



# MOMENTS



## MATTER

### New Year's resolutions for those grieving

TRACEY ANDERSON, MSW, MA, BC

New Year's Day is a time when everyone plans to make their resolutions for the upcoming year. We set goals for ourselves and make plans for the changes we want to see in ourselves. Grieving individuals can also make resolutions to help get through what could be a tough year. The following are some resolutions to consider:

#### I'll be patient with myself

Grief is a journey that's different for each person. Everyone has their own pace, own story, and own relationship with the loved ones who have passed. Your individual grief journey shouldn't be compared with others. You may feel like you are doing well and then suddenly have a bad day. This is normal and is expected. Give yourself some grace. Be patient with yourself. Expect to have days where you don't want to do anything. Other days, you may want to go outdoors and get away from the house. Do what feels right for you. Anything you don't get done today you can try to do tomorrow.



#### I'll take care of myself

It's important to get proper rest while you're grieving. Exercise can also be helpful during this time. Sometimes, it's good to get outdoors and be in nature and feel the warmth of the sunshine, especially during the winter months when you may feel cooped up. A walk by a peaceful pond or river may help lift your spirits. We all need a break from our grief at times. Maybe you need a distraction and want to get a cup of coffee or read a book.

#### I'll try to find joy in the small things

Grief can intensify if we focus on things we've lost from our past and won't have in the future. It can be

difficult to find things to be thankful for when feeling like everything has fallen apart. You may find joy in the health of your family, children, or grandchildren. Maybe it's as small as simply waking up to see a new day. Look for pictures, moments, feelings, and things even in unexpected places that bring you joy and put a smile on your face.

#### I'll recognize and be thankful for the good things that happen in my life

It can be difficult to be thankful when you feel sorrow and loss. You can start small by trying to make a list of three things that you're thankful for in your life. Look at the people and things around

*Continued on page 2*

you that bring value and meaning to your life. Look at the ways that you've been blessed. Be thankful even for the smallest things. After a while, you may start to feel joy and happiness again.

**I'll attempt to express my emotions as they arise**

It's important to express those emotions and feelings that arise in your life. Keeping your emotions buried can lead to depression, anxiety, headaches, stomach aches, and/or other physical symptoms. If you feel like you cannot express emotions aloud, journaling may be a good option. Write letters to your loved ones, write out thoughts and feelings, and/or write out conversations you wish you could have, or could have had. Expressing what you're feeling can be difficult, but it can bring relief once you've released those emotions.

**I'll share the stories of my loved ones and realize they'll always be a part of my life**

Your loved one may not be here physically, but their love, relationship, and legacy will live on. We can continue to honor

and remember them by sharing stories, memories, and lessons they taught us. Such memories may be difficult to share at the beginning, but they can bring a sense of relief and happiness as time goes by. You can share the impact your loved one had on your life. Share those funny stories and memories. Relive those good times with your family and friends. This is a way to help you feel connected with your loved one.

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Grief is a journey, but it doesn't have to be a journey you walk alone

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**I'll reach out to others when I need help or support**

Don't be afraid to reach out when you need help. You don't have to go through grief alone. Your friends and family love you and want to help. Tell them what

you need. Reach out when you want to talk, need someone to listen, or just don't want to be alone. You can also reach out to a support group. At Mountain Valley, we offer several support groups throughout our coverage area. This is an effective way to connect with others who are going through this journey that can seem so lonesome. Consider reaching out to friends who have lost loved ones. Building a support network is important and a fantastic way to help you through your time of grief.

