



THE AUSTIN CENTER FOR

**Grief&Loss**

*Hope › Healing › Transformation*

Newsletter

Winter 2019

## A Message from our Executive Director

I am metaphorically dipping my toe into 2019---testing the waters to see if it is comfortable and more importantly safe. This past year was a difficult one for so many people in the Central Texas area. There was a record number of mass shootings in Texas and our nation. Austin was terrorized for weeks by a bomber. We had fires then floods which affected so many of our neighbors in the local and surrounding communities. These very public adversities impact us in way that we may not even be aware. When we are personally impacted, adversity can stop our life story in its tracks.

Resilience, however, allows us to bring meaning to adverse events. These adverse events become part of our story but our life can continue. Without adversity we cannot develop resilience, but it is important to remember that our ability to be resilient can both strengthen and weaken over time. The Austin Center for Grief & Loss helps our community strengthen its resilience. We do this by providing a safe, supportive, and flexible environment that helps a person see adversity as part of who they are rather than defining them. In our support group setting, we observe resilience in our members' ability to be vulnerable, to feel and regulate emotions as opposed to denying them, to care and offer support to others, and to be gentle with themselves and others.

Our vision and mission at Austin Grief remains steadfast---to help people work through their grief and to provide hope, healing and transformation. We have many wonderful programs planned in 2019, and we invite you to personally attend or share our calendar of events with someone who would benefit from them.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Welcome Becky Morales, LCSW  
Clinical Director**

The anticipation and start of a new year can bring so much with it - perhaps reflection on the past year, perhaps some intention setting for the upcoming year, and not uncommon for a variety of thoughts and feelings to swirl around in our minds related to our personal circumstances and situations. For myself, the start of a new year has been a time to set intentions for what I can personally focus on to help myself regardless of what may be going on around me. That, sometimes



seems like a huge task with many things often outside of my (and our) control. At the same time, there is something helpful about being able to focus on a small task that I can keep working towards, knowing that some days I will make positive steps and other days I may take a few steps back.

I am honored to join the Austin Center for Grief & Loss as the Clinical Director. Austin Grief is an amazing local resource and provides a tremendous amount of support to those in our community that need it most during times of grief and loss. Thank you for your support of Austin Grief, and I look forward to building relationships with all of you as supporters and friends of the Center. While this is no small task, I am committed to this in 2019 and beyond.

Warm regards,  
Becky Morales, LCSW-S

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## **Shield-Ayres Foundation Grant**

We are pleased to announce and thankful to have received a \$10,000 grant from The Shield-Ayres Foundation to support the services offered at The Austin Center for Grief & Loss.

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## **Samsung Best Pitch Competition**

Thank you to Samsung Austin Semiconductor for inviting Austin Grief to participate in the Best Pitch Competition. Austin Grief was a selected finalist and was awarded a \$1,000 grant.

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## **Expanding Support Groups**

Austin Grief has opened several new support groups to the community. Groups include Parent Loss for adults, Beyond Divorce for children, and Grupo de Apoyo para Familias en Espanol (Support Groups for Families in Spanish). Look below for more information in our Support Group Spotlight.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **Community Yoga**

Saturdays, January 12th & 26th

3:00 pm

Austin Iyenger Center - 605A Copeland St., Austin, TX 78704

The Austin Center for Grief & Loss community has been invited to a yoga series at the Austin Iyenger Center. This series was designed specifically for our clients, group members, staff and therapists. This is a free event and no yoga experience is needed.

### **Austin Classical Guitar Society Concert**

Saturday, January 26th

8:00 pm

AISD Performing Arts Center

Irina Kulikova has captivated audiences around the world with the elegance, beauty, and power of her music. Austin Classical Guitar is thrilled to present her Austin debut and has extended a special invitation to those served at Austin Grief. This event is an opportunity for our grief community to come together in an experiential environment for a special evening of music and connection. RSVP is required with limited seating. Free event for Austin Grief attendees.

### **Connecting with the Heart:**

#### **Exploring How Attachment Patterns Influence Grief**

Led by Marshall Lyles, LPC-S, LMFT-S, RPT-S

Friday, January 25, 2019

REGISTRATION FULL

The Austin Center for Grief & Loss is hosting a 6-hour advanced clinical workshop on how attachment patterns influence grief. This workshop will provide invaluable information and training on understanding the process of grief in light of attachment theory principles. Registration is full at this time. Please complete the interest list form to be notified about future clinical workshops.

