President’s Message

Here we are, with the year at an end and the days at their shortest. The combination is bound to provoke a gnawing sense of incompleteness: what haven't we done? What have we failed to finish? If only we had another week, another day, another hour. We want more time, more light. The holidays are passed, and while we wait for the sun to return and the days to lengthen, I bring you tidings, not of comfort and joy, but at least, hopefully, of interest.

This month’s Connects features a report from Executive Director Isaiah Allen on the progress of several key initiatives. Having completed the migration of the website and database to a new software system, we are now looking to put this system to optimal use: easier access to educational resources, including webcasts; a streamlined recertification process that cuts down on paperwork. Both of these projects, and others, have involved sustained cooperation between our management team and ADEC committees. I want to express my deep appreciation and respect for the efforts of the committees and for the Credentialing Council. A huge thank you to Greg Adams, who has provided leadership to the Council for the past six years and who will be handing the reins to Jolene Formaini in April.

Many of you are well acquainted with the Handbook of Thanatology, having spent time with this volume in preparation for your certification examination. Editors Heather Servaty Seib and Helen Chapple are assembling a stellar team of contributors for the 3rd edition, which will reflect the evolution of knowledge in our field along with a cutting-edge view of theory, practice and research.

I hope that you are also familiar with the journals Death Studies and Omega, both of which you have access to as to as members. I have long felt that subscriptions to these journals are one of the greatest benefits of membership, but I am also aware that many our members do not have the time to peruse these resources on a regular basis. The Communications Committee is working on making it easier for you to be informed about
what’s in the newest issues. In the meantime, I encourage you to go to the ADEC website and check out the riches awaiting you in these two journals, as well as in Grief Matters: The Australian Journal of Grief and Bereavement, all of which can be accessed by members from the Home tab on the website.

This is a hard season for our bereaved clients, and in the presence of their profound grief, we sometimes can't help but feel that we are not doing enough, that we need to do more, to be more. If you have been feeling any of this, I hope that you are able to enjoy a bit of respite after the business of December. If you are making resolutions, I hope that you’ll resolve to take time to do the things you love, with the people you love. As one of my favorite writers, Annie Dillard, says, “How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives.” Along with thinking about what you have or haven’t done, I hope that you'll make time to reflect on what you’ve learned, what you’ve shared, and how you’ve helped others feel more at peace in the midst of painful loss.

With all my best wishes for the year ahead,

Phyllis

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Executive Director’s Message

Phyllis and I were talking during one of our recent bi-monthly meetings and running down the list of projects and goals we had before us. It struck us both that while there is always more to do, a great deal had been accomplished this year. She asked me to reflect with you on the day to day accomplishments that ADEC has made in this past year.

The most significant, and probably least notable change was the completion of the migration of the website and database to a new software system. This is a behind-the-scenes accomplishment to be sure, but it has had significant impact. It has improved our ability to communicate with our members; created a stable platform for the website and other supported technologies like the member blog, the career center, and the code of conduct agreement; and this platform also enables our staff to make changes to the website efficiently.

The Board has taken some key actions in recent months that will benefit ADEC in its mission. At its November mid-year meeting, three- and one-year goals were established for the Board. In addition to setting these goals, the Board outlined specific action steps and associated deadlines. I’m sure many of you have experience in organizations that set beautiful goals, but struggle to take the necessary steps in a timely fashion to accomplish those goals. We want to avoid that pitfall, so the Board, committees, and staff all have tangible goals with real outcomes and shared accountability detailed to move ADEC toward her goals.

The Board also recently adopted a new membership type. This membership type is creatively called “New Member.” I’m sure many of you know that ADEC’s membership renewal is associated with the calendar year. This is helpful renewal practice for current members. New year, new membership. It’s easy to remember and track. However, as the year ticked by there was a greater and greater disincentive for people encountering ADEC for the first time to join the Association. I’m sure you would empathize with a professional learning of ADEC in July and wanting to join only to learn that they would have to pay a full year’s membership dues for 6 months of membership benefit. That interested member prospect may join in October and have membership for the whole year, or they may move on and never engage. None of us like that gamble. We want to remove as many barriers as possible for those interested in joining. This New Member type will still be a membership for the calendar year. However, the membership dues will be prorated based on the number of days remaining in the membership year. New members will only have to pay for the first-year membership benefits for which
they are receiving benefits. After that first year, that member will join into the annual renewal process.

In this edition of Connects, you will also read about the coming 3rd edition of the Handbook of Thanatology. The Board undertook a months-long process of research, reflection, and planning before launching this project. Let me express my appreciation for your Board and other volunteer leadership who painstakingly work for the benefit of ADEC as an organization with a real and tangible impact in the world.

