Hello ADEC members,

For this issue of ADEC Connects, there are several things we are excited to share regarding new or ongoing opportunities for our ADEC members!

The first, is that we are in the process of planning a half-day workshop for later this fall! Melanie Wright (chair of Professional Development) and myself are co-chairing this endeavor, with Isaiah Allen (ADEC Executive Director), and Peggy Whiting (our Vice President) rounding out our workshop planning group, in conjunction with members of the Professional Development Committee.

More details will be announced as arrangements and speakers are finalized, but it will include our mid-year Board of Directors “Wolfe Report,” several panel presentations on topics germane to our membership right now, and the opportunity to earn additional CEUs. So please stay tuned to your ADEC Happenings emails for further information.

The second, is that Joy Berger is working hard to connect volunteers with the various committees we need populated. In particular, we have a serious need for help on the Professional Development (especially webinars) and communications committees. You’ve heard the expression “see something, say something”? In this case, if you “want something” (through ADEC), “DO something” (for ADEC)! =)

The third, is a new initiative, proposed by Michelle Ramirez and the committee on Diversity. We would like to encourage any ADEC members who are performing outreach services in their local or extended communities to share what they are doing to help those in need! There are so many individuals and communities adversely affected by current events, yet we have amazing members who are diligently working to help support and encourage those around them…thus we would like to encourage and motivate one another by sharing about the work being done! Please send any writeups (pictures appreciated!) to Michelle at MRamirez@hopeforgrievers.com for potential inclusion in a future edition of ADEC Connects.

The fourth, is about self-care and was inspired by looking around at my students, friends and colleagues, reflecting on the numerous conversations had, and realizing I would be
remiss to not acknowledge that right now we are all counted among the ‘walking wounded.’
Yet that is what we are often called to do, especially within the helping and healing sciences. Tending to others and attempting to pull from a reservoir of emotional strength that hasn’t been replenished, now in part due to social distancing, higher workplace and family demands, and a political chasm, that if we step back, isn’t quite so divided when we focus on what makes us human.

But finding our Zen in the midst of 2020 feels a bit like picking a new color palette for the Titanic after she struck the iceberg. So often we preach to our patients, clients, students, congregants, and friends the importance of self-care, but are guilty of a bone-deep hypocrisy, that we don’t similarly tend ourselves, or afford ourselves the same compassion we so readily extend to one another. And what we do in attempt of self-care is not always caring, and not all coping mechanisms are adaptive…Netflix and chill, extra wine (hey, it’s not like we are driving, right?!?), and interrupted sleep patterns (that help us justify that little catnap here or there) feel good in the short term, but don’t serve us well in the long-term.

My question to each of you is: what are you doing to find your Zen? What projects, hobbies, or activities are edifying to your body, your mind, or your spirit? Are you mindfully replenishing your emotional reserves? I’m going to post this on Facebook, and would love to hear from our members what helps center each of you…what song, book passage, stretch, recipe, poem, or imagery keeps you going? What helps you find your balance?

Working out in my basement (thank you eBay for coming through when gyms were closed!), organizing cupboards, and cooking have become my escapes. Hoarding recipes, watching cooking shows (a.k.a. food porn in our house!), and dropping off contactless delivery care packages for local loved ones are what help me to maintain.

Of course, not only the humans in my world take advantage of my stress-cooking as you can see in this before/after picture of zucchini lasagna rolls: I say Tomato, Zoe says “Tomewato!”

Warmly,

Rebecca

*no furballs were physical or emotionally harmed in the making of this article

Cultural Sensitivity in Highly Concentrated Multicultural Areas
South Florida is a majority minority community and there are multiple ethnic cultures that meld to create a synergy of cultural assimilation. As the COVID 19 numbers continue to rise in the area it is important to understand the interpretation of the virus from each person’s cultural lens.

This can help to build togetherness during times of social ambiguity, social isolation, and political uncertainty. To hone in on current trends, Ashley Ferguson and Rochelle Clarke discuss the effects of COVID 19 and the Black Lives Matter Movement in South Florida among mental health clinicians working in healthcare.

You can read their insightful article by clicking the button below.