### **Crafting and Community with Jane**

Ongoing Thursdays

2:00 - 4:00 pm

Austin Grief - 2413 Greenlawn Pkwy., Austin, TX 78757

We invite you to join Jane as she “holds space” for those in our community who are grieving a loss. You are welcome to bring a craft, a book, knitting, coloring or only bring yourself. A variety of supplies are available. No crafting ability is required, and you are welcome to join and “just be” with a safe and loving community. Jane Lippmann is a retired Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the College of Liberal Arts and Professor of French from the University of Texas. Since retirement Jane has pursued her love of knitting, enjoys exercise, volunteering, and traveling.

### **Yoga and Grief Adult Therapy Group**

Winter Series

Fridays, February 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, March 1st, 8th

10:00 - 11:15 am

Austin Grief - 2413 Greenlawn Pkwy., Austin, TX 78757

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 the muscles that hold us. This gentle, restorative, and trauma-informed yoga class offers the space for letting go, and in turn, creating greater ease within the mind, body, and spirit.

### **Kendra Gives Back**

Wednesday, February 6th

5:00 - 8:00 pm

Kendra Scott North Lamar - 3800 N Lamar Blvd, Austin, TX 78756

Please join us for an evening of wine, sweet treats, and shopping for a cause. This event is just before Valentine's Day and a great opportunity to have a fun girls night out, a special mother daughter outing or couples night. Kendra Scott is donating 20% of the sales proceeds to Austin Grief.

### **Singlehood - Celebrating Time with Yourself**

Thursday, February 7th

6:00 - 9:00 pm

Austin Grief - 2413 Greenlawn Pkwy., Austin, TX 78757

How do you experience being single? Is it a time you relish and experience as freeing, or do you feel lonely and feverishly hunt the next romantic partner? Often people miss the opportunity to experience the freedom and fulfillment that is possible while single. Being single is an opportunity to discover what you desire from life and become clear about your personal needs. The purpose of this workshop is to help you feel more comfortable and confident in whatever stage of single life you find yourself.

### **Amplify Austin**

Thursday February 28 - Friday March 1st

6:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Amplify Austin Day is Austin's annual day of giving. The 24-hour period of giving provides an easy and fun way for our entire community to support the

important mission of Austin Grief.

### **Practice Conscious Separation**

Thursday, March 21st

6:00 - 9:00 pm

Austin Grief - 2413 Greenlawn Pkwy., Austin, TX 78757

Break-ups, separations and divorce are notoriously difficult events. If you are in the midst of a separation and hope to uncouple without ruining the relationship, this workshop is for you. This workshop is an opportunity to learn tools and practices to implement while navigating a separation. You and your partner will be joining other couples who also want to experience a thoughtful ending to their relationship.

**To register for the above events and for more information on upcoming programs, please click the link below.**

[Austin Grief Events](#)

## **SUPPORT GROUP SPOTLIGHT**

### **Parent Loss Support Group**

This is a new support for adults who have experienced the loss of a parent. This group is facilitated by two trained volunteers and supervised by a licensed clinician. Groups meet twice monthly.

### **Children's Beyond Divorce**

Children develop the skills to help navigate the grief and loss associated with parents divorcing. Using group discussions, role-playing, art, and play, children gain a sense of belonging, knowledge that their problems are shared with their peers (normalizing), emotional support, and the development of positive coping skills.

### **Children's Bereavement Groups**

Early Elementary - Late Elementary - Middle School - High School  
Children and teens' understanding of death and loss is different from adults, so it is only natural that the way they grieve and mourn is also different - often in ways other than talking. Children's support groups are lively and interactive with the freedom and safety for each child to express their grief in their own way.

### **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.

[Support Groups](#)

## COMMUNITY IMPACT

### **Kiwanis Club Presentation**

Mary Dickerson and Becca Van Tassel, LCSW-S presented to the Kiwanis Club in October on the topic of supporting children and families in their grief. Kiwanis is a global organization of volunteers dedicated to improving the world, one child and one community at a time.

### **Dia de los Muertos**

Austin Grief hosted a Dia de los Muertos community event as a celebration honoring the deceased. Families filled a colorful altar with photos and mementos of loved ones who have died. Families shared a meal and watched CoCo, a movie that explores the meaning of family, set on the colorful Día de los Muertos.



### **Evening of Remembrance**



In December The Austin Center for Grief & Loss hosted its annual Evening of Remembrance service at St. Martin's Lutheran Church. Candles were lit and names spoken aloud as a way to honor loved ones memories. [Click here](#) to see the coverage from Spectrum News.

### **Guest Therapist on [Soy Mama Radio Show](#)**

Lorena Lara, LPC-Intern, tuvo el placer de participar en el programa de Radio La Palabra Soy Mama. Para escuchar el tema haga click [aqui](#).

Lorena Lara, LPC-Intern, had the pleasure to participate on the radio program Soy Mama. To listen and share, click the link [here](#).

