

WICS Newsletter

Widowed Information and Consultation Services

Summer 2017

Variables to Your Grieving Process

By Jeanne M. Harper, M.P.S.

Your grieving process is unique because it is YOURS. There are many reasons, many variables, for the differences in your grief. The reasons for the differences may include:

- Social
- Physical
- Intellectual
- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Financial

Some of the variables may include:

Age - Age makes a difference in our ability to understand death, dying, the future, problems, opportunities, our ability to get around (i.e. going to stores, meetings, church, etc).

Gender - Men may grieve quite differently than women due to stereotypical roles/rules or perceived social expectations, such as "Men don't cry"; "Men don't know how to shop for food, do laundry, housework"; "Women don't know how to pay the bills, do taxes, fix the car."

Life Experiences - How have you dealt with other losses/deaths in your life? When did these losses/deaths occur? Is this your first experience with the death of a love one? If you've experienced grief before, you know what the *normal* experience for you is, such as concentration and/or memory problems (short-term or long-term). When the right side of the brain is over loaded with feelings and emotions, the left side, which is the cognitive/thinking side, has a difficult time functioning. So, you may leave the stove on, lose your keys or other important items. Grief support groups can help you learn what is *normal* in grief.

Individual personality, coping skills, adjustment - Are you the type that holds your feelings and concerns inside? Or, do you talk or scream them out for others to hear? Or, perhaps you are the type who *works* your feelings and stays busy to keep from feeling. Are you the type who will ask for help, ask questions, and is willing to learn? Or, are you the type who will work it out in your own way?

Family communications, myths and attitudes about loss/death - Is it OK in your family to talk about death and issues surrounding death and dying?

Cultural background and current environment - Whatever your family's cultural background, Italian, German, Jewish, etc., there are many different rituals and expectations about how you are *expected* to grieve, based on stereotypes and family expectations. As a child, you learned the grieving style of significant adults and as an adult, this will make a difference to how you allow or expect yourself to grieve now.

Health - Are you in good physical health or do you have chronic pain or illness? This can deplete your emotional energy as well as make your grieving process more difficult. Since the death happened, do you find you are having aches and pains? This is very common. Make an appointment for a complete physical to relieve yourself of negative thoughts and fears.

Support system - Do you have good friends and family who will allow you to grieve YOUR way, who support you with love, caring, and space? Does your church support your grief? Does your community have a support group for those who are bereaved?

Financial resources - Were there a lot of medical bills to be sent to Medicare, Medicaid, insurance companies? Will your portion of the bills overwhelm you? Was there a will? Were there insurance monies to help with the bills? Do you have a good accountant and/or lawyer to assist you through the tax and legal issues? Will you have income/ will you have to go to work? Do you know what is available in your community?

Relationship with the deceased - Are there secondary losses due to the death? For example, a widow/widower not only loses a mate, but also a partner in raising children, or loses a home due to financial constraints.

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WICS

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WICS Contact Information

Phone: 206-241-5650

Email: wicsoffice@qwestoffice.net

Website: www.kcwics.org



www.windermere Renton.com
425-235-7777

WICS would like to thank

Windermere

RE/Renton, Inc and **The**

Windermere

Foundation for their
generous donation to our
children's program.

PLEASE NOTE: *If you are no longer interested in receiving the newsletter via USPS mail, please contact our office to be removed from the list.*

Gifts of Love

WICS deeply appreciates everyone who gives so generously throughout the year. Thank you for helping WICS be available to those in the community who need us.



Please help us help others by sending a LOVE GIFT today. WICS relies on your donations. Your gift allows WICS to support grieving individuals and families in our community. We invite you to send a gift in memory of your loved one. You and your loved one's name will be noted in the next newsletter.

Workplace "Matching Gift" programs can increase your donation. Check to see if your employer will match your gift.

All Love Gift Donations are tax deductible

WICS Remembers

**Evelyn Amende
Mildred Smith**

Evelyn and Mildred were long-time supporters and volunteers of WICS. Their help and presence was vital to WICS becoming what it is today. Evelyn was part of the very first group meeting and Mildred started attending WICS a short time later. Both women stayed active and interested in WICS throughout the next 40+ years.

