



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

Newsletter

Summer 201
8

A Message from our Executive Director

The July rains have been transformative for Austin Grief. Arthur and Leslie DeVesco arranged for the planting and naming of our new landscaping, The Garden of Love and Hope, in honor and memory of their daughter, Andrea. An olive tree, which is currently blooming, is the focal point of the garden with lots of Texas native plants surrounding it. Butterflies and hummingbirds can now be spotted on our grounds. Thank you to Kimberley Hinton and the Robin Tyler Design team for a beautiful installation. The much-welcomed rains have been transformative for the new garden---plants are doubling in size before our eyes.

Transformation is a word we use a lot at Austin Grief. Whether we are talking about improvements to our Center, the new garden, or the healing that quietly takes place in therapy sessions, support groups, day camp, or school groups. Transformation means a marked change in form, nature, or appearance. Austin Grief's, founder, Khris Ford, introduced the notion of transformation when she founded My Healing Place (now Austin Grief) in 2007. In working through her own grief process after the death of her son, Stephen, she wrote:

"We were a family in acute grief, each of us trying to absorb the new reality in our own way. We were parents trying to be present....and at the same time, capable of attending to very little more than our own grief. Yet, what I remember above all else, was a strong inner knowing that we would make it as a family. Even more I knew something new was happening for us as a family."

The something new that Khris references is the acknowledgement that she and her family were forever changed, transformed by the death of their son--but not bound by it. This is the essence of our mission at Austin Grief. There is a focus, not only on what is lost, but also what is left and what is possible. What is possible for each client is different but includes love, hope, memories, spirit, friendships, and feelings.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Loewy Family Commons

Austin Grief has named the annex building The Loewy Family Commons. Adam and Phil Loewy made a generous \$50,000 donation and will be recognized as Marquis Sponsors at the 2018 Holders of Hope gala. The Loewys feel a strong connection to Austin Grief's



mission. Adam is one of the top personal injury lawyers in Austin and has been named a Texas Super Lawyer. As the owner and founding partner of the Loewy Law Firm, Adam has personally witnessed his clients' suffering from both grief and loss. Phil sits on the board of The Fertility Foundation of Texas and understands the grief couples share when they have difficulty or are not able to conceive a child. The Loewys believe in and advocate for grief counseling, and their gift helps make this possible for the Austin community. Adam and Phil, have a one-year old son, Clayton, and live in Northwest Hills.

Expanded Service in Hays County

The Burdine Johnson Foundation awarded Austin Grief a \$10,000 grant to expand school based grief groups to Hays County. Austin Grief's partnership with Communities in Schools facilitates this program.

Capacity Building Grant Awarded

The Austin Center for Grief & Loss has been awarded a \$25,000 capacity building grant from the Albert and Margaret Alkek Foundation. The grant will be used to strengthen the Center's information system's infrastructure, expand its grief groups in schools program and help launch its services for the Spanish-speaking community.

Buffalo Exchange

Thank you to [Buffalo Exchange](#) for selecting Austin Grief as your spotlight local charity supported through the Tokens for Bags® program. Throughout the next six months, customers can choose a token and donate towards Austin Grief. Visit Buffalo Exchange on Guadalupe St. in Austin. We appreciate the community support.

Welcome Lorena Lara, MA, LPC-Intern Bilingual Therapist

Lorena is bilingual and offers therapy services in both English and Spanish for individuals, couples, families and groups. Lorena received

her Master of Arts in Counseling from St. Edward's University. She is trained in the use of Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy and focuses on the treatment of trauma for a wide range of presenting problems due to loss, grief, divorce, infidelity and other life-altering events. Lorena believes in a collaborative and compassionate approach to treatment helping individuals achieve wholeness and well-being. During her personal time, Lorena is actively engaged in the community, enjoying the hill country, and seeking new adventures.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Grief & Secondary Trauma Support for Media Professionals

Led by: Becca Van Tassel, LCSW-S

The Austin Center for Grief & Loss, is offering a two hour interactive presentation on ways to effectively manage stress for news professionals. Media professionals often experience secondary trauma due to covering tragic events in the community. This workshop format will include education on stress management, interactive discussions, and activities.

Yoga for Grief & Loss Summer Series

Led by: Rachel Saffer, LCSW and
Francesca Budesheim, E-RYT, MSSW

It's not only the mind that needs to grieve, it's the body as well. Yoga integrates body, mind, and spirit. Grief, our natural response to loss, creates tension not only in the mind, but in the nervous system and muscles. This gentle, restorative, and trauma-informed yoga class offers a space for letting go of tension in the body, and in turn, creating greater ease within the mind. Feel a sense of community without having to speak a word, feel physically and emotionally supported, gain a sense of control, peace and acceptance in the aftermath of loss. No prior yoga experience is necessary to participate in this group. We will be using restorative yoga which emphasizes being mindful and present, in the moment, rather than technique.