### **Out of Darkness Walk**

The Austin Center for Grief & Loss sponsored The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's Out of Darkness walk held in

November in Austin. Dedicated staff braved the weather to show support.

## The Central Texas Grief & Loss Conference

The Austin Center for Grief & Loss sponsored and helped to organize this vital Grief Symposium that focused on the impact of grief and loss across the lifespan. The keynote was offered by national expert Phyllis Kosminsky, Ph.D., LCSW. The symposium offered a variety of workshops and intensives that drew professionals as well as beginners in the area of grief work.

### Samsung Engineering Group



Samsung Implant and Diffusion Teams surprised Austin Grief with a generous offering of toys, crafts and supplies for our children's program! We are so grateful for the continued support of these great teams!

## YOUR AUSTIN GRIEF COMMUNITY

### A Message from Becca Van Tassel, LCSW-S

Dear Austin Grief Friends and Community,

It is with a heavy heart that I announce my departure from the Clinical Director position at The Austin Center for Grief & Loss. It has truly been an honor to lead such an incredible team, and I'm so grateful for the wonderful and transformative experiences I have shared with this community. I'm thrilled Becky Morales has joined Austin Grief as our next Clinical Director. I am dedicated to the mission of this organization and plan to continue to serve as a staff therapist and provide training to expand grief informed care. Thank you to all who have been part of my journey, it has been an honor to be part of the Austin Grief family.

With Love and Gratitude,  
Becca Van Tassel, LCSW-S  
Outgoing Clinical Director

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### Board of Directors Spotlight

Elaine Cavazos, LCSW-S, graduated with her masters of social work



from Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio, Texas. She has practiced in many social work settings including MD Anderson Cancer Center, Texas Children's Hospital, Seton Healthcare System, and My Healing Place (now The Austin Center for Grief & Loss). Her career includes experience as an assistant clinical faculty member at the Steve Hicks School of Social Work at The University of Texas and as an adjunct professor both in the classroom and in field

education. Ms. Cavazos has a private practice where she focuses on providing psychotherapeutic services to clients needing help with pregnancy and postpartum mental health issues and/or perinatal loss. She also serves as the Clinical Director for the Pregnancy and Postpartum Health Alliance of Texas. Elaine chaired the inaugural University of Texas Maternal Mental Health and Wellness Conference in April 2017 and is chairing the planning committee for this same conference in the spring of 2019.

Elaine has been a valued part of the Austin Grief community and has supervised many of the social work students interning with us. Elaine joined the Board of Directors in 2017. Thank you Elaine for your service and dedication to The Austin Center for Grief & Loss community.

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## Volunteer Opportunities

Austin Grief has a compassionate volunteer community. We are so grateful for the dedication and heart of our volunteers. In gratitude we are making 2019, *The Year of the Volunteer!*

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, and as a board committee member.

Thanks to the KUT Volunteer Spotlight on Austin Grief in October, we received an overwhelming interest in our Volunteer Facilitator Training. The spring training is scheduled to begin on March 27th.

For more information on volunteer opportunities please visit the [Get](#)

[Involved](#) section of our website.

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## Holder of Hope Giving Circle

We want you to be a part of the Holder of Hope Giving Circle supporting the important work of The Austin Center for Grief & Loss. By supporting the Austin Center for Grief & Loss and becoming a Holder of Hope Giving Circle member you are helping provide hope. Hope can be fleeting for those experiencing a loss - death, divorce, or other tragedy. A death often leaves people isolated and alone. 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 to those who have lost partners, children, and loved ones.

The biggest benefit you receive from being a part of the Holder of Hope Giving Circle is knowing you are making a difference in the lives of grieving individuals. Additionally, you will be invited to art exhibitions, book signings, and one private party each year. Thank you in advance for your support. We will provide you a Holder of Hope pin - we hope you will wear this proudly and often. Please also spread the word about Austin Grief's mission and the important work we do.

On behalf of our clients, staff, and board of directors, thank you for your support and for helping The Austin Center for Grief & Loss bring about transformation in the lives of our clients and making aspirations, ambitions, expectations and dreams possible again.

[Holder of Hope Giving Circle](#)

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## Your Story

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 Social Media and Google. As always, we would love to hear from you! Please contact Mary Dickerson at [mdickerson@austingrief.org](mailto:mdickerson@austingrief.org), to share your story.

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## 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!

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

**Sponsor** Holders of Hope 2019. 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.

**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.

[DONATE TODAY](#)

[www.AustinGrief.org](http://www.AustinGrief.org)

2413 Greenlawn Pkwy., Austin, TX 78757

512.472.7878

