

# CENTER *Connections*



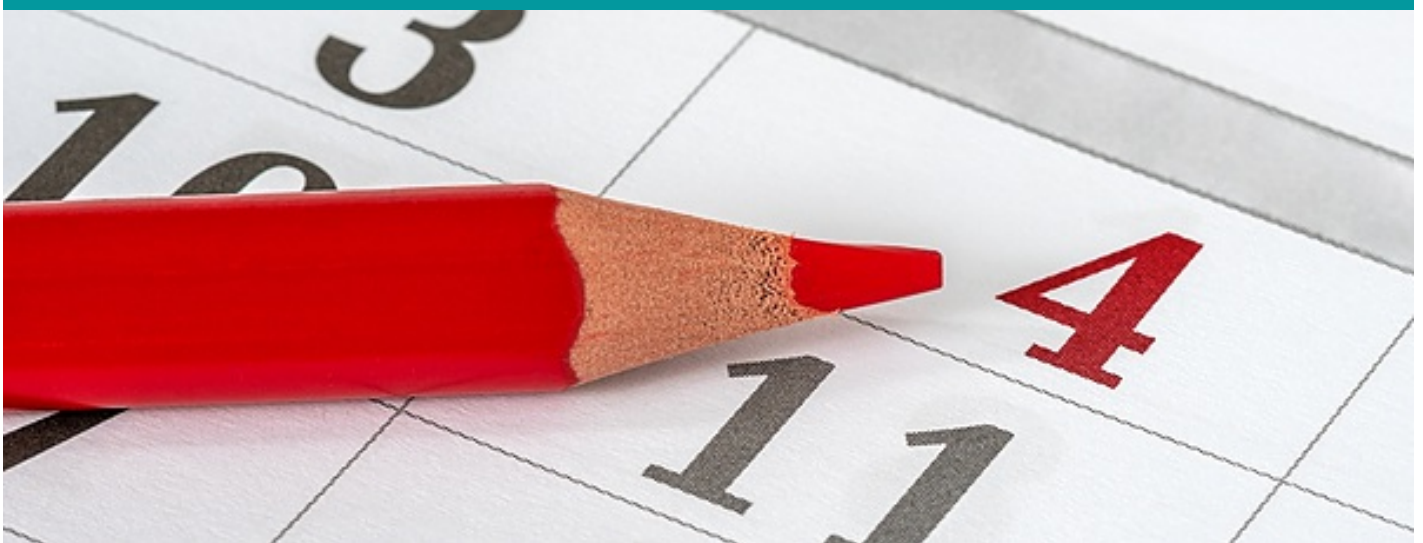
The Center *for*  
Loss and Bereavement



Through this month of lights and wonder, whatever traditions you may carry and religious beliefs you may celebrate, know that our hearts are with you. In approaching – and embracing – this new year, we continue our work with those who seek strength and meaning through suffered losses and especially hold onto hope that there will be better days ahead.

Where 2020 brought us a great deal of pain to cope with, it also offered us new perspectives and precious moments where the kindness of others shone brighter than ever. We look forward to greeting the new year with you all, and are grateful for the many gifts that kept so many others supported and connected through these isolating times. For those who walk with us in this work- the grieving clients we serve, our caring volunteers and board members, and those who generously support our mission- we thank you and wish you peace and comfort through this month, especially, and good health and renewal for us all in 2021.

*Mark Your Calendars*



## **Centered Conversations**

Education offered for public wellness at  
NO charge, donations appreciated!

## ***Self-Care & Building Supports***

Wednesday, January 27, 2021  
1:00-2:00p.m.

## ***Continuing Bonds***

Wednesday, March 17, 2021  
1:00-2:00p.m.

## ***Resiliency & Growth***

Thursday May 20, 2021  
1:00-2:00p.m.

CENTERED  
CONVERSATIONS  
DETAILS

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## **Professional Roundtable Training** **CEU's available!**

### ***Empathy for the Empaths: Applying Grief Principles from the Professional's Perspective***

February 25, 2021  
12:00-2:00 p.m.

### ***Resilience Rebirth & Resourcefulness: Meaning Making in the Face of Adversity***

April 22, 2021  
12:00-2:00 p.m.

TRAINING  
DETAILS

# Grief Brief

## On the Holidays and Hope

By: Steve Keller



Well... It has been one tough year! Most of our clients are acutely or chronically bereaved due to the death of a loved one, usually a cherished family member. That reality alone can be so life-altering, traumatizing and debilitating that the bereaved feel their own survival threatened. Our client's struggles have been exacerbated by the pandemic that has killed over 300,000 people in our country. In addition, racial strife, civic unrest, political polarization, economic losses, rampant unemployment, virtual schooling, social distancing, and disrupted social routines all have contributed to the enormous grief burden.