Our condolences to the **Amende** and **Smith** families.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark Your Calendars and Save the Dates

SUMMER PICNIC CELEBRATION
August 12, 2017



Information and Registration on page 5.



Holiday BUS TRIP to LEAVENWORTH

in December is Cancelled due to low attendance the past 2 years. We'll reschedule if enough people are interested.



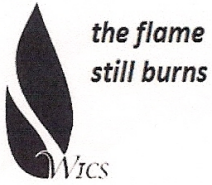
Contact your WICS Group Leader ASAP if you want to go to Leavenworth in December.



SEABECK RETREAT
June 1-3, 2018



Plan now to attend the retreat next year!
Registration & information available in January 2018.



Support Group Meetings

For all widowed men and women who would like to share their concerns and experiences and discuss coping skills.

BALLARD: 7 p.m. Tuesdays

5433 Leary Ave NW - Ballard Landmark Assisted Living (mtg room near front desk)

Contact: **Doug** 206-441-9490 or **Pat** 206-367-1669

Dinner Gathering – Tues. 5 pm at Hale’s Ales 4301 Leary Way NW

BELLEVUE: 7 p.m. Mondays

10420 S.E. 11th St. - Pilgrim Lutheran Church (Corner 11th St. & Bellevue Way)

Contact: **Kathy** 425.653.7209 (best to call M, W, F during the day)

or email at: clancyKa@comcast.net

Dinner Gathering – Mon. 5 pm – Location varies - Check website weekly for location & info

COVINGTON: 7 p.m. Tuesdays

25810— 156th Ave SE - St. John the Baptist Catholic Church

Contact: **Le** 253.630.0324 or email at: saraacree@comcast.net

RENTON: 12:30 p.m. Wednesdays

211 Burnett North, Renton Senior Center

Contact: **Burnie** 425.255.1888 or email at: burnie@comcast.net



WICS invites you to send a gift in memory of your loved one. We rely on your donations. Your gift allows us to continue supporting grieving families in our community.

Please help us help others by sending a LOVE GIFT today.

All donations are tax deductible.

Workplace “Matching Gift” programs can increase your donation.

Check to see if your employer will match your gift.

Gifts of Love

Amount: \$ _____ From: _____

In Memory of: _____

Message: _____

Send Acknowledgement to (name): _____

Address: _____

Return to: WICS, P.O. Box 66896, Seattle, WA 98166



The Road to Hope and Healing...A Journey Shared

Our annual retreat with WICS, TCF and the Children's Program was held at Seabeck Conference Center June 2nd – 4th. The retreat weekend was truly full of hope, healing, encouragement, compassion, and inspiration to keep traveling on our grief journey. We took home some great 'grief tools' from the various workshops to help us along the way. We were able to share with each other and know that there are others who understand our grief and that we are traveling this grief journey together.

Thank You to all who attended, helped with snacks, led the opening and closing, and helped with the various activities in between. We want to especially thank our Keynote Speaker & Workshop Leader Alan Pedersen and our other Workshop Leaders: Dr. Bob Baugher, Margarita Suarez, Gera McGuire, Cathy Sosnowsky, and Kristen Brandon.

It is always awesome to see folks coming for the first time on Friday feeling as if they might not 'belong' but leave on Sunday with a strong sense that they are now part of a 'family' who understands. Our hope is that you returned home from the retreat with a bit lighter heart from having done some good grief work. (Some said they left "lighter in heart, but heavier in pounds from all the great meals!")

Some comments from the evaluations:

- ♥ *"I came last year and gained useful grief handling strategies."*
- ♥ *"Emotionally draining IN A HEALING WAY. Good, new friendships."*
- ♥ *"This retreat was a phenomenal experience."*
- ♥ *"I felt supported and being with others who understood and didn't try to fix me."*
- ♥ *"The retreat was well organized, in an ideal location and had excellent workshops."*
- ♥ *"So blessed to have Alan Pedersen here – he is wonderful! It is so great to have a combination of intense grief work and relaxing/reflecting time."*
- ♥ *"Well organized – a lot of pain but a lot of positive energy shared."*
- ♥ *"Workshops were well done, informative and understanding.."*
- ♥ *"Everything was done really well. I felt validated. The retreat encouraged all feelings."*
- ♥ *"Amazing speakers. Great organization. Retreat and environment beautiful!"*
- ♥ *"The WICS closing ceremony was a perfect closing to a perfect weekend. It was great to see the change in people in just 2 days! They found life after death."*