In the coming weeks, you’ll hear more about exciting developments with webinars, credentialing, and additional support technologies. It is a pleasure to work alongside the many good people of ADEC.

Best,
Isaiah

Handbook of Thanatology, 3rd Edition

In May 2018, the ADEC Board sent out a call seeking applications from members interested in serving as editor(s) of the 3rd edition of the Handbook of Thanatology. This process resulted in our selection as co-editors and we are honored to serve the organization in this capacity.

The Handbook of Thanatology will be an accessible volume that contains the essential knowledge in the field of thanatology, offered in a format that will make it practical for both novices and those with extensive experience in the field. The underlying structure of the book is based on the current Body of Knowledge in Thanatology (Chapple et al., 2016).

We actively recruited and encouraged involvement from authors who represent diversity with regard to disciplines and demographics. Our decision to secure at least two authors (ideally from two different countries) for each chapter rests on our belief that the final product will be a richer and more balanced reflection of knowledge within the field. We are currently reaching the end of the author recruitment process and are excited about the voices and perspectives that will be included.

This spring and into summer will be a time of writing and editing. ADEC has chosen to organizationally-publish the Handbook and has connected with companies that will assist with the logistics of production. Publication of the 3rd edition of the Handbook of Thanatology is expected in time for the 2021 conference.
Student and New Professionals' Committee

ADEC’s Student and New Professionals' Committee (SANP) is comprised of students and new professionals from diverse disciplines who are interested in the study of, or practice in, the field of thanatology. The committee works together to actively promote the involvement of students and new professionals in ADEC, prepare for annual conference activities and events, and raise funds to further scholarship and support of students and new professionals in thanatology.

This year, SANP is focused on increasing committee membership, incorporating new methods of raising funds to support students and new professional scholarships, increasing its social media presence, supporting professional development, and improving outreach. The committee is concerned with finding new ways to reach underrepresented professions in the field and increasing diversity within the committee as well as the population of students and new professionals in ADEC at large.

We would like to invite all who are interested in joining in on the exciting and new initiatives of our committee to reach out to us via our Facebook page (ADEC Division of Students and New Professionals), or email Chair Ashley C. Overman-Goldsmith, at acoverma@ncsu.edu.

Student Profile

So that the ADEC community can get to know its students, Connects is featuring stories on individuals who are ADEC scholarship recipients.

Mark Shelvock is currently a teaching assistant to both the Department of Women’s Studies and Feminist Research at Western University, and to the Department of Thanatology at King’s University College in London, Ontario, Canada. He is a Master of Arts (MA) candidate, and will begin his doctoral research in Fall 2020 in the Faculty of Health Sciences at Western University. This path supports Mark’s goal of becoming a social scientist, health researcher, and death educator in the field of thanatology. Mark will also be teaching his first introductory course in thanatology and death studies at Fanshawe College in January 2020, and is a member of ADEC’s Communications committee. Mark has previously published in a peer-reviewed undergraduate research journal, and hopes to submit his current scholarly work to a peer-reviewed academic journal in thanatology in 2020.

Do you have a mentor/role model who has significantly affected your career path in thanatology? Tell us why you chose this career path.

My deep interest in this field stems from a lived experience of seismic losses in my life which shattered my fundamental beliefs, and guided me to pursue a formalized education in death studies. While grappling with my existential quarter-life crisis at the time, I was able to meet several wonderful faculty members who all became role models in the Department of Thanatology at King’s University College in London, Ontario, Canada. I would like to give a special acknowledgement to Dr. Darcy Harris, as she encouraged me to live life with authenticity,
and taught me how to turn the personal into the professional. Darcy is an outstanding teacher, story teller, and mentor, and I am deeply grateful for her presence in my life. I would also like to thank Brad Hunter, for teaching me that the greatest gift in life is knowledge, and that once you have it, nobody can take it away from you.

What advice would you offer a more junior professional in the field on growing their career or keeping their work fresh?
Know your deepest intentions. Otherwise, what’s the point?

What do you think the future holds for your work and that of others like you? How will that impact what you do?
It has been my personal experience that knowledge and education derived from thanatology has the ability to empower people at any stage of life, and so, it is my hope that our field continues to expand in the future. Thanatology has the ability to positively transform people, communities, and societal institutions, but if our collective discipline is to continue to meaningfully accomplish this on a wide-scale level, it will require continual change, transition, and evolution as these elements are entwined with growth. My intuitive thoughts are that our collective field will begin to grapple more seriously with issues such as global health and wellness, non-death loss, issues with the ongoing erosion of culture, confronting grief and death in relation to the ongoing climate crisis, building stronger alliances with social justice and bioethical movements, and become increasingly more interdisciplinary in terms of knowledge creation and practices.

