

So Much Has Changed: Managing Secondary Losses During the Holidays



So Much Has Changed Managing Secondary Losses During the Holidays

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Secondary Loss

Secondary loss is a physical or psychosocial loss that coincides with or develops as a consequence of an initial loss (Rando, 1994)



Like ripples on a pond

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Examples of Secondary Losses



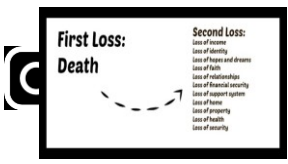
- When I lost my son, I simultaneously lost all his friends
- Changes in relationships
- Need to change work, move to a new community, etc.



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Coping with Secondary Loss

- Recognition
- Validate
- We need to acknowledge and grieve each loss we experience

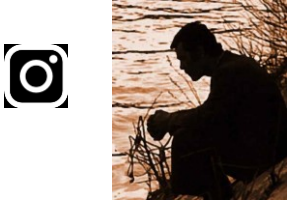




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Grief is Manifested in Many Ways

- Physically
- Emotionally (including positive emotions)
- Cognitively
- Behaviorally
- Spiritually





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The Grief Process A Roller Coaster of Reactions



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Grief is not a time-bound process
that ends in detachment



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Amelioration of Grief

- Over time pain lessens
- Persons function at similar (or sometimes better levels) than prior to the loss
- Yet grief still has a developmental aspect



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Secondary Losses During the Holidays
What makes the holidays so difficult?



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The Last Holiday



- In hospice or palliative care, we may realize we are celebrating a last holiday
- Understanding anticipatory grief and mourning
- Acknowledging and coping with mixed emotions
- The "dual process" of the last holiday
- The Gift of Reminiscence

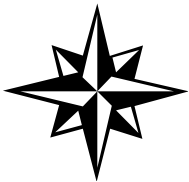


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Holidays Are a Traditionally Difficult Time

- Awash in memories that highlight secondary losses
- Constant reminders
- "Hallmark expectations" – television shows, movies, and the idealized family holiday
- "Out of season"
- Anxiety
- Stress
- Cold, darkness, isolation and SAD



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Two Strategies to Avoid



- Keep everything the same
- Escape
 - Physically
 - Substance abuse



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Substance Abuse

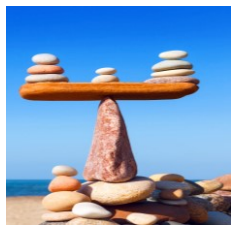
- Readily supported in holiday times
- At best, one problem remains



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Beyond that, there are no right ways or wrong ways to grieve



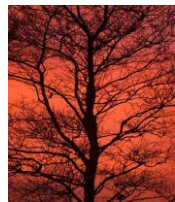
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Assess Strengths

- What helped before?
- External Sources of Help:
 - L, D, R
- Spiritual strengths
- Family strengths: review family history



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Coping with Grief During the Holidays

- Acknowledge and validate grief
- The danger of drift



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The “Three Cs”



- **C**hoose
 - A bit differently
 - New meanings
 - What needs to be done, how
 - Who to be with and when to leave
 - The choice to decide when to choose
- **C**ommunicate
- **C**ompromise

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Children, Grief, and the Holidays

- Children's grief, including the normal "self-centeredness" of younger children
- The importance of the holidays
- Respecting children's choices
- Understanding that adolescents and children may displace anger
- Creating rituals and memorials
- Acknowledging their losses and recognizing the losses that they may experience through the holidays



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Possible Activities



- Memory boxes
- Charitable or memorial activities – plant a tree, donate etc.
- Gift for the deceased
- Personal actions, such as baking cookies for nurses who cared for Grandma

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Children, Grief, and the Holidays

- How well parents function is a major predictor of how well children will do
- Model your grief and coping
- Take care of your child; do not expect them to take care of you
- Draw on extended family and intimate network



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The Horse on the Dining Room Table



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Seven horizontal lines for writing.

The Important of Ritual
Bringing the Deceased Into the Holiday



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Seven horizontal lines for writing.

A Holiday Ritual

- Candles may represent many things such as grief over loss, courage in grief, memories, and love
- Creating therapeutic rituals acknowledge secondary losses



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Seven horizontal lines for writing.

Remind Families of the Need to Be Gentle with Themselves

- Cope with stress
- Good self-care
- Acceptance of tough times

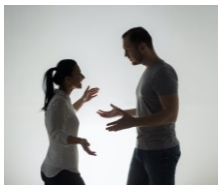


Be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars. In the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul.
(Max Ehrmann)

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Gentle with Others



- Coping with insensitive comments
- Grief's Questions
 - Why did it hurt?
 - What did it mean?
 - How could I respond?

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The Hidden Holidays

- These same principles can be used for other holidays, such as Mother's and Father's Day, Easter, Passover
- Or personal days, such as birthdays or anniversaries



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Grief Surges

- Other dates or seasons may have significance as well reinforcing secondary losses
- One father who lost an adult son experienced grief surges at the start of the baseball season and the World Series as he and his son often watched games together



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Grief Surges



- Grief surges can be aroused by smells, tastes, sounds, touch, or sights
- Highlighting secondary losses



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Remember Spiritual Diversity



- There is increased spiritual diversity in the US beyond Judeo-Christian faiths, including Native Americans, Humanists, and Wiccans
- www.interfaithcalendar.org for an Interfaith Calendar



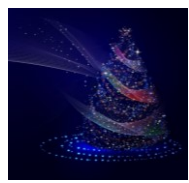
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How Organizations Can Help

- Counseling and Support
- Educational programs
- Memorial events such as tree lightings
- Email, social media, mailings
- Partnering with other local organizations



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The Importance of Reassurance and Hope



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About the TAPS Institute for Hope and Healing®

Launched in March 2018 through an alliance with HFA, the TAPS Institute for Hope and Healing® serves as a resource and training center, providing programs for both professionals working in the field of grief and loss and the public.



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Upcoming TAPS Institute Programs

- December 3** *Understanding the Role of Medication in Coping with Grief and Loss*
Live Webinar, Noon-1:00 p.m. ET
With **Eric Bul**, PhD, MD, Center for Anxiety and Traumatic Stress Disorders, Massachusetts General Hospital; Harvard Medical School
- January 28** *You, Me, Us: Supporting Couples After the Death of a Child*
Live Webinar, Noon-1:00 p.m. ET
With **Tina Barrett**, EdD, LCGC, Executive Director & Co-Founder, Tamarack Grief Resource Center
And **Kim Parrow**, MA, LCPC, Lead Grief Specialist, Tamarack Grief Resource Center
- February 11** *Grief River: A Nature-Inspired Map for Understanding Grief and Loss*
Live Webinar, Noon-1:00 p.m. ET
With **Thomas Dennis**, Dmin, LCPC, CT, Bereavement Coordinator, North Shore University Health System

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