



THE AUSTIN CENTER FOR
Grief&Loss
Hope › Healing › Transformation

Newsletter

Winter 2021

A Message from our Executive Director

Welcome to 2021. We are so grateful and thankful to our supporters, volunteers, clients, staff, and board members. It truly takes a village to make it possible for us to meet our mission to help children and adults as they move from a place of grief and loss to a place of hope and healing for the future. With vaccines rolling out and hope on the horizon, we are optimistic that 2021 will be a much better year.

We miss seeing you all in person and are encouraged by the possibility that we may be able to physically gather some time in 2021. There have been silver linings to offering individual therapy and support groups virtually. We have been able to expand the number of people we see and telehealth has enabled people who previously were unable to make it to the Center in person due to geographical distance, to now access mental health services. To date, we have 20 support groups up and running and are planning to add more.

This past fall, we resumed our school-based grief groups virtually using telehealth platforms. This has definitely presented a challenge in reaching children in Title I schools, given the lack of connectivity to the internet that many face. Undeterred, we are working with our partners at Communities In Schools and the school districts we serve to meet the challenges and to continue to provide services. We know the need is greater than ever before. This semester, we are adding 2 new school districts (Bastrop and San Marcos) to the 3 we serve (Austin, Hays, and Manor). We now provide school-based grief groups in 5 Central Texas school districts.

The demand for mental health services has increased exponentially in the wake of the pandemic. Austin Grief is providing therapy to 95% more people than it did prior to the advent of COVID 19. That is why it is vital for Austin Grief to continue to be able to meet the greater need for mental healthcare to support those experiencing any type of loss and grief, especially during these difficult times.

We appreciate the support of each of you for Austin Grief, and we look forward to working with you to continue to serve our communities in need.

In Gratitude,
Kim Nugent-Anderson

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Shield-Ayres Foundation Grant Awarded

We are pleased to have been awarded a three year \$10,000 grant from the Shield-Ayres Foundation to support our mission and to continue providing the much needed services offered at The Austin Center for Grief & Loss.

Jack Rhodes Memorial Fund Grant Awarded

We are grateful to have been awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Jack Rhodes Memorial Fund for our support group services provided by Austin Grief.

ECG Foundation Grant Awarded

Austin Grief is honored to be the recipient of the ECG Foundation \$10,000 grant providing critical grief therapy, consultation, and training for the Austin community.

Join Our Team

Can you help us get the word out? The need for services provided by The Austin Center for Grief & Loss has expanded. We are actively seeking 2 fully licensed Contract Therapists, LCSW, LMFT, or LPC. Opportunities to work with adults and families, as well as children and teens.

A graphic with a green and grey geometric background. At the top is the logo for 'THE AUSTIN CENTER FOR Grief&Loss' with the tagline 'Hope > Healing > Transformation'. Below the logo, it says 'is actively seeking a'. In the center, a green box contains the text 'LICENSED CONTRACT THERAPIST, LCSW, LMFT, OR LPC'. Below this, it says 'For more details visit www.austingrief.org/careers'. At the bottom, it says 'To apply send cover letter and resume to hr@austingrief.org'.

Visit <https://www.austingrief.org/careers> for more information.

Austin Grief is actively seeking a Marketing and Communications Intern. The internship will provide the opportunity to implement brand and social media management. Please share with anyone who might be interested. Contact Jessica at jowens@austingrief.org for more details.

HOLDERS OF HOPE GIVING CIRCLE



Please consider becoming a member of our Giving Circle, by contributing a gift of \$10, \$25, \$50, or \$100 per month.

In this time of critical need in your community, you can make hope, healing, and transformation possible.

Receiving help after experiencing a trauma can change the trajectory of a person's life. When children receive support in their grief process, it helps the entire family cope and heal together. Please help us sustain this important work and our mission.

[Holder of Hope Giving Circle](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS



[CLICK FOR DETAILS & SHOP NOW LINKS](#)

THE AUSTIN CENTER FOR
Grief&Loss

2021 VIRTUAL
PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE PRESENTS

DR. EVGENIA (JANE) MILMAN

FEBRUARY 19 & 20, 2021

10 am - 1 pm

6 CEUS



**Making Meaning in the Era of Loss:
Grieving Death and Our Way of Life During the Pandemic**

People try to live lives that make sense and matter to them. The death of a loved one or dramatic life changes during the pandemic can make clients question who they are, their world, their future, and their life-stories. Clients are then left struggling to find ways of living meaningfully. With a particular focus on the pandemic, this workshop will describe the meaning making model of therapy, identifying challenges faced by clients as they attempt to make meaning, providing examples of what it sounds like when clients make meaning, and offering techniques to facilitate making meaning. Attendees will have the opportunity to practice therapy techniques and address a panel discussion with clinical experts.

www.austingrief.org

REGISTER TODAY!



