

**TAPS**  
Institute for Hope and Healing

***Coping with Waves of Grief  
During Special Times***

**Patti Anewalt, PhD, LPC, FT**  
panewalt@hospicecommunity.org

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Presented by Boeing

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**Special Days . . . A Stressful Time**

- Your expectations for yourself
- Others' expectations of you
- Your expectations of them



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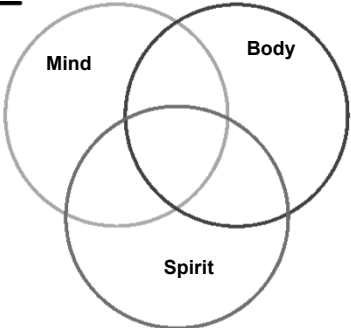
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The Dalai Lama, when asked what surprised him most about humanity:  
*"Man. Because he sacrifices his health in order to make money. Then he sacrifices money to recuperate his health. And then he is so anxious about the future that he does not enjoy the present; the result being that he does not live in the present or the future; he lives as if he is never going to die, and then dies having never really lived."*



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### Signs and Symptoms of Stress

- Shorter attention span, more forgetful or distracted
- Feeling exhausted
- Diminished sense of purpose and enjoyment
- Frequent headaches, stomachaches, or other somatic complaints
- Resistance can be low, resulting in more frequent illnesses
- Sense of hopelessness
- Depression



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### The High Cost of Stress

- 75-90% of visits to primary care physicians are due to stress-related problems including backache, insomnia, anxiety, depression, hypertension, chest pain and headaches
- Work stress is as harmful to health as smoking or taking no exercise
- Women seem to be more vulnerable to this stress than men
- 92% of people experience extreme levels of stress at least once a week
- More than 1/2 of all deaths between ages 1-65 result from stressful lifestyles

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### Stress vs. Depression

Stress

- Over-engagement
- Over-reactive emotions
- Urgency & hyperactivity
- Loss of energy
- Leads to anxiety disorders
- Primary damage is physical

Depression

- Disengagement and detachment
- Emotions blunted
- Helplessness & hopelessness
- Primary damage is emotional

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*"I thought I was doing much better. The pain had subsided; I could laugh again. I was beginning to spend time with friends. Then, I had to face my birthday again without him. I felt those same effects of grief wash over me and it felt like I was almost back at the beginning again."*

~Anonymous

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**Special Days Often Trigger Grief Surges**

- The very traditions you used to look forward to with anticipation may now aggravate your stress level
- Different family members have different opinions about what to do and how to do it when it come to those traditions
- Some aspects of your grief that had become more manageable now seem less so
- Anxiety and stress may seem to go hand-in-hand

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**STUGS**

*Even many years after a death, mourners may commonly experience intense grief reactions. Too often, healthy and understandable STUG (subsequent temporary upsurges of grief) reactions have been misdiagnosed as pathological reactions. ~Rando, 1993*

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**Consider Your Secondary Losses**

- Socially
- Attending church or synagogue
- Family traditions
- Role changes



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**Three Cs for Coping with the Special Days**

- Communicate
- Commemorate
- Compromise



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**Communicate**



- Discuss your choices with others, especially those who are affected by them
- They have needs as well

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**Commemorate**

- Your loved one is on your mind so much of the time...look for ways to acknowledge this during the holiday season



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**When Words are Inadequate,  
Create a Ritual**



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**Rituals**

- Establish order
- Reaffirm meaning
- Bond community
- Handle ambivalence
- Encounter mystery

~Jim Christiansen

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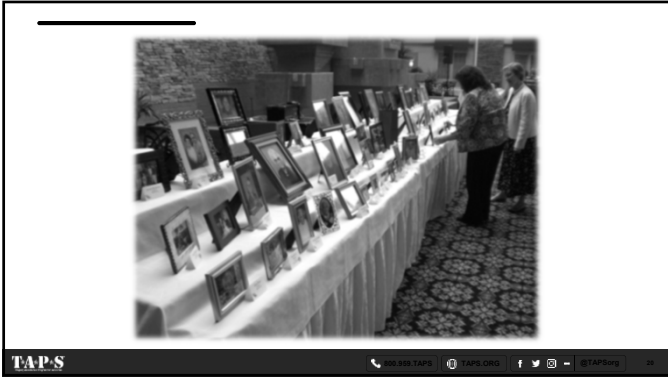
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**Compromise**

- When you communicate, you may find that your feelings and needs, the very ways that you cope, will differ among family members.
- It is important to find a way to compromise.



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**Three Ts to Help Grieving Children**

- Touching
- Tears
- Talking



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**The Three As**

- Awareness
- Acknowledgment
- Action



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**Stress Management vs. Resilience**

- Stress Management consists of strategies that can help you get through one moment of crisis
- Resiliency is a longer, more fulfilling pursuit that gives you enduring inner strength

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**Resilience – Foster Four Core Beliefs**

- You have some control over your life
- You can learn from failure
- You matter as a human being
- You have real strengths to rely on and share

~Sheryl Sandburg, *Option B*



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**Resilience Variables**

- Relationships with others
- Feeling capable and competent
- Personal support system
- Sense of personal control
- Understanding personal limitations
- Loss history
- Environment



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**Resilience Builders**

- Relationships – make connections
- Service
- Humor
- Inner direction
- Perceptiveness
- Independence
- Positive view of personal future
- Realistic goals
- Flexibility
- Love of learning
- Self motivation
- Competence
- Self worth
- Spirituality
- Perseverance
- Creativity

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### Challenges to Self-Care

- Multiple roles
- Lack of support from others
- Time constraints
- Expectations of self
- Expectations of others
- Personal stage in life
- Life script, such as the tendency to overdo



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*A cup is a container for holding something.*

*Whatever it holds has to eventually be emptied out so that something more can be put into it.*

*I have learned that I cannot always expect my life to be full.*

*There has to be some emptying, some pouring out, if I am to make room for the new.*

*The spiritual journey is like that – a constant process of emptying and filling, of giving and receiving, of accepting and letting go. ~Author Unknown*



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### Personal Strategies . . .

