PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

When I was growing up, my parents never talked about money with us kids. It’s a generational thing, maybe, but money is an uncomfortable topic for many of us – including me. So writing this message has stretched me out of my comfort zone.

Although the sky is not falling, the fact is that ADEC is having a number of financial struggles, and your Board is working to solve these issues. ADEC is not alone in this regard. Many membership associations are experiencing similar struggles. Membership in ADEC is trending down, and attendance at conferences are affected by budget cuts and the widespread wage stagnation in the United States. Although ADEC has reserves, we have been forced to dip into them this year to cover losses experienced at the Minneapolis conference due to low registration numbers.

In addition to cancelling the October face to face semi-annual Board meeting, we have cancelled the fourth issue of ADEC Forum because the current layout (intended for ink-on-paper publishing, the layout we have used for many years) is costly. The Communications Committee will be looking at ways to further cut costs in ADEC publications, and this may involve a revision of what ADEC Forum looks like. Revising the look of a publication, even within ADEC, is nothing new. ADEC Forum has undergone many revisions in its format over the decades, as the Board learned when examining past issues all the way back to the 1980s.

Cutting costs is important, of course, but it isn’t enough.

So as President I would like to challenge each and every member of ADEC.

First, I want to challenge you to make a donation to ADEC this summer, when cash flow is particularly tight. I just made my annual donation today. It’s easy. Go to the ADEC website, log in, and go to the "donate" tab. The amount you donate is not as important as the number of people who donate.

For example, if every member donates $100 this summer above and beyond membership dues in the fall (and I know many of you will join me in donating more than $100), that’s over $140,000! If you can’t donate $100 then donate whatever you can afford. If you can’t afford to donate, urge a colleague (or two or three) to join ADEC – sweeten the prospect by telling your colleagues about the great new member benefits we are launching with this issue of ADEC Connects!

Second, I want to challenge those ADEC members who regularly do paid speaking engagements, keynote addresses and workshops on dying, death, grief and loss to donate a portion or all of your fee from one speaking engagement to ADEC. If you are like me, then attending the ADEC conference feeds your soul and helps you stay apprised of the cutting edge of the discipline. My presentations are improved because of what I learn at ADEC conferences, and I have donated a portion of one of my speaking engagements this year.

Finally (and I know I said it before), consider volunteering with a new committee. As I mentioned in my ADEC Forum message, the Fundraising and Donor Development Committee has no Chairperson. The Chairperson we seek has a lot of experience in
fundraising and grant-writing, and is someone who knows how to think outside the box with respect to the kinds of grants ADEC might be able to attract. Grants can sometimes provide new and expanded member benefits.

There are other new committees seeking assistance as well. For example, if you have solid business experience, consider working with our new Business Planning Committee whose task is to create a business-savvy culture within ADEC. Part of their work includes developing a standardized business planning template for all ADEC programs consistent with ADEC’s mission. Another new committee that would benefit from your ideas and input is the Organizational Partnerships Committee, whose task is to develop articulation agreements with organizations both inside and outside of the United States who share common values and goals. These kinds of partnerships can and do provide additional member benefits.

And, I want to thank each and every member who has sent me, members of the Board, or Kellen their ideas and thoughts on how to help ADEC achieve its goal of financial sustainability and wellness this year and in the future. When your suggestions come in to me as President, I make sure they are forwarded on to the appropriate committee chair. Members can email committee chairs directly – their email addresses are listed on the ADEC webpage. Not every suggestion will be implemented, but I assure you that all of them are considered thoughtfully and seriously.

Janet McCord, PhD, FT
President
ADEC

PRESENT IN PORTLAND!

The deadline is approaching to apply to share your expertise and work with thanatology professionals at the 2017 ADEC Annual Conference, April 5-8 in Portland, Oregon. The deadline is September 9, 2016. ADEC is seeking submissions on a breadth of topics related to death, dying and bereavement. Choose from a variety of presentation types varying from 15 minutes to 90. This is your chance to share your work and your passion with friends and colleagues in gorgeous Portland. Find out more details by clicking the button below.
TALKING TO YOUR CLIENTS ABOUT ONLINE GRIEF SUPPORT

By Litsa Williams and Eleanor Haley

As mental health professionals and writers of the grief website, "What's Your Grief" (WYG), we see more and more people take to the Internet every day searching for information about grief. Although it's hard to quantify, in the last twelve months grief searches on search engines brought 1,022,007 people to WYG and social media brought 400,000 more. When you consider that WYG is just one of thousands of websites providing information about grief, the numbers are staggering.

While some people go to the Internet in lieu of seeking in-person treatment, many use it as a supplemental source of support and information. For this reason it's important to talk with clients about their use of online grief support. The following are a few basic tips about seeking online grief support.

When seeking online grief support, you should:

Never . . .

- Agree to meet someone you met online alone or in a private environment.
- Believe individuals who say they can cure your grief.
- Believe a site that claims to be the only source of information on a topic or therapy.
- Seek therapy from someone who is not a therapist.