[Click here to read “Cultural Sensitivity in Highly Concentrated Multicultural Areas”]

**Grieving the State of the World**

Giving grief words, even metaphorical words, is often seen as integral to effective grieving processes. During the past year, well before Covid19, differing persons receiving support for individual or family losses, voiced that if they wake in the middle of the night or perseverate during the day about loss, it is not the personal, but the state of the world that is distressing. Some have asked if there are words or phrases for their experiences. To be clear, there was often a sub-theme for the grief they voiced: the planet itself could be in danger; divisive world leaders; wide
Here are some phrases or words I have found that may be useful when talking about losses related to the current state of the world:


**Grieving the Ineffable.** Defined in the dictionary as incapable of being expressed or described in words.

**Solastalgia.** Defined as derived from nostalgia. Solastalgia is a form of homesickness one gets when one is still at home, but the environment has been altered and feels unfamiliar.

Other phrases heard include ongoing grief; psychic instability; existential grief; and polarization anxiety.

Grief and bereavement care include acknowledging losses of any kind and aiding grievers in finding words for their losses. Add to my growing list.

**Featured Member Profile**

*Connects is featuring stories on selected individuals so that the ADEC community can get to know its members!*

Gordon Thornton, Ph.D., FT(ret) is a professor Emeritus at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. He taught the Psychology
Gordon Thornton, Ph.D., FT

of Death and Dying from 1975 until he retired in 2007. Dr. Thornton joined ADEC in 1977 and served as treasurer and later became president of ADEC. He received both the Service and Death Educator awards and was co-chair of three ADEC conferences. As Chair of the Credential Council he worked on the Body of Knowledge Committee that developed the matrix formulation and was a co editor on the first Handbook of Thanatology.

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

There were many folks in ADEC who played a role in forwarding my career. Collectively these professionals expanded my knowledge of Thanatology, provided insight to a non clinician about counseling the dying and bereaved, and encouraged aiding students and new professionals. Most importantly, these role models taught me that humor and hugs were very okay in our field. Obviously, many ADEC senior members were critical to my professional and personal development, however, if I had one name to choose it would be Dr. Hannelore Wass. She permitted me to have a sabbatical with her and involved me in an ADEC sponsored research project. She was a wonderful example of a dedicated and competent death educator.

What advice would you offer a more junior professional in the field on growing their career or keeping their work fresh?

Thinking of myself as a junior and naïve professional, I found the ADEC family to be the primary source for my career development. So my advice for new professionals is to become involved in ADEC and all it offers. Attend ADEC conferences where presentations provide cutting edge knowledge, theories, and research from experts in the field. Furthermore, enroll in the courses, workshops and webinars that ADEC provides. Network with junior and senior professionals. Plan to become ADEC certified. Volunteer for ADEC committees. There is much incidental learning in committees and they are a great source of connecting with others.

What do you think the future holds for your work and that of others like you? How will that impact what you do?

The future holds much promise for professionals in Thanatology. In the years since I joined ADEC, our organization has become very inclusive in the field including topics such as end of life issues, counseling the dying, traumatic grief, and different sources of bereavement (non death and ambiguous losses). New professionals need to help educate the public about Thanatology dispelling misinformation or mistaken perceptions. All of us will be challenged to adapt to crises in our society. For example, consider how the Pandemic has restricted the rituals and physical support that have helped the bereaved.

Student Profile

So that the ADEC community can get to know its students, Connects is featuring stories on
Hello, my name is Teresa J. Munro. I am honored to have been asked to share my bio with you. I am a single, 59 year old mother of five of which two are living at-home. I have one daughter born with Down Syndrome. I have lived in Maryland for the last 14 years and I am hoping to relocate to Washington State. While here in Maryland, I received my Bachelor’s degree in Health Service Management with Aging and Gerontology as a minor area of studies at the University of Maryland Global College.

Presently, we are faced with the COVID 19 Pandemic which behooves us to accept that loss is, and will continue to be, prevalent. We may not deny these losses. Indeed, both young and seasoned professionals need to expect loss and find the bravery and courage to forestall these losses. When my oldest daughter died of suicide one of my many counselors asked me how I got up each morning – my answer was “God.” God gave me this courage to carry on. Thank you.

