Grief is one of the most difficult parts of our lives that we each must encounter and endure. It seems that how we deal with grief varies depending upon our experiences, our relationship to the person who died, and how we view death in general. Is this the end? Is death merely a transition? What truly happens to the person when he/she dies? So many questions that surround this mysterious but inevitable part of life. Whether a loved one dies suddenly without warning or suffers months to years on end from a chronic illness, there is no easy way to accept the news of death when it happens.

Grief is defined as “deep sorrow, especially that caused by someone’s death” according to the Oxford dictionary. There are many stages of grief that are recognized by several professional organizations, including the American college of Psychology. The five most common stages of grief are: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. These stages can vary in their timeline and duration among those suffering with grief. It is not a linear timeline and there are variants depending on what is happening in one’s life during the time of the grief suffered.

Elisabeth Kubler-Ross wrote a highly successful book delineating the process of passing away called “On Death and Dying”. She also co-wrote another book with David Kessler called “On Grief and Grieving”. A quote regarding her first book is noted to say, “One of the most important psychological studies of the late twentieth century, On Death and Dying grew out of Dr. Kübler-Ross’s famous interdisciplinary seminar on death, life, and transition. In this remarkable book, Dr. Kübler-Ross first explored the now-famous five stages of death: denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Through sample interviews and conversations, she gives readers a better understanding of how imminent death affects the patient, the professionals who serve that patient, and the patient's family, bringing hope to all who are involved.”

During the pandemic, grief has become a highly necessary topic of discussion as many of us have had to deal with grief both on a professional and personal level. Learning how we face grief and how to work through it with our patients, our colleagues and our inner being is so vital to our own stability and our own ability to be empathetic and offer compassion to those who may be “stuck” and need more support as to why they are feeling “stuck”.

I often explain to my patients that grief is like taking a Kleenex and putting it in your hands and squeezing it hard (trauma). When you open the Kleenex it is not as soft not as smooth and there are several wrinkles. You might spend time trying to smooth those wrinkles away but it never looks and feels the same as the original Kleenex pulled from the box. Those wrinkles represent those moments of our lives that have impacted us and cause us need to work through them. They (the wrinkles) may never leave us, but like the Kleenex, we are (hopefully) still functional and can serve a useful purpose in life.

In conclusion, grief is an unfortunate, but inevitable part of our lives. There are stages to which we endure while grieving and some stages stay with us in various levels of severity. Dealing with the grief, whether through seeing a counselor, talking with a dear friend, focusing on work, journaling, crying, yelling, being still, or a combination therein, is vital to moving through the pain of loss and helping to heal and accept that death is a part of life.
“Always laugh when you can. It is cheap medicine.” ~ Lord Byron

My great Aunt Rosie loved pickles. She ate them every day, sometimes several times a day. We used to tease her and say, “You’re pickling yourself!” She did live a very long life. Round about her 80th birthday, I sent her a card shaped like a pickle - it was over 20 inches tall - and it read “Another Birthday?!” on the front. Inside it read, “What’s the big dill?” 😂

I love puns - the cornier, the better. Laughter ensues and somehow life feels lighter on the other side. Do you find yourself laughing less these days? It’s to be expected, I think. When we fill ourselves up with the news, the socials, the financials, and throw in an extra dash of personal and professional drama, we have a perfect recipe for misery.

We know the many benefits of laughter - stimulation of the organs (my friend calls it internal jogging - my preferred way to jog!), improved circulation, boosted immune system, pain relief, and overall improvement in mood. The great thing is all of that happens almost instantly.

Recently, during a physical therapy appointment I was feeling kind of puny. It’s tough when we get injured and then must take time for additional appointments to get our bodies working strong again. While stretched out on the table, curtained off so I could have quiet time while I laid on an ice pack, something magical happened - in walked my physical therapist’s next client. He bounded into the space already telling a story. As he sat nearby filling out a survey about his progress during PT, he started making comments that got me laughing so hard I couldn’t contain myself! Before I knew it, I was lobbing comments right back over that curtain. Come to find out, he was a comedian! Boy! Did I need that laugh! I felt like a different person when I left PT - and it was entirely due to a different type of therapy - humor!