Be cautious . . .

- When exchanging money for any reason.
- When taking advice from others. Remember, what works for one person may not work for everyone.
- When engaging in online forums and groups that are not moderated.

Always . . .

- Look for evidence that a site and its authors are credible sources.
- Remember there are many different theories about grief, therapies that can be effective in helping people in their grief, and ways to cope.
- Look for research and links to outside sources.

STUDENT PROFILE, BRYAN E. WRIGHT

So that the ADEC community can get to know its students, ADEC Connects will continue to feature stories on ADEC scholarship recipients.

Bryan E. Wright is a Master's degree candidate in thanatology at Marian University. While his interest in and knowledge of world cultural and spiritual customs has broadened during his graduate studies, his interest in the topic is not new. As founder and editor of "The Search for Breadcrumbs," an online community devoted to the exploration and promotion of everyday mindfulness, Wright explored and encouraged open discussion of a variety of traditions with followers all over the world. A passionate student of Eastern and tribal contemplative methods, traditional and post-tribal shamanic practices, and ancient collaborative healing modalities, Wright has worked in private practice since 2012 to help groups and individuals navigate change and loss in conscious, mindful ways. More recently, Wright has worked with a hospice organization in Cincinnati to support bereavement and spiritual care programs. Upon completion of his graduate studies at Marian, he intends to pursue his chaplaincy and pastoral education (CPE) certification. Wright holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Kentucky and currently lives with his wife and two sons in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Do you have a mentor/role model who has significantly affected your career path in thanatology? Tell us why you chose this career path.
Like many others, this path found me following a series of profound losses – a series of deaths in the family, the loss of a marriage, the loss of a long-term job, etc. So, I had a loss-and-adaptation narrative that was seeking a constructive outlet. For many years, however, I had already been seeking a Master’s degree program that would help me make a career transition into a life of service. I knew I wanted something that integrated elements of teaching, counseling, spirituality, philosophy, and cultural studies. When I discovered the graduate program in thanatology at Marian University, I immediately thought to myself, "That's it!" As my studies have progressed, and as I have begun applying my knowledge in more practical settings (hospice work, bereavement support, one-on-one spiritual care, mindfulness coaching), I have been delighted and gratified each day with my choice. And I have to acknowledge a few professors and scholars, in particular – Janet McCord, Brad DeFord, Bill Hoy – who have helped keep me moving forward. Their patience, personal support, generosity, and vast wisdom have been gifts I can never repay.

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

While a degree program in thanatology primarily deals with the end of life, the most relevant work in research and program development will always be done with an eye toward the living. Keep the field of thanatology moving forward by avoiding the temptation to focus too much on death and dying. I've heard people say, "The dead pretty much take care of themselves." So, look for ways to use the knowledge of thanatology to make life more meaningful and satisfying for the people who have to keep on making sense of this world.

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

I am certainly not in the business of predicting the future, but what I would like to see is for thanatological study to go more deeply back to the roots of human experience for guidance. That is, I believe much of the new wisdom we seek with regard to death and dying – or even just loss and grief – is already out there in the consciousness of our world’s most ancient cultures but has, sadly, been lost in Western society's rush to invent, individualize, and modernize. For example, look at the American Indian tradition of "keeping the soul," which is a ceremonial way of marking a 12-month period of grief following a death in the immediate family. This tradition has parallels throughout the world and has, for thousands of years, suggested that a year-long period of bereavement is both normal and healthy, yet, it is only just now that contemporary research has begun to validate the wisdom of our ancestors. Meanwhile, we live and work in a society that expects us to return to work in three days and which offers us little support following the initial "casserole caravan," as Bill Hoy describes it. The bulk of my research-to-date has focused on this phenomenon, and, moving forward, I am looking for ways to re-discover, advocate for, and incorporate some of these ancient practices into modern application in support of individuals who are mourning profound losses, both death-related and non-death related.

OUTDOORS IN PORTLAND

Registration for the 2017 ADEC Annual Conference in Portland, Oregon will open in just a few weeks. In run up to the conference, ADEC Connects will be featuring some of the amazing scenery and activities Portland has to offer.

Silver Falls State Park — Silver Falls is known for its magnificent waterfalls and is the largest park in Oregon at over 9,200 acres. After a few days at the luxurious Marriott, try camping out at the park.

Read More

Multnomah Falls — In a state where water regularly flows down from upon high, Multnomah Falls — all 620 feet (189 m)
of it — stands above the rest as Oregon’s tallest waterfall. Located just 30 miles (48 km) east of downtown Portland along the Historic Columbia River Highway, the two-drop cascade attracts visitors of all types and ages.

Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden — Botanical gardens located in southeast Portland. What started as a rhododendron test garden has blossomed into a gorgeous sprawling gardens featuring an abundance of wildlife, plants, a lake, paved paths and small waterfalls.

WHAT’S NEW FROM ADEC MEMBERS

By the Rev. Paul A. Metzler, D.Min.