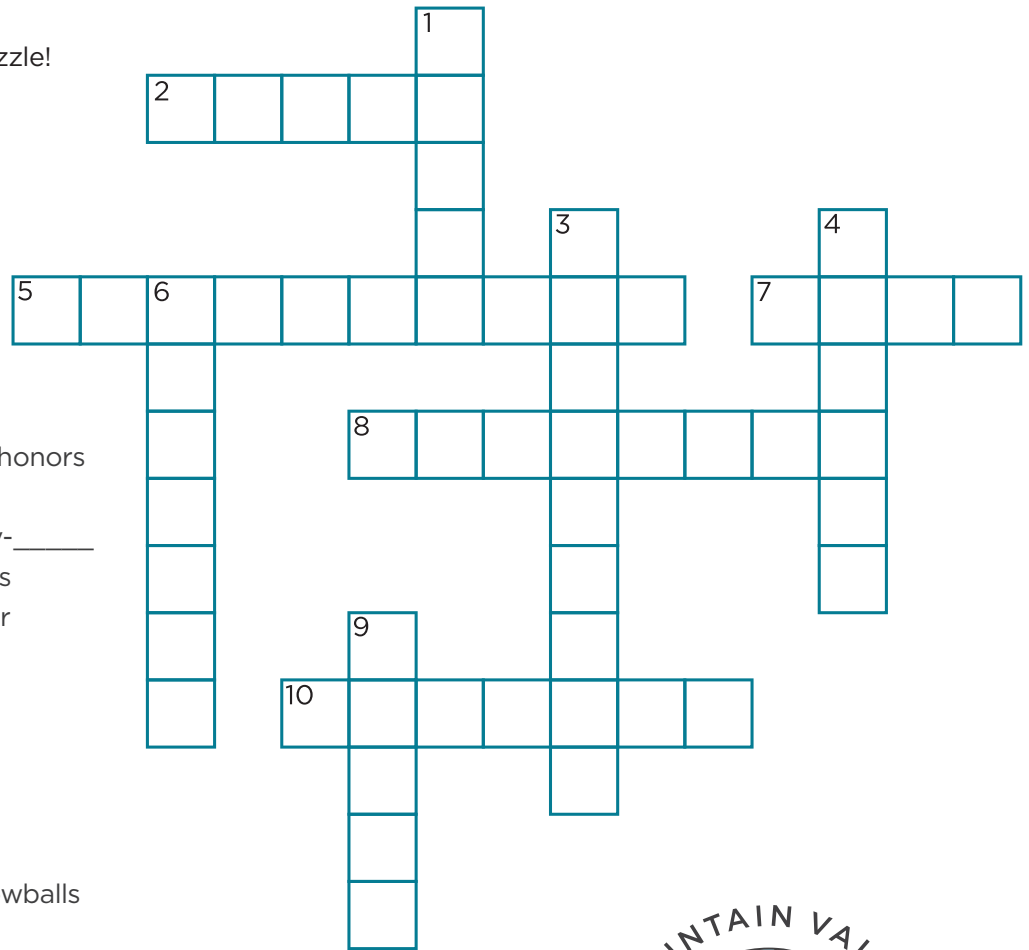
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As you go through this new year, remember these resolutions. You may not accomplish them every day, and that's okay. Do the best you can. Be patient and give yourself grace. Grief is a journey and, most importantly, know that you're not alone. Grief is a journey, but it doesn't have to be a journey you walk alone. As you look to find joy, gratitude, and other uplifting moments each day, you may find that the days become a little easier, and that you're better equipped to get through this journey.



# CROSSWORD

Enjoy our January themed puzzle!



## ACROSS

- 2. Third Monday of January honors
- 5. A goal for the new year
- 7. Two thousand and twenty-\_\_\_\_\_
- 8. When the new year begins
- 10. The first month of the year

## DOWN

- 1. A thin layer of ice
- 3. A side dish believed to symbolize wealth or gold
- 4. The coldest season
- 6. Made with three large snowballs
- 9. \_\_\_\_\_ New Year!



9	6		3	7			1	
1	8	5	4	2	9	7	6	
	7				1			8
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## SUDOKU

The rules for sudoku are simple: A 9x9 square must be filled in with numbers from 1 to 9 with no repeated numbers in each line, horizontally or vertically. To challenge you more, there are 3x3 squares marked out in the grid, and each of these squares can't have any repeat numbers, either.

# Coping with sudden loss and understanding traumatic grief

JESSICA SIMANDLE  
Bereavement Coordinator

When I was 12 years old, I experienced the sudden and traumatic loss of my father. Our family was involved in an automobile accident. On our way to Wednesday night church services, we encountered a truck carrying pressed boards. In the curve, the load shifted, and the impact killed my father instantly. All our lives were forever changed in that moment. I share this to say, I can understand what it's like to have your life upended by tragedy. In the blink of an eye, lives can get rearranged, and the pieces of life's puzzle that once fit together with ease no longer connect. It's confusing, infuriating, and some days you're not sure you'll survive.

I want to clarify the term traumatic grief. Sudden loss is almost always traumatic. But not all traumatic losses are sudden. A death needs not be violent or be witnessed for the death to traumatize a person. One could experience trauma if you held out hope to the very end that the person would recover. Or you believed the death was unfair. Or you believed the dying person suffered. Or you've experienced multiple losses in a relatively brief period of time. These are all examples of how grief can feel traumatic to the grieving individual.

What do you do? Who do you turn to for help? We know loss happens, inevitably, to almost everyone, and, naturally, when we experience loss, we grieve. Whether we're grieving a great loss or someone we know is, we owe it to ourselves and each other to have the skills to offer and receive needed love and support.

There are proven ways to cope with traumatic grief.

## **Maintain routine and structure in our lives**

Routines and stability calm our anxious minds. Grounding exercises using our five senses can help calm us when we feel emotionally dysregulated. These techniques help bring your attention back to the present and away from stressful thoughts that can make us feel overwhelmed. A common grounding practice is 5-4-3-2-1. Begin by taking a few deep breaths. Then notice five things you see, four things you can touch, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, and one thing you can taste. When exploring with each of the senses, it's valuable to focus on colors, shapes, textures, location, weight, etc. Routines that are important to focus on are getting enough sleep, eating as nutritiously as possible, drinking adequate amounts of water, and moving your body in ways that feel good to you.

## **Show yourself the same compassion you would offer to your dear friend**

You deserve to be kind and patient with yourself, as well. You'd likely not be hard on someone who just lost a loved one. So, why do you treat yourself differently than you would someone else?