EARLY GIVING AMPLIFY AUSTIN

We're gearing up for Austin's annual community wide 24-hour day of giving that kicks off on Thursday, March 4th!

All gifts made **now** count toward Amplify Austin totals! As a bonus, prizes are awarded to non-profits for most donors and for most dollars raised during early donations! Select the link below to donate and to share our mission and impact.

AMPLIFY AUSTIN GRIEF!

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Community Collaborations

Austin Grief is working with local medical groups to provide support for frontline healthcare workers.

Capital City Village

Scott Van Camp, LMFT, Clinical Director, provided consolation and training to the Capital City Village in support of their volunteer team.

Volunteer Facilitators

Austin Grief has completed its most recent cohort of the year to train our incoming volunteer support group facilitators. These volunteers are the embodiment of our mission. For information on joining our Spring cohort contact our Volunteer Coordinator at rsmith@austingrief.org.

School Grief Support Groups Expand

Austin Grief is proudly offering support groups in schools. This semester we are expanding into 2 new school districts to provide school-based grief support in Travis, Hays, Manor, Bastrop, and San Marcus school districts.

YOUR AUSTIN GRIEF COMMUNITY

A Message from our Clinical Director

Years ago, I saw an episode of “The Dog Whisperer” that forever changed my understanding (and practice) of the mind body connection. As I remember this episode, a very small dog was having a chronic biting problem. The host of the show, Cesar Millan, was an expert observer and he noticed a very tangible behavior that preceded this dog’s pattern of biting behavior. Just before biting or other aggressive behaviors, this little dog would have his tail tucked between his legs in a state of fear or trauma.

Cesar’s observation led to his formulation of a possibly life-saving intervention. Cesar took a piece of yarn and tied the yarn from the dog’s collar to his then slumping tail. He then adjusted the yarn so the tail was now standing confidently tall and erect. Cesar’s hypothesis was that he could make the dog’s body send a message to his mind that he did not need to be in a state of fight or flight. His hypothesis was correct, as this little dog stopped biting and began to collect the necessary data (through positive experiences) that most animals and people are not hostile or a threat of any kind. This dog was on the road to recovery from previous trauma.

At this point, you may be wondering what this has to do with human grief and loss. My correlation was a newly renewed interest in mindfulness and particularly, the simplicity of controlled breathing. There are many ways to breathe in meditation or contemplation, and for the sake of this brief exploration into the topic, I will give one easy example. This example is to breathe in through the nose (on a count of 4), hold this breath gently below your diaphragm for just a

few seconds, and then to breathe out through the mouth (on a count of 6). This exhalation is a long and steady push and sometimes it helps to focus on the sound of the air against your lips as it is leaving the mouth. If you are able, please go ahead and try (3-5) of these sets of controlled breathing. If thoughts arise during this breathing, simply notice them. There is no need to assign values or judgments or to try to stop your thinking. Just notice.

Although we do not have tails like a dog that signal our trauma, we do have very observable patterns of breathing when it comes to trauma and our fight or flight response. Breathing during duress is often deep and sparse, or rapid and shallow. Much like Cesar's subject, this is our body telling our mind that we are currently experiencing circumstances that warrant our fight or flight response; this is one element of the experience of trauma.

Simply making a conscious choice to choose our patterns of breathing can support our body in sending a message to our brain that we are not in a traumatic experience and that quite possibly, our present circumstances are more manageable than we may have believed (and remember, accessing our frontal lobes for reasoning is a capacity that can be significantly diminished during trauma triggering.)

Actions like controlled breathing can help to mitigate smaller (or what we call, "little t") traumas (even such as everyday anxiety). If you are experiencing more severe symptoms as the result of trauma or grief and loss, although these interventions can be helpful; it may be necessary to seek professional support such as the services (including EMDR) that we provide at ACGL. Thank you for reading, and I wish everyone out there well!

Scott Van Camp, LMFT
Clinical Director



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Support Austin Grief

Donate, without your support, we could not continue to change lives providing hope, healing and transformation. To make a donation visit our [website](#) or click the link below.

Holder of Hope Giving Circle, by contributing a gift of \$10, \$25, \$50, or \$100 per month, you will become a [Holder of Hope Giving Circle](#) member and will help sustain the much-needed work of providing hope, healing, and transformation.

Sponsor Holders of Hope 2021. For more information visit our website, [Holders of Hope](#).

Referrals, individuals can schedule an intake appointment by phone at: 512.472.7878 or [online](#) anytime. For consultations or trainings in the community please call 512.472.7878.

Shop and give at the same time! When you shop using [Amazon Smile](#), [Freytag's Austin Community Bloom's program](#) and even using your Randall's card!

Spread the word and let your community know why you support The Austin Center for Grief & Loss.

[DONATE TODAY](#)

www.AustinGrief.org

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