Bissler, Goldstrohm and Kosminsky teamed up to produce an adult coloring book that offers creative and soothing opportunities to both attend to grief and turn away from grief. They posit that this type of flexible attention is conducive to the healing process following a loss and that the creative process of coloring provides access to emotions, reduction of anxiety and effective processing of grief. The coloring book is organized around five core concepts: Connect to your memories; Open to your emotions; Let go of all judgment; Ongoing connections; Reinvent yourself. There has been enormous growth in the adult coloring book industry in the USA and elsewhere in recent years. This suggests that the desire for and use of this expressive medium is strong and this book can have useful application for those in grief.


Doka has written a helpful guide for grieving persons that offers clear information, informed perspective and genuine encouragement for what he terms the lifelong but hopeful journey of grief. The fourteen chapters are grouped in four sections (Part 1: The Journey of Grief; Part 2: The Many Losses in Life; Part 3: The Unacknowledged Losses of Life: Disenfranchised Grief; Part 4: Helping Yourself – and Others. While most of Doka’s many published works have been for professionals in the field, this one is clearly a self-help book for grievers. It includes many illustrative stories and demonstrates a wide familiarity with the thanatological literature. His section on disenfranchised grief and his chapter on meaningful rituals bring into focus topics often ignored or treated lightly in similar literature designed to directly help grievers. This thorough guide will enable many grievers to sort things out themselves or identify roadblocks in their journey for which they need professional help.


Straub has issued a second edition of her interesting and useful Workbook that provides a wealth of resources for educational programs, including engaging exercises, as well as perspectives for personal healing on the journey of loss and grief. Part One, Primer on Death, includes thirteen chapters spanning topics from death education to dying and grieving processes, cultural, legal and ethical considerations. Part Two, The End, includes
EARN YOUR CERTIFICATION

Summer is coming to a close, and with it your window to submit your application to become a certified thanatologist through ADEC’s Certification in Thanatology program. September 17 is the deadline to apply to earn your CT. The exam will be November 5.

If you're already a CT, now is the time to step up and become a Fellow in Thanatology (FT), ADEC's most prestigious distinction.

CTs and FTs should recertify every three years. Visit the ADEC website to view the guidelines and learn how to recertify in 2016.

STUDENT AWARDS

The awards application submission site for the 2017 ADEC Annual Conference is now open.

Student Paper Awards

ADEC invites the submission of student papers to be considered for one of three awards:

- The Undergraduate Student Paper Award established in memory of Mary E. Brown, a former Canadian member of the Association and educator.
- The Graduate Paper Award, established in memory of Richard Kalish.
- The Cross Cultural Student Paper Award, dedicated to the memory of Dr. Hannelore Wass, a founder of ADEC and significant contributor to the field of thanatology. This award encourages graduate and undergraduate students to submit papers dealing with cross-cultural and individual differences in dying and death.

Student Conference Scholarships

The Student Scholarship Committee announces a call for applications for Student Conference Scholarships for the 2017 Annual Conference in Portland, OR, USA. The award consists of payment for conference registration (contingent upon conference attendance) and one-year student membership in ADEC (for new members only). Students will be asked to complete four hours of volunteer services while at the conference.
MEMBER CORNER

Death Notification: Long-time ADEC member Robert Fulton died on July 29, 2016. His obituary can be accessed online where condolences to the family can be posted. Robert Fulton contributed in important ways to the field of thanatology and was recently awarded the ADEC Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2016 ADEC Annual Conference. We will remember him fondly.

Research Request: Dr. Sabine Gerhardt of the University of Akron and Dr. Claudia Sadler-Gerhardt of Ashland University are seeking your assistance in recruiting participants for their qualitative investigation about the experiences of young adults (20-40 years old) who have lost a spouse or partner to death within the past 5 years. They plan for an initial interview of 90 minutes, in-person or via computer video, with the option of a follow up phone call within a couple of weeks. There is very little literature on the needs of young widowed adults, and they recognize that, although some grief reactions are similar regardless of age, the needs of young adults who are starting vocations and possibly raising young children are much different.

If you know someone who meets the criteria (widowed within the past 5 years and between the ages of 20 to 40) who would agree to participate, please contact either Dr. Gerhardt at sef2@uakron.edu or Dr. Sadler-Gerhardt at cgerhard@ashland.edu. They would appreciate your forwarding this request to any clients, students, or colleagues who might meet the criteria. Also, please feel free to contact either of them if you have questions.

This research has been approved by both the University of Akron IRB (#20160323) and Ashland University’s HSRB (#4-12-16-#081).

FEATURED UPCOMING EVENT
Attachment Informed Grief Therapy - Perspectives on the Therapeutic Relationship
John Jordan, PhD
Wednesday, September 21, 2016
12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. CDT

ADEC CONNECTS
ADEC Connects is interested in your thoughts and work. Please reach out to us with content submissions, suggestions or ideas.

CONTACT US
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