Camp Red Bird

Austin Grief is hosting session two of its summer day camp for children ages 6-12 that have experienced the death of a loved one. Children can expect a week filled with fun, therapeutic games and activities, arts and crafts. The next session is August 6th - 10th. To inquire about enrollment, please contact Rachel Saffer at rsaffer@austingrief.org. For more information and to register please

visit our website, www.austingrief.org/campredbird.

Forgiveness and Grief Brown Bag Lunch & Learn

Led by: Lori Pelliccia, LPC-Intern

One of the greatest challenges that grieving people face is forgiveness. The practice of forgiveness can lead to compassion for others and to healing. Participants will explore the connection of forgiveness within the grieving process, examine some widespread beliefs about forgiveness that make it challenging to forgive, and learn specific steps to help with the process of forgiveness.

Volunteer Facilitator Training

Led by: Becca Van Tassel, LCSW-S and Paula Loring, LCSW-S

Our extensive volunteer training provides students, clinicians, and community members the opportunity to learn about working with children and adults who are experiencing grief, loss, and trauma. Students benefit from this training since it provides direct hours for practicum/internship through group facilitation. It is also an excellent opportunity for clinicians to obtain CEUs and develop a greater understanding of the grief experience for clients. Registration is limited to 10 spots.

Complicated Grief Therapy Group

Led by Becca Van Tassel, LCSW

The Complicated Grief Therapy group will be offered to a small group of individuals that are having significant difficulty coping with a loss. Grief after a significant loss can be complex, multifaceted and time-varying. The grief process reflects the response to what was lost and the changes that take place during the adaptation to the loss. Clients will develop coping skills to accept the death, have increased trust in others, and find peace and hope in order to transform and heal from their loss. Registration opens August 2018.

Holders of Hope

Please join us for our annual Holders of Hope celebration, October 18, 2018, 6:30 - 10:00 P.M. at The Umlauf Sculpture Garden. The evening will feature a catered dinner by Whim Hospitality, complimentary wine and beer, live music featuring artists Jenny Reynolds and Michael Fracasso, and the wit and prose of typewriter poet, Scott James. The support provided by you is the heart and soul of the important work provided by The Austin Center for Grief & Loss.

Our mission advancement depends on the support received at this annual celebration of hope. Please join us for the celebration!

For more information on all our upcoming programs and to register for events, please click the link below.

SUPPORT GROUP SPOTLIGHT

Late Pregnancy and Infant Loss

For parents coping with the loss of a pregnancy 21 weeks or later (sometimes referred to as stillbirth) and infants up to 12 months.

Early Pregnancy Loss

For parents experiencing early pregnancy loss, up to 20 weeks.

Empty Nesters

For parents and caregivers looking for support and connection as their children come of age and leave their childhood homes.

Grupo de Apoyo para Familias en Espanol

Support Group for Families in Spanish

Para niños y sus familias que han sufrido una pérdida.

For children and their families who have experienced a loss.

Children's Bereavement Groups

Early Elementary, Late Elementary, Middle School and High School.

Children's groups are lively and interactive with the freedom and safety for each child to express their grief in their own way.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Samsung Engineering Group

Thank you to the Samsung engineering team for volunteering your time! The walls in The Loewy Family Commons received a much needed fresh coat of paint which brightened the space.



Round Rock Dragonettes



Thank you to the Dragonettes, the Round Rock High School Dance team, for benefiting Austin Grief at your 2018 Showcase!

Grieving Across Cultures

Austin Grief hosted an engaging Brown Bag, Grieving Across Cultures. Participants learned the importance of cultural competency in bereavement work. Panelists include, Rabbi-Cantor Marie Betcher, Congregation Cheverim B'Kavanah; Shaikh Mohamed-Umer Esmail, Nueces Masque; Krishna Gobburu, Austin Hindi Temple and Community Center; and Nalka Stwe, Austin Buddhist Vihara. Thank you to our panelists for sharing their cultural and religious views on death, grief, and mourning.



Camp Red Bird on KVUE



Our first session of Camp Red Bird was featured on KVUE news.

We are thankful to have worked with a group of children who are incredibly brave and full of life.

Check out the story by clicking, [Camp Red Bird](#).

Disenfranchised Grief

Becca Van Tassel, LCSW-S, presented a CEU training at the Downtown Austin Community Court (DACC), on the topic of Disenfranchised Grief. The City of Austin's DACC collaboratively address quality of life issues faced by residents in the downtown Austin community.