★★★ **Save the Date!** ~ **June 1-3, 2018** ~ **You won't want to miss this healing weekend!** ★★★

Variables to Your Grieving Process

~ continued from page 1 ~

Relationship with the deceased – *continued* ... What kind of relationship did you have with the deceased? What was your last experience with the deceased like? How did the person who died influence your life? How much of your day was involved in caring or being with them? How much did this person do for you?

Preparedness for the death - Did you have time to say goodbye and things, such as "I love you" or "Please forgive me"? If you didn't have time, take the time now and write them a "goodbye letter" and send it symbolically to the deceased, as one child did by digging a hole beside the grave and burying the letter, or attach it to a helium balloon and let it float into the sky.

Nature of the death - Where did the death take place? Was it sudden or expected? If it was expected, did the time before death last a few hours, days or weeks? Were you provided with information from medical professionals to help you understand what was happening? Was the death a suicide, leaving lots of questions, fears, guilt, anger, etc? Was the death a homicide or perhaps due to a car accident, or a drunk drive? If so, was there a lot of anger and unanswered questions?

These are just a few of the variables and the issues that surround them that can create differences in YOUR grieving process.

~ JMH ~



WICS ANNUAL SUMMER PICNIC

A Lovely Day and Dinner On The Lake

with a Basket Raffle Mini-Fundraiser

Hope to see you there for a day of fun and companionship!

**All WICS, WICS Weds,
and their families and friends are invited.**



Saturday, August 12, 2017

Anytime from 1pm until you feel like going home



Le and Sara Habryle's Lake House

**26038 216th Place SE
Maple Valley, WA 98038**



~ Please CARPOOL. Parking is limited. ~

~ Bring your swim suit and a beach towel. ~

Things To Do:

Swimming, Boating (boat w/ small engine, kayaks, canoes, raft, water floats),
Lawn games, Fishing, Talking, Eating...

Sun expected, but no guarantee ☺

Menu:

Hamburgers, sausage hot dogs, potato salad, green salad, chips, veggies,
snacks, cookies, cake, wine, beer, soda, lemonade and coffee

Cost:

\$20/person - if prepaid by August 7th - *check or cash only.*
(covers food, beverages and a little to the WICS organization)

Children under 12 free.

(After August 7th: \$25/person PAID AT THE DOOR by cash or check only.)

Basket Raffle:

Tickets \$1 each OR 6 Tickets for \$5. (Purchase your tickets at the picnic.)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Cost: \$20.00/person if pd by Aug. 7

(After Aug. 7: \$25/person at the door)

~ Children under 12 Free ~

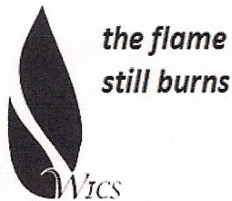
Email: _____

Number attending: _____ X \$20.00 = \$ _____

Number of children: _____

Send Form and Payment to: **WICS PO Box 66896 Seattle, WA 98166.** (Checks payable to **WICS.**)

WICS
PO Box 66896
Seattle, WA 98166



Summer 2017

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Seattle, WA
Permit #1014



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

SUMMER PICNIC
and **MINI FUNDRAISER**
August 12, 2017
at the Habryle's Lake House
~ Register Now ~
Registration Form on pg 5

Widowed Information and Consultation Services (WICS)

- WICS is non-sectarian and is not affiliated with any other agency.
- WICS is a program that offers group support to men and women who are coping with the death of their spouse or partner. Since its beginning in 1974, WICS has served more than 80,000 men and women.
- The most frequent inquiries at WICS are for clarification of the grief process, such as "Are my feelings normal?" or "Am I losing my mind?" and also seeking help for dealing with loneliness.
- When a widowed person telephones or visits a WICS support group, he or she can be sure to find other widowed people who will listen and understand. A warm and supportive atmosphere is provided for those who call on the service.

Phone: **206-241-5650**

Website: www.kcwics.org

Email: wicsoffice@qwestoffice.net