



Tom Bekkers, MSW, APSW, is an Advanced Practice Social Worker with over 25 years of experience in professional counseling related to patients and family members faced with the challenges of health situations, life-style adjustment issues, death and grief. Tom holds a Master's Degree from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

For more than two decades, he worked at St Vincent Hospital in Green Bay and served as facilitator of the "Understanding Grief" group and "Taking Time" cancer support group. Tom worked at Unity Hospice as a grief counselor from August, 2012-June, 2013 and has co-facilitated grief groups at Unity for family members after the death of a loved one. Tom is currently employed as a social worker with Green Bay Oncology. He is co-author of "The Widower's Toolbox: Repairing Your Life After Losing Your Spouse" which helps channel men's grief into constructive tasks and provides tools that will enable bereaved men to recreate lives that can be fulfilling once again.

Tom lives in Denmark, Wisconsin with his wife and has two daughters. Tom and his wife are members of the Circles of Faith Catholic Community, belonging to St. James Parish in Cooperstown. Tom may be contacted by phone at (920)-660-8066 or by e-mail at [tbekkers@centurytel.net](mailto:tbekkers@centurytel.net)

## GRIEF RESOURCES

### Books: General Bereavement

- Living When a Loved One Dies (Grollman)
- Life After Loss (Deits)
- Good Grief (Westberg)
- The Journey Through Grief (Wolfelt)
- Heaven is for Real (Burpo)

### Books: Death of a Spouse

- The Widowers Toolbox (Schaefer/Bekkers)
- How to Survive the Loss of a Love (Colgrove)

### Books: Death of a Parent

- How it Feels When a Parent Dies (Kremetz)

### Books: Bereaved Parents

- The Bereaved Parent (Schiff)
- The Worst Loss (Rosof)

### Books: Helping Children with Grief

- The Grieving Child (Fitzgerald)

### Books: Sudden and Traumatic Loss

- No Time for Goodbyes (Lord)

### Books: Suicide

- Suicide Survivors: A Guide (Wroblewski)

### Websites

- Sympathy Sharing Site  
[www.bereavement.com](http://www.bereavement.com)
- Journey of Hearts  
[www.journeyofhearts.org](http://www.journeyofhearts.org)
- Survivors of Suicide  
[www.survivorsofsuicide.com](http://www.survivorsofsuicide.com)
- The Compassionate Friends  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

Grief Support Ministry  
is an outreach program of the  
**Circle of Faith Catholic Churches**

# Circles of Faith Bereavement Ministry and Grief Support Group



March – July  
2021

## GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP OFFERINGS

All sessions will take place in person and through Zoom at:

St. James Parish Hall  
18228 CTH R, Denmark WI 54208  
12:00-2:00PM

Zoom is available by contacting Mr. Tom Bekkers, facilitator - Info on reverse side

### SUNDAY, MARCH 7, 2021

Gender Differences in Grief

When we look at the gender differences in grief, what is important to remember is that neither way is right or wrong, just different. It can be helpful to understand how these gender differences play a part in how we grieve. Men and women can learn from each other and ultimately, realize that understanding the differences and similarities can help us better support families, friends, and coworkers, both male and female alike.

### SUNDAY, MAY 23, 2021

Dealing with All the Stuff  
After a Loved One Dies

Sorting through the belongings of a loved one can bring up many issues: pain of past hurts, or anger over decisions made about inheritance or a cherished item. Dealing with the stuff becomes a responsibility for someone after each person dies. Are you that person? This session will offer ideas to help you cope with this task in a healthy fashion.

### SUNDAY, JULY 11, 2021

Helping a Child Grieve and Grow

No, you cannot protect the child you love from the reality of death. It has intruded into his or her life and the child must face the loss. But you can help him or her deal with the painful feelings and hold fast to good memories. This session will explore specific strategies aimed at assisting children through the grief journey, and the role of others who they can trust and let them express - and relieve - their feelings.

## General Tips on Grief

- Give yourself permission, time and space to
- Be patient and gentle with yourself
- Seek support through family, friends, clergy, support groups or counseling
- Learn about grief...understanding helps you to realize that you're not "going crazy"
- Express your grief...talk, write in a journal, paint a picture, play music, write a poem, do something physical...any activity that helps you vent your feelings
- Don't overextend yourself or take on new responsibilities right away
- Accept your grief...don't pretend that it doesn't hurt. Grieving is a natural and healing process
- Don't compare yourself to others who are grieving. Everyone heals in their own time and way
- Respect your own timetable...there is no fixed time frame for mourning
- Cry...it is not a sign of weakness. Tears release tension and are healing
- Pace yourself...grief takes energy
- Take good physical care of yourself. Try to get enough rest...emphasize nutrition...exercise in moderation...see your doctor for a physical
- Find balance in your life...take time to do nice things for yourself
- Plan activities that are enjoyable
- It's OK to laugh and have fun times
- Don't become dependent on alcohol or drugs to get through the painful times...they will only mask the pain
- Get involved in meaningful activities...work, hobbies, and volunteering
- Ask for help when you need it and accept help when offered. Let others know what is right for you; they will take their cues from you
- Realize that death often causes one to examine his/her faith or philosophy of life. You may find yourself questioning old beliefs. Talking about it can help. For many, faith offers help to accept the unacceptable
- Set small, manageable goals - one day (hour/minute)—whatever you can do
- Postpone major decisions, such as selling your home or changing jobs, if possible. Also avoid making hasty decisions about your loved one's belongings. Gauge your own readiness
- Realize that grief is a process that has both ups and downs, strides and backslides, times of rest and pause. Honor your own process
- Avoid thinking "what if..." "if only..." "I should have..." Feelings of guilt are normal, though often not realistic. Forgive yourself, if necessary
- Share memories. Use their name. Healing through grief doesn't mean forgetting your loved one