- Allow yourself to feel whatever it is you feel
- Turn to others for support
- Be gentle with yourself
- Do something for others
- "Give sorrow words"~Shakespeare
- Focus on what brings you energy
- Take charge where you can
- Harbor hope
- Search out and count your blessings
- "Remember to remember" ~Miller

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**... Personal Strategies**

- Regular physical exercise, good nutrition and adequate rest
- Emotional meditation, journaling, personal psychotherapy, strong social support systems
- Breathe
- Spiritual well-being: activities such as spending time in nature or engaging in religious or spiritual practices

*It is important to engage in activities and behaviors that support health and well-being*

*-Becvar, 2003*

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**4-7-8 Relaxation Technique**

- Exhale completely through your mouth
- Inhale through your nose and count to 4
- Hold your breath for 7 seconds
- Let it out through your mouth for a count of 8



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**Mindfulness Facts**

- Mindfulness does not require any particular religious or cultural belief system
- It is simple but not easy!
- There has been an explosion of interest in recent years

*Mindfulness is INTENTIONALLY paying attention to present moment experience in a non-judgmental way with an attitude of curiosity and kindness towards yourself.*

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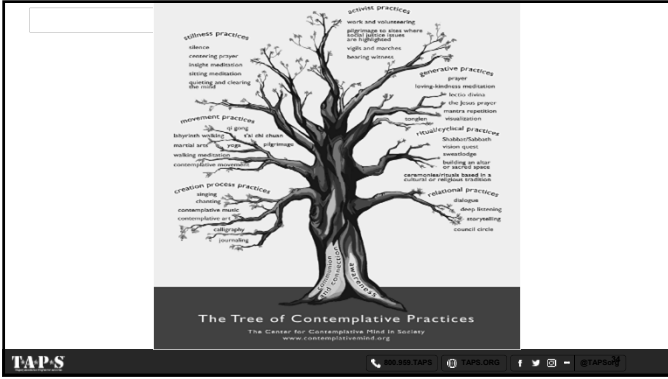
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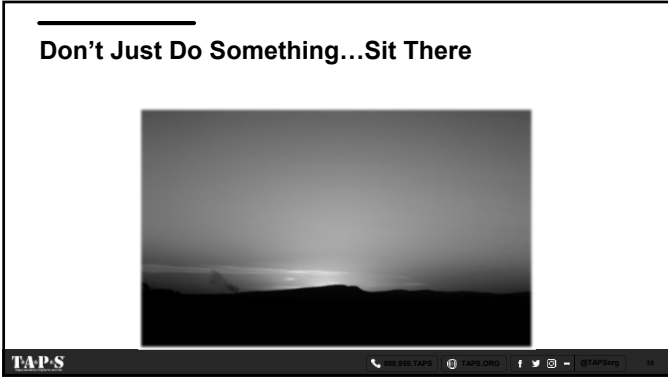
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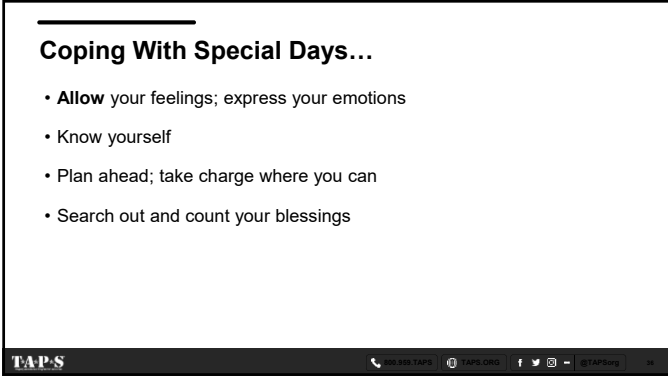
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**...Coping With Special Days**

- Delegate
- Do something for others
- Harbor hope
- Be gentle with yourself
- "Remember to remember" ~James Miller

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**Live For Today**

*Don't let anyone take your grief away.*

*Love yourself.*

*Be patient with yourself.*

*Allow yourself to be surrounded*

*by loving, caring people. ~Doug Manning*

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**Remember...**

You are making new memories.

They are important for the next generation because they will be *their* recollections of you.



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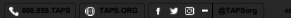
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### Discussion

- What special days cause grief triggers for you?
- What have you found helps you when you experience a STUG?
- Who can share an example of a way you have become more resilient since your loss?
- Do you have any questions about children or teens in your family when it comes to special days?




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### About the TAPS Institute for Hope and Healing®

Launched in March 2018 through an alliance with HFA, the TAPS Institute for Hope and Healing® serves as a resource and training center, providing programs for both professionals working in the field of grief and loss and the public.



Presented by Boeing 




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### Upcoming TAPS Institute Programs

- December 11— *Understanding the Grief of Addiction and Overdose Death*  
Presenters: **Litsa Williams**, MA, LCSW-C and **Eleanor Haley**, MS
- December 13— *Compassion Meditation for Meaning Making & Posttraumatic Growth*  
Presenter: **Heather Stang**, MA, C-IAYT
- January 30— *Loss, Grief, and the Quest for Meaning*  
Presenter: **Robert Neimeyer**, PhD

Visit [taps.org/institute](http://taps.org/institute) to learn more and RSVP!




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