What could you do to increase your joy? Notice people smiling! Listen to laughter! Make a recording of people laughing (babies, especially) and listen to it when you need an uplift. Think about giving yourself a prescription for increased happiness. Make a list of the things and the people that make you laugh. Get those things and people in front of you. Commence with the laughter!

When we make laughter a priority, we may very well change the course of our lives for the better!

Make it a strong day!
Wellness is about utilizing skills that you can incorporate into your daily routine. As such, I'm hoping this can be an enjoyable way to "reset" back to a healthier lifestyle. I am attaching a Wellness Challenge to be returned to me no later than 5PM on Tuesday July 26, 2022. You can return virtually over email (dyoung@msu.edu). Just highlight the items you completed, and fill-in the two with write-ins (if you did them). We will run the challenge for **one week** (starting Monday, September 12, 2022).

**Here's how the challenge will go:**
- I have collected a total of 36 mini-challenges (i.e., 30 min. physical activity, cleaning your house, drinking 64 oz. of water)
- For every item completed, you'll get one point.
- I do NOT expect anyone to complete all 36, some items may not be "healthy" for everyone, choose wisely for what works for you and your body!
- You have seven days to complete these items, highlight the items completed/fill in the two with write-in options, & return to Deb Young (dyoung@msu.edu) by the end of the business day Tuesday September 20, 2022
- I'm not sending out reminders & participation is 100% voluntary. THAT BEING SAID, I have the BEST MSUCOM prize pack I've ever been able to offer for one person in each category with the most points at the end of the week (seriously). **Residents, Faculty, GME administrators, and MSUCOM Students can participate.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>30 min. physical activity</th>
<th>Scheduled annual physical exam</th>
<th>Signed up to donate blood</th>
<th>Called your support system to catch up</th>
<th>Meat free day</th>
<th>Got 7-9 hours of sleep</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ate veggies 1x a day for the whole week</td>
<td>Ate breakfast for the whole week</td>
<td>Took all meds/vitamins as Rx'd</td>
<td>Choose the wellness activity of your choice</td>
<td>Random act of coworker kindness</td>
<td>ETOH free week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 min. meditation or prayer</td>
<td>Explored a new venue/location</td>
<td>Walked 10,000 steps today</td>
<td>No soda today</td>
<td>Cleaned your house</td>
<td>Drank 64 oz. of water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled to see the dentist</td>
<td>TREAT YO' SELF</td>
<td>Used sunscreen</td>
<td>30 min. physical activity</td>
<td>Went for a walk outside</td>
<td>Caffeine free day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filled out 1 staff nomination form</td>
<td>Pet a dog/cat (or animal of your choosing)</td>
<td>Did not text &amp; drive for the week</td>
<td>Made a new recipe</td>
<td>Studied for 1 hour or CME/lifelong learning activity</td>
<td>Made a budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Went without fast foods for the whole week</td>
<td>Ate fruit 1x a day for the whole week</td>
<td>Went without candy for the whole week</td>
<td>Wrote down something you were grateful for each day</td>
<td>Read for fun (not related to medicine)</td>
<td>Washed your sheets and towels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Collaboration with American Medical Association**  
By Deborah Young, PharmD, BCPS

**MSUCOM-SCS is excited to announce a collaboration effort with the American Medical Association to provide access to AMA Wellness Resources to our GME Member Community.**

The AMA STEPS Forward® webinar series provides interactive instruction from experts who address practical, actionable strategies to transform the medical field and your practice within it.

The webinar series is part of the AMA STEPS Forward® Innovation Academy, designed to help physicians, care teams, and health care leaders implement time-saving practice innovation strategies that promote joy in medicine, efficient use of technology, practice sustainability, and quality patient care.

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**8 steps physicians can take when deciding where to practice**

**JUL 29, 2022**

Sara Berg, MS  
Senior News Writer

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