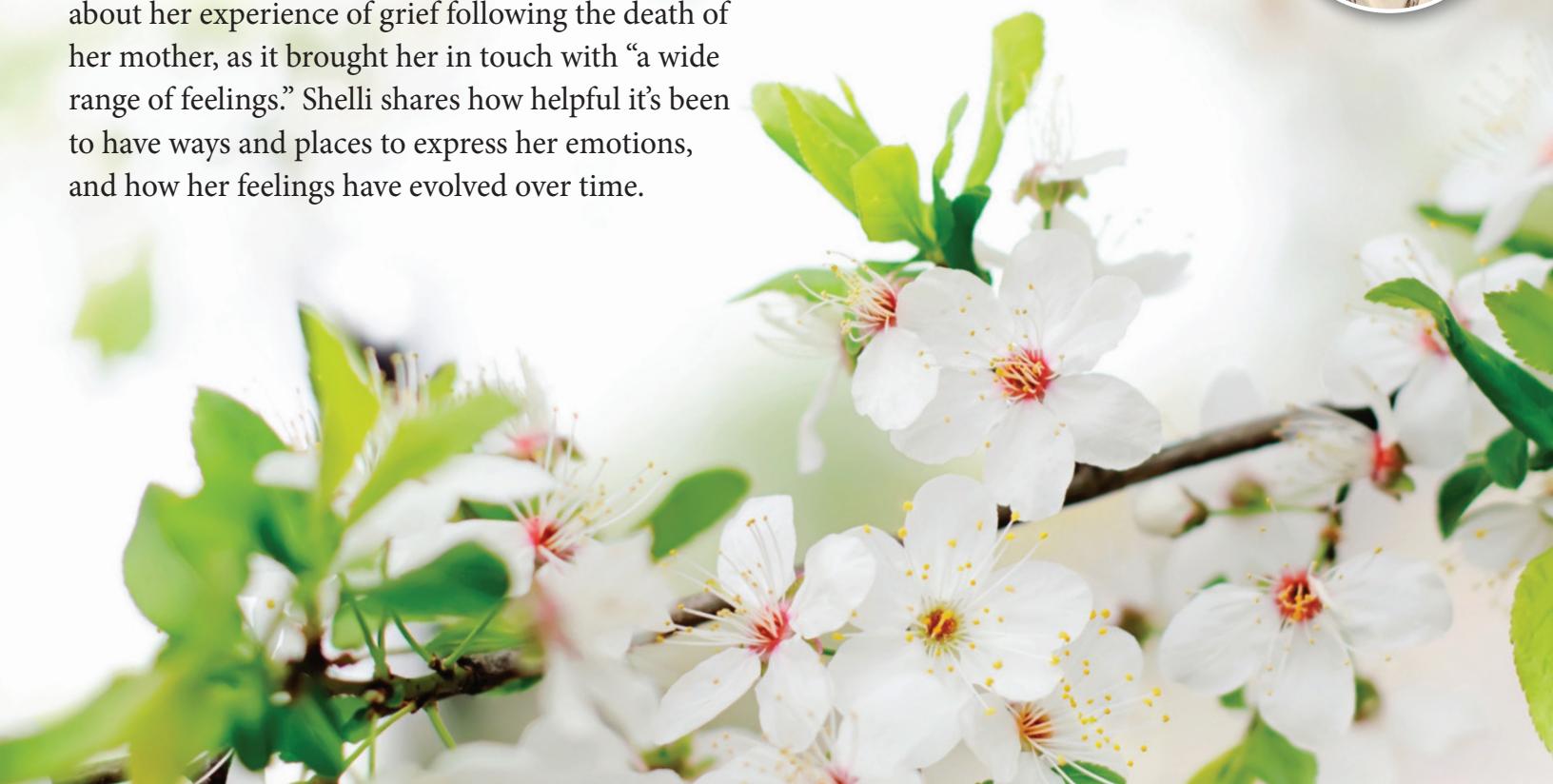
Palliative care counselor Shelli McDermott writes about her experience of grief following the death of her mother, as it brought her in touch with "a wide range of feelings." Shelli shares how helpful it's been to have ways and places to express her emotions, and how her feelings have evolved over time.

Also in this issue, take note of our spring/summer *Grief Matters* programming. The new monthly conversations about grief and the introductory four-part *Grief Matters* Forums are ways to become more grief aware and to find support among others who are grieving. These virtual programs are free and available to anyone, anywhere.