## **Express it, don't repress it**

Sitting with difficult emotions is important rather than simply sweeping them under the rug or numbing yourself with food, drugs, alcohol, or spending. Explore whatever expression is most beneficial to you. For some,



that might be talking to a trusted friend or professional, or journaling thoughts and feelings. Or finding a creative outlet, such as painting or music, that gives our souls permission to express what we're feeling.

A valuable resource Mountain Valley offers is a guidebook entitled *Sudden Loss: Understanding Traumatic Grief*. Signs of more complicated grief called Prolonged Grief Disorder, a condition similar to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), are described. If these complicated grief symptoms are making it difficult to function daily, then contact our bereavement department. Our bereavement coordinators can assist you with your grief and offer referrals to community resources. If you're having thoughts about harming yourself, call or text 988, or call (800) 273-8255 to speak to a trained counselor on the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.



## WORD SEARCH

Find words from Jessica Simandle's article. Good luck!

- Talk
- Paint
- Support
- Patience
- Beneficial
- Journal
- Routine
- Structure
- Practice
- Expression
- Stability
- Explore
- Assist
- Sleep
- Love

W	L	M	N	V	U	Q	S	L	A	B	P	J	X	U	U	A	K	O	B
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A	C	F	D	E	Q	N	R	F	I	N	R	D	E	E	I	L	G	T	R
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# Grief support groups

## NORTH CAROLINA

### STOKES COUNTY

#### January 6th @ 6pm

Slate Funeral Home  
132 E Dalton Rd, King, NC 27021  
Melissa McCollum: (336) 679-2466

### SURRY COUNTY

#### January 9th @ 11:30am

Central Cafe  
304 N Main St, Dobson, NC 27017  
Jessica Simandle: (336) 583-8589

#### January 9th @ 11am

Mountain Valley Elkin office  
968 N Bridge St, Elkin, NC 28621  
Tracey Anderson: (336) 526-2650

#### January 27th @ 10am

Mountain Valley Pilot Mountain office  
129 Veterans Dr, Pilot Mountain, NC 27041  
Jessica Simandle: (336) 583-8589

#### January 23rd @ 6pm

Mountain Valley Elkin office  
968 N Bridge St, Elkin, NC 28621  
Tracey Anderson: (336) 526-2650

### YADKIN COUNTY

#### January 2nd @ 11am

SECU Hospice Care Center  
243 N Lee Ave, Yadkinville, NC 27055  
Melissa McCollum: (336) 679-2466

#### January 14th @ 6pm

Oak Grove Baptist Church  
8087 Windsor Rd, Hamptonville, NC 27020  
Melissa McCollum: (336) 679-2466

#### January 16th @ 6pm

SECU Hospice Care Center  
243 N Lee Ave, Yadkinville, NC 27055  
Melissa McCollum: (336) 679-2466

### WILKES COUNTY

#### January 20th @ 6pm

Reins-Sturdivant Funeral Home  
270 Armory Rd, North Wilkesboro, NC 28659  
Tracey Anderson: (336) 526-2650  
Melissa McCollum: (336) 679-2466

## VIRGINIA

### HENRY COUNTY

#### January 1st @ 2pm

King's Grant Retirement  
350 Kings Way Rd, Martinsville, VA 24112  
Shannon Roberson: (888) 789-2922

#### January 14th @ 10am

The Community Fellowship  
2674 Virginia Ave, Collinsville, VA 24078  
Shannon Roberson: (888) 789-2922

### PATRICK COUNTY

#### January 16th @ 2pm

Stuart Church of Living Water  
101 E Blue Ridge St, Stuart, VA 24171  
Shannon Roberson: (888) 789-2922

### GRAYSON COUNTY

#### January 20th @ 2pm

Mt Olivet Community Church  
Community Building  
(gray building next to church)  
6926 Carrollton Pike, Galax, VA 24333  
Jessica Simandle: (888) 789-2922

## No RSVP needed

Please attend the group nearest you.  
Meeting dates and times are subject to change

For more information, please call  
the group's bereavement coordinator

Mountain Valley  
**THANKS**  
OUR SPECIAL  
**PARTNERS**



IN AFFILIATION WITH



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BENEFITING  
MOUNTAIN VALLEY  
HOSPICE SERVICES

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**DONATE  
ITEMS!**



**WE  
PICK UP!  
LARGE  
ITEMS**



Activity page  
**solutions**

**MOUNT AIRY**  
MON - SAT • 10 - 5  
705 W PINE ST, STE 300  
(336) 789-1230

**SPARTA**  
TUES - SAT • 10 - 5  
38 E CHEEK ST  
(336) 372-4545



# Helpful books on grief and loss

There are more than 150 titles at the Alleghany, Stokes, Surry, and Yadkin locations of the Northwestern Regional Library • [mtnvalleyhospice.org/grief-library](http://mtnvalleyhospice.org/grief-library)



SCAN for the Moments Matter newsletter survey!



INSIDE:  
 New Year's resolutions  
 Coping with sudden loss  
 + January 2025 grief support group schedule

to Moments Matter, our bereavement newsletter

# WELCOME



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 Dobson, NC 27017

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# Activity page solutions



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