Remember and Reflect



The Austin Center for Grief & Loss and Swan Songs hosted a remembrance service on June 3rd at The Trinity Church of Austin. Remember and Reflect featured music, poetry, ritual, and contemplation to celebrate the memory of those we love and

have lost. Musicians included, Tony Rogers, Christabel Lin, Christine Albert, Chris Gage, Rabbi Cantor Marie Betcher, Oliver Steck, Paul Klemperer and Alison Earnhart.

Podcast Highlight

Clinical Director, Becca Van Tassel was invited to join Laura Jo Acuna Zavalney from Copper Bridge Counseling in the podcast, "[Our Collections: Inside and Out](#)".

They discussed the interactions of grief and hoarding.

To listen to podcast 3, click "[Our Collections: Inside and Out](#)".

National Alliance for Grieving Children Symposium



The National Alliance for Grieving Children Symposium was held in San Antonio Texas. Austin Grief was represented by Katie Tarvin, LMSW, Clinical Coordinator, Rachel Saffer, LCSW, Children's Program Manager, and Becca Van Tassel, LCSW-S, Clinical Director. The NAGC Symposium presents the

latest research and clinical developments. Clinicians have the opportunity to enhance skills in state-of-the art services and exchange clinical expertise with colleagues, clinicians, researchers, and healthcare professionals.

YOUR AUSTIN GRIEF COMMUNITY

A Message from our Clinical Director

Dear Austin Grief Friends and Family,

It has been a year of growth for The Austin Center for Grief & Loss. We have renovated our office, added new therapy rooms, expanded our children's play room, installed The Garden of Love and Hope, and transformed the annex into The Lowey Family Commons. As a result, we have seen beautiful signs of growth and transformation.

Additionally, Austin Grief is committed to providing the most relevant therapeutic techniques to serve our clients. In the past year, many of our clinicians were trained in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy. The EMDR International Association-Approved Training is a comprehensive training which takes place over the course of six months with a combination of 50 hours in experiential lecture and consultation. EMDR was designed to alleviate the distress associated with traumatic memories. We have seen incredible benefits by incorporating the EMDR intervention with grief therapy.

Research shows that EMDR can help griever's move through the mourning process without skipping steps which are traditionally very painful or traumatic. The use of EMDR helps address factors which may be disturbing and, therefore, complicate the grief journey.

Additionally, research suggests that processing negative memories of one's loss and the various triggers associated with a loss using the EMDR protocol allows room for positive, accessible memories of the loved one. This protocol has been used with very promising results in preventing PTSD when someone has experienced a traumatic event.

At Austin Grief the EMDR protocol is available for both English and Spanish speaking adults and children. We also offer EMDR for group settings. It is our mission to provide the most comprehensive and leading therapeutic services in Austin to help our clients heal and be transformed.

Warmly,
Becca Van Tassel, LCSW-S
Clinical Director

Volunteer Spotlight

Austin Grief is so grateful for Holly Holmes and her five years of dedicated service to The Austin Center for Grief & Loss. Holly has accepted an amazing employment opportunity that requires her to travel, so she is stepping down from her volunteer position on group night. Holly has provided much needed child care to those who are not old enough to be in group. She has been an important member of the Austin Grief team and has provided parents with peace of mind to attend groups without worrying about finding child care. Holly provides young children with a safe space to play, laugh and be creative. As everyone here on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month knows, when Holly is in the building, the sounds of laughter and silliness fill our hallways. Thank you, Holly, for your service, your willingness to be silly, your compassion, and your love for our children. Your impact, on the children and the families you have helped, will continue to ripple in each of their lives. We are very thankful for your time at Austin Grief and wish you and your puppies the best.

Your Austin Grief Community

What is your story of hope, healing and transformation?

Would you be willing to share the impact of Austin Grief in your life?

If you are a volunteer or friend of the Center, please consider sharing

Austin Grief's impact on Google or Yelp.

As always, we would love to hear from you! Please contact Jessica

Owens at jowens@austingrief.org, to share your story.

Lending Library

Did you know Austin Grief has a lending library?

There are a variety of books on topics of grief, specific types of loss, healing, and life after loss. Please feel free to look through our selection and check out a book from the library.

Volunteer Opportunities

Austin Grief has a compassionate volunteer community. If you would like to be a part of transforming lives after loss, please consider joining our volunteer community. There are numerous ways you can support hope, healing and transformation, including child care during our evening support groups, event coordination, fundraising, gardening, special projects and group facilitation. Please contact Katie Tarvin at ktarvin@austingrief.org for more information.

How can you support your Austin Grief Community?

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! Shop at Buffalo Exchange on Guadalupe street and ask for an Austin Grief token.

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

Sponsor Holders of Hope 2018. For more information visit our website, [Holders of Hope](#).

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.

[DONATE TODAY](#)

www.AustinGrief.org

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