Most sincerely,

Rebecca Bass

Rebecca Bass
Bereavement Coordinator
Morton Plant Mease Hospitals





Matters of Grief

On his website Grief.com, grief specialist David Kessler explains the six needs of those who are grieving. One of these needs is the need to express feelings. He explains that there are a million colors of grief, as depicted in this feeling wheel. The shifting landscape of grief yields many feelings, even in the course of a single day. Sometimes, those who are grieving struggle to put words to their experience

and can find it helpful to be asked “How are you feeling today?” Having a tool like this feeling wheel demonstrates the subtleties of each primary emotion.

Take some time to check in with yourself or your loved ones to see what feelings might need to be expressed. What colors/feelings speak to you?

Conversations About Grief

Join the *Grief Matters* team for free monthly conversations about special topics related to grief. These new programs are an extension of the four-part introductory series also featured in this issue. These supportive one-hour conversations are offered online on Microsoft Teams.

Upcoming dates and special topics are:

Thursday, May 18; 12–1 pm

Navigating Special Days: Birthdays, Anniversaries and More
Special days following a loved one's death can be challenging to navigate. Explore ways to honor and remember your loved one.

Thursday, June 15; 12–1pm

Myths About Grief: Things We Have Been Told

Our conversation will dispel some of the myths about grief, looking instead at what the reality of our experience actually teaches us.

Thursday, July 13; 12–1pm

Pet Loss: Honoring the Experience
Pets are family to those who mourn their death. Find space to validate your experience of grief when your family pet crosses the rainbow bridge

Register in advance:
bereavement@baycare.org
or (727) 462-7995

Grief Matters Forums

The *Grief Matters* team of BayCare chaplains and counselors welcomes you to this introductory online series that will address topics central to the experience of grief. The presentations are offered with daytime and evening options.

You can attend single events or the entire series.



Understanding Grief: An Introduction

This forum will focus on types of grief, the grief timeline and the uniquely personal ways individuals experience grief.

Tuesday, June 6; 6:30–7:30pm

Wednesday, June 7; 12–1pm

Love and Loss: Sorting Through the Feelings

Grief is a whole range of emotions that have physical, emotional and spiritual consequences. Explore helpful strategies to cope with your grief.

Tuesday, June 13; 6:30–7:30pm

Wednesday, June 14; 12–1pm

What Helps? Finding and Providing Support

From those who have experienced grief, explore what might be helpful and what might not be.

Tuesday, June 20; 6:30–7:30pm

Wednesday, June 21; 12–1pm

The Ripple Effect: Exploring Secondary Losses

Recognizing that many losses can follow a death, including loss of hopes, dreams, relationships, finances and more, is an important part of the grieving process.

Tuesday, June 27; 6:30–7:30pm

Wednesday, June 28; 12–1pm

Register in advance: bereavement@baycare.org
or (727) 462-7995

TO:

To receive this newsletter digitally and to connect with us for online programs, email bereavement@baycare.org. This *Grief Matters* newsletter is published quarterly by the Spiritual Care department at Morton Plant Mease Hospitals and is made possible with the generous support of Morton Plant Mease Health Care Foundation.

A Season of Grief

By Shelli McDermott, LCSW
Palliative Care Counselor, Morton Plant Hospital

Grief has a way of bringing us in touch with a wide range of feelings. When my mom died a year and a half ago, along with the expected feelings of sadness, I also felt some relief, guilt and anger. The last seven years of my mom's life were incredibly difficult, and I wanted so badly to make things better for her, but my efforts seemed fruitless. No matter what I said or did, she was still miserable and I, in turn, felt inadequate.

It may come as no surprise that I experienced some feelings of

relief when my mom died. I was relieved that she was no longer suffering and relieved that I no longer felt inadequate as her daughter. However, those feelings of relief sometimes led to feelings of guilt as well as some anger that my mom had been so unhappy.

While struggling with these feelings, I found that journaling and talking with close friends and family was helpful. I also spent time looking at old photographs of my mom and I enlarged a couple of favorites of the two of us from my childhood.

Now that a year and a half has passed since my mom's death, I find myself experiencing more feelings of peace and acceptance. I think less about the struggles of the last few years of her life and more about the many years before when she was a funny, energetic and happy woman. I wish the end of my mom's life had been different but in retrospect, I'm able to see that she did the best she could. I'm choosing now to focus on all the good things I remember about her.