What’s New: New Books from ADEC Members

What’s New celebrates our members’ considerable contribution to the thanatological literature by offering a brief review of books and other educational materials written or produced by ADEC members. Each review is run once to provide an opportunity for our membership across the world to be aware of resources in the dying, death and bereavement field. The What’s New column has been included in ADEC publications since 1996 and previously in The ADEC Forum. While mainly focusing on books, it has also included other items such as video and even a grief board-game. Keep reading to learn how you can submit your own publication for review.

**Harris, Darcy L. and Howard R. Winokuer. Principles and Practice of Grief Counseling.** (3rd edition).

Harris and Winokuer are each both professors of thanatology and clinicians working actively with bereaved clients. Those dual perspectives inform this substantive text in the specialized practice of grief counseling. It offers readers baseline introductory concepts of counseling practices but within the unique context of loss and bereavement, whether by death or non-death loss. This new edition maintains their appreciation for the healthy, adaptive nature of the grieving process while newly including numerous practice examples throughout the book to anchor the theoretical concepts with realistic clinical situations. The fine instructional book ends each chapter with glossary terms, questions for reflection, and robust bibliographic references. The book is available digitally and qualified instructors have access to an Instructor’s Manual, Test Bank, and PowerPoint resources. It will continue to be an outstanding foundational text in classrooms and an insightful reading for continuing professional education.

Kaplan has written a workbook that encourages and enables readers to so deeply engage their experiences of loss and grief that they emerge renewed, moving toward the legacy of a transformed future. Drawing on her own multiple experiences of loss and her studies in mythic and symbolic awareness, Kaplan offers stories from her own and others' grief to conceptually frame the contours of the journey through loss. The last third of the book uses her four “cornerstones” (Story, Reflection, Vision, and Action) to guide readers to journal, reflect, engage with nature, use contemplative practices, explore dreams, and the like. These practices she terms *soulwork* and are key components in the deep spirituality that infuses this useful and engaging book.


Mangione and her co-author Donna DiCello have examined the wide territory of father loss grief as experienced by daughters through the particularity of Italian American perspectives. Drawing from her personal experience of the same and enriched by interviews with fifty-one other bereaved daughters, the book is organized in five parts that cover important meta-themes such as challenging stereotypes, early psychological development, connection and disconnection, dying and death, and the complexity and continuity embedded in the grieving process over time. It includes sixteen chapters and useful “Pause and Reflect” exercises end each of the major sections. Mangione not only uses her personal experience, but as a clinical psychologist and academic she includes a high level of clinical insight and draws from the professional literature, making this book useful well beyond the Italian American world.


Wolfelt offers this small book as a guide to mourners, drawing on his many years of accumulated insight into the grief and mourning process. In its brief 114 pages, he has distilled his concepts into accessible prose and engaging graphics so that “first aid” can be administrated effectively. The three parts (I: “Grieve;” II: “Mourn;” III: “Live”) offer a framework for grievers to triage their situation and apply not only first aid, but short-and long-term care strategies to healing. This book will be useful to new grievers finding their way through the emotional and spiritual wounds of loss to life and healing.
In Case You Missed It! Recent ADEC Webinars

Use of Therapeutic Exposure in Traumatic Grief Interventions
(The recording of this webinar, which was originally held on November 25, is now available for purchase.)

Dr. Alyssa A. Rheingold is a licensed clinical psychologist and Professor at the National Crime Victim's Research and Treatment Center (NCVC) within the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Medical University of South Carolina.

The webinar provides an overview of the role of avoidance in maintaining post-traumatic stress symptoms and discusses various approach-based strategies to assist traumatically bereaved persons in managing their symptoms.

Tending to Grieving Hearts through the Holidays: Self-care for Clients and Clinicians
(The recording of this webinar, which was originally held on December 19, will be available for purchase in late January.)

Lara Krawchuk, MSW, LCSW, MPH is owner and clinical director of Healing Concepts, LLC, a private counseling and consulting practice, in West Chester, Kennett Square and Philadelphia, PA. She is a long time Lecturer for the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy and Practice and the West Chester University MSW Program.

In this webinar, the relevance of ambiguous loss, secondary losses, countertransference, compassion fatigue, and parallel process related to holiday grief are discussed. Several concrete tools to creatively and meaningfully support self-care through the holiday season are explored, drawing on the concepts of meaning making, the continued bond, and the dual process model of grieving.