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 mother is my role model that stood by me throughout my life. I miss her. She went back to school at the age of 48 and became an RN. There are so many reasons for choosing this career path; but, mostly because of my daughter Elizabeth, who died of suicide.

What advice would you offer a more junior professional in the field on growing their career or keeping their work fresh?

Try to live in the moment and remember the importance of the support you provide to others.

What do you think the future holds for your work and that of others like you? How will that impact what you do?

The full impact of the novel COVID 19 virus Pandemic is yet to be seen. I really would like to work in some outreach capacity, possibly housing and the homeless.

Professional Development Committee

To keep members abreast of what is happening within the ADEC committees, Connects is featuring articles discussing their latest activities.
Melanie Wright, MSW, FT, and Worth Kilcrease, MBA, MA, LPC, FT

The Professional Development Committee is charged with ensuring the continued professionalism of ADEC members and our community of peers through a variety of methods. It provides educational opportunities, so members stay abreast of the latest developments in Thanatology. We meet these objectives through the monthly ADEC webinar programming, geared towards offering CEUs. Jane Milman, chair of the Webinar Subcommittee, enlists established leaders within Thanatology to share their knowledge, clinical experience, and research findings with us electronically. Webinars are also a convenient way to earn CEUs for state licensing and CT/FT requirements.

Melanie Wright, incoming chair of the Professional Development Committee, has been the chair of the CEU Subcommittee and manages the provision of CEUs from various professional organizations. In 2019, she spearheaded the addition of ACCME to the list of accredited CEUs ADEC offers. This allows physicians to receive CMEs for taking part in ADEC programs and opens the door to develop a relationship with this sector of the medical community.

The Committee also strives to reflect the Body of Knowledge via the Handbook of Thanatology. Each of the twenty-three chapters has at least two contributors representing all major areas of the world: the Americas, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia. For the first time, this Handbook will be published by ADEC. Worth Kilcrease, the former chair of the Professional Development Committee and current Treasurer of the Association, is also the publishing manager for this project. He anticipates the new Handbook will be published in 2021 in time for introduction at the annual conference in Houston.

Click here to check out all the webinar offerings!

Member Stories
The work of a Hospice Chaplain is sacred work building mutual trust and working together to identify sources of hope and strength. We allow space to talk and prioritize the things that mean the most to the dying patient, while deepening connections.

A few years I was asked to visit “Todd.” On my first visit he sat quietly in his wheelchair with his head down. Initially, it appeared he wasn’t very social or interested in engaging in conversation; however, he invited me to sit down.

During our time together, I noticed a picture of him and on its frame the name of a prominent southern city was written. I asked him to tell me about that city. He lifted his head and started talking about his life, his love for that city, how he used to ride his bike through the streets.

He shared that he moved home because his father became ill and died. Todd shared about, his family, his joys and the hope he had even in the face of his own terminal illness. Todd and I spent over an hour together on that first visit. Before departing, I stepped into the kitchen to let Todd’s mother know that I would be leaving.

She turned to me, grabbed me by the shoulders, looked me in my eyes and said “I don’t know what you talked about and I don’t know what you said, but this is the first time in over a year that I’ve heard my son laugh. Thank you!” I visited with Todd regularly for the next two weeks. We continued laughing and talking. When he was no longer able to speak, I sat at his bedside and shared with him the memories he shared with me, leading to his peaceful life closure.”

This account is symbolic of the thousands of unique spiritual care visits taking place every day in small and large hospices across the United States and internationally in palliative programs across the globe. As colleagues who work in caregiving roles in dying, death and bereavement NHPCO and ADEC share so much.
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 Creative Toolkit for Working with Grief and Bereavement: A Practitioner's Guide with Activities and Worksheets**

Claudia Coenen offers a toolkit for working creatively with grieving clients and also a useful introduction to foundational Thanatology concepts. Part I includes succinct summaries of the early roots of grief studies, the rich array of current grief models, and a range of perspectives from which the bereavement process can be understood. In Part II Coenen, a strong proponent of creative grief expression, offers 30 copyrighted activity sheets for clinician use with clients in sessions or as take home assignments between sessions. These easily photocopied activity sheets offer clinicians somatic, reflective, and artistic expressive modes with which to engage clients. This toolkit will be a useful addition to those actively engaged in bereavement counseling.