Holidays are notoriously difficult for the bereaved, and this year is unprecedented due to adverse conditions necessitated by the pandemic. One of the most important healing ingredients for grievors is the love and nurturance provided by one's social support network. Health officials have strongly warned against social gatherings with anyone other than household members. This has forced people into a quandary: either celebrate without extended family and friends or risk acquiring the virus. Given the epic challenges of this holiday season, we encourage our clients to "dig deep" and take a personal inventory of their core values. In other words, what is the essential meaning of the holiday to you, whether celebrating Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, or New Year's Eve?

Perhaps this year, more than any other, it is wise to slow down, reflect, honor the deceased, feel one's feelings, and appreciate the small things. You may even observe yourself experiencing moments of joy! Realize that the hardest of times rarely last. Remind yourself that, over time, the intensity of grief

waxes and wanes but gradually lessens and that regardless of where you fall on your journey, moments of peace and self-care can go a long way in restoring hope.

The following resources offer more guidance on surviving this holiday season as well as actively engendering a sense of hope for the future:

- [\*\*COVID-19 FILM: A Message of Hope \(Inspirational Video\)\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Why Is Hope So Important?\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Dealing With Grief During the Holiday Season\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Managing holiday stress during a pandemic\*\*](#)

# Clinical and Group Programs Update



Our therapists and group facilitators have seen and heard the emotional toll that many are carrying with the anticipation of winter holidays amid their

grief. Through clinical and supportive strategies of meaningful conversation, connection, and hands-on activities, those coming to our Center find hope in a place of solace and empathy for whatever situation needs comfort.

This issue's Spotlight volunteer, Jill, finds peace through meditation, which is also used in our clinical and group settings. Meditation can be simple. The hardest part is just remembering to do it. It helps to practice so that when we do have times of overwhelm or stress, we know just what we can do to get grounded once more. It is helpful to set aside time each day to practice even if for just 5 minutes. Jill shares some simple ideas below that may be of benefit to any who wants to learn to breathe a little easier into the new year.

1. Follow your breath. Sit quietly and perhaps close your eyes if that feels comfortable. Take long deep breaths focusing particularly on the spaces between the inhale and exhale. Counting your breaths can help to keep you focused so your mind does not wander. If your mind does wander simply come back and start counting again.
2. Listen for the quiet. No matter what is going on around us we can listen for the quiet in the midst of the noise. There are gaps in the busyness and noticing them can help slow our thoughts and bring a sense of calm.
3. Embrace the outdoors. Take some time outside noticing the sounds, smells, and sights around you. See in the beauty of the sky, the smell of the air, or perhaps the breeze on your face. Some stretching and walking along with the noticing can feel good.

REQUEST  
INFORMATION

*Spotlight*

**Meet Jill Herman!**



Jill Herman is a long-time, treasured volunteer in our Children's Programs at the Center. She has dedicated her time in varying capacities over the years and has seamlessly transitioned to volunteering in our virtual Nello's Corner groups this fall. We are very fortunate that Jill generously shares her personal practice of meditation with our groups of children. Jill's calming nature and enthusiasm can be felt in every group interaction, and her commitment to the Center and the families that we serve is invaluable.

When asked what Jill finds most rewarding about her volunteer experience, she shared-

*"I really enjoy my time with the kids in Nello groups and Camp Millie. They demonstrate such resilience and growth as they work through their loss. I have been meditating for many years and started to introduce it to the children's groups a couple of years ago. I noticed that kids arrive at the group after a long day of school and meditation helps them to let go of tension or excess energy they may be feeling. I have watched a child who could not focus or sit still become calmer and more receptive as a result of our meditation. Some children have reported that they felt light as a feather or that they were very relaxed. Meditation can offer insights, feelings, or questions to add to the group discussion that others may be feeling as well. The hope is that they will see it to be a helpful tool they can use anytime they are feeling anxious or overwhelmed with emotion. It's a resource they can take with them that is always available."*

We are so thankful for the tremendous resource **Jill** is to our team and for her continued dedication to our programs.

# Community Connections



*Join Us in Honoring 20 Years of*  
**HOPE • MISSION • IMPACT**

As we move through the holiday season and look towards the new year ahead, we reflect on both our 20 years of service and our ability to meet the challenging times. We thank you for your support to others who've sought connection and guidance through the devastation of grief. Should you find it within your means to contribute to our mission in honor of this 20th



anniversary, you will foster community resilience to see others through this exceptionally challenging time and help support us for the next 20 years.

I WANT TO SUPPORT 20 YEARS OF IMPACT

DONATE

REQUEST INFORMATION



[www.bereavementcenter.org](http://www.bereavementcenter.org)  
3847 Skippack Pike - Unit PO Box 1299,  
Skippack, Pennsylvania, United States, 19474

610-222-4110  
[emv@bereavementcenter.org](mailto:emv@bereavementcenter.org)

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