Both webinars are approved by the American Psychological Association (APA), the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB), the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), the Accreditation
Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) for 1.5 CE hours each.

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**Members' Corner**

ADEC *Members' Corner* is a regular column in ADEC Connects that highlights one or more members’ activity as an ADEC professional. *Members’ Corner* is open for contributions from all ADEC members; to be included, please send your article to Amanda Brace or Beverly Rollins.

**Debra Hester** announces the launch of “#empathyforgrief – Break the Silent Struggle With Grief” weekly podcast, blog, and streaming FM radio announcements. These grief support resources provide a free, mobile, on-the-go, alternative for people who are suffering in silence due to the death of a loved one. The weekly podcast, blog, and accompanying book, *My Backyard Garden, A Memoir of How Love Conquers Grief*, is available online. They can be downloaded and viewable on mobile devices. Learn more on the Mother's Backyard website.

On February 4, 2020, join grief expert **Rev. Paul Metzler, MDiv**, in an online chat as he discusses the topic, “When Well-Meaning Comments Make My Grief Worse.” The chat is free and open to the public and will be held from 1:00p-1:45pm ET on Tuesday, February 4. **Sign up for the chat today!**

**Rev. Susan M. Pfeil**, ADEC certified thanatologist in Norwalk, CT., recently published in Christianity Today/Pastors Special Issue (April 2019) an article on "Laying My Church to Rest: How I Learned to Process the Unique Grief of Closing a Church." It applies concepts of ambiguous loss and disenfranchised grief to the experience of a faith congregation deciding to close after 122 years due to irreversible loss of members. Susan is a Presbyterian pastor and licensed marriage and family therapist in addition to her ADEC membership.

**Gail Rubin** was instrumental in organizing the “Before I Die New Mexico Festival” in November. A record-breaking 1,800 people participated at 37 events over 8 days in Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Espanola, and Taos. Read more about it on the Before I Die NM website.

**Donna Schuurman** and members of The Dougy Center staff are excited to announce a new resource they have developed for families who have a family member living with an advanced serious illness. The Family Ties kit has been created to help kids, teens, and adults navigate this difficult time. Through activities, games, and practical information, the Family Ties kit can help families strengthen relationships, spark meaningful conversations, create lasting memories, and have fun too! It includes an activity journal for kids and teens, an adult guidebook with practical information and activities for families, the “Huddle or Hoopla” game, and heart note cards for sharing encouragement, advice, and words of support. You can find the Family Ties kit at The Dougy Center’s online bookstore.

**Dr. Alan Wolfelt** has announced publication of *Understanding Your Grief after a Drug-Overdose Death*. It is the latest in his Companion Press *Words of Hope and Healing* series of books which focus on grief and other loss-related topics. More information is available on the Center for Loss website.
Calling all Student and New Professionals!

Attend the Annual ADEC Conference for FREE
by winning best design for the 2020 Conference t-shirt contest!

Submit your design with the subject "ADEC T-Shirt 2020"
to Ashley Overman-Goldsmith at acoverma@ncsu.edu
no later than Saturday, February 1, 2020.

If your design is chosen by the SANP committee,
you will be notified by email
and will receive FREE admission
to the ADEC 2020 Conference in Columbus, Ohio!

All fund from t-shirt sales will be applied
towards future student and new professional scholarships

Contest Rules and Regulations

- Only one design will be selected by the committee.
- The winner will receive free admission to attend the ADEC 2020 conference.
- Professional design quality is not required for submissions; submissions will be judged by how well the concept represents the mission, vision, and values of ADEC.
- Multiple submissions from a single individual is not permitted.
- The design must be original - no copyrighted images are allowed.
- If the same design is submitted by multiple people, the committee will randomly select a winner.
- All submissions become the property of ADEC. By submitting your original design, you agree to release the ownership of the design and grant the copyright to ADEC.
- The contest is open to all students and new professionals who are interested in attending ADEC's annual conference. Contest submissions are not limited to current ADEC members.
Contact Connects

Connects is interested in your thoughts and work. Please reach out to us with content submissions, suggestions or ideas. For consideration in the February 2020 issue of Connects please submit your ideas/content by Friday, January 31, 2020.

Contact Us
Editor – Amanda Brace Ed.S, LSC, PCC-S
Assistant Editor – Beverly Rollins BSW, MGA, MA

Association for
Death Education and Counseling®
The Thanatology Association®

400 South 4th Street
Suite 745E
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55415