**My Backyard Garden: A Memoir of How Love Conquers Grief**

Debra Hester offers a deeply loving, personal, and faith-focused memoir of the life and final times she shared with her mother. Appreciating that “when one of us grieves, all others are an extension of this grief and have connected roots” (p. v) she includes the many family members who comprise the circle of love and loss they shared when her mother died at age 96. The eight chapters of this book invite others into the metaphorical as well as real backyard gardens of their lives, which are built upon the reality of family interconnectedness. While Hester’s journey is very singular, her sharing in this book will be valued by others in their personal journey of grief.

*Denver, CO: Outskirtspress, 2018.*
Want to have your publication included in Connects?
Have your publisher send a copy (not just an announcement) of recent material (2018 - present) to:

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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:
Editor – Amanda Brace Ed.S, LSC, PCC-S
Assistant Editor – Beverly Rollins BSW, MGA, MA
Simone Brock, FT, Barbara Ross, CT, and Jamie Boshears, CT, have created virtual “Telegrief Support Groups” for Arkansas Hospice Bereavement. Simone and Jamie also continue to hold Death Cafes and have changed to a virtual format for the time being. (You can find “Death Café of Central Arkansas” on Facebook.)

Shannon Henry, MSW, LICSW, an outpatient mental health therapist with an interest in working with clients struggling with grief and loss, has started a grief skills and support group for young adults (ages 18–25) who have experienced the traumatic death of a love one. The clinic, CARE Counseling, that she works for has also supported her in starting a grief consultation group for clinicians who would like support to improve their clinical skills and share difficulties, ideas, and solutions. She has also been working with a colleague on a presentation to be delivered at various conferences that explores the experience of grief, loss, and bereavement that clinicians see in their professional practice.

Phyllis Kominsky was recently interviewed in Psychology Today regarding grief in the time of COVID 19. You can read her interview here.

Robert Neimeyer and Lauren Breen are looking to augment the Death Studies Editorial Board. If you are interested in finding out more and might be interested in joining the DST team in this capacity please contact Bob at neimeyer@portlandinstitute.org, or Lauren at Lauren.breen@curtin.edu.au.

Jacob S. Sawyer recently conducted a roundtable discussion on implications for death, dying, and bereavement for those who are neither religious nor spiritual at the annual Winter Roundtable conference at Teachers College, Columbia University. This included a summary of his research on bereavement outcomes for atheist people presented at the 78th Annual Conference of the American Humanists Association last summer, which can be found here.

Mary Alice Varga reports that the Southeastern Quilt and Textile Museum in Carrollton, Georgia right outside of Atlanta has an exhibit on "Sacred Threads" – an exhibition of quilts expressing life's journeys with focuses on joy, inspiration, spirituality, healing, grief, and peace. Also, the museum will soon have a virtual exhibit available in August called, "Making It Through – Sheltering in Place" featuring quilt pieces that folks have made during the Pandemic. You can see the quilts on the Museum’s website.

ADEC’s Certification/Recertification Process Moves to a Seamless On-Line System!

This new web based system ensures that all things “Credential” can be found in one place on ADEC’s website. This change also makes the application process more user friendly. Click the blue button below to access all things new including information and forms.

Click here to access ADEC's Credentialing Information and Forms
Why Join ADEC?

ADEC offers substantial membership benefits including:

- Online subscriptions to three professional journals – Omega: The Journal of Death and Dying; Death Studies; and Grief Matters, the journal of the Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement
- ADEC Connects
- The Thanatology NewsBrief
- Discounts to the annual conference
- Professional certification
- Professional recognition
- Connection with other ADEC members
- Professional development
- Networking
- Volunteer opportunities
- Tuition discounts
- Two free webinar recordings a year

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 October 2020 issue of Connects please submit your ideas/content by Wednesday, September 30, 2020.

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