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Friday, May 27, 2016

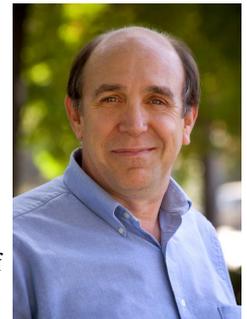
Hospice of San Luis Obispo County

### Working with Grief & Loss

This month our speaker is **Anthony (Tony) Huffaker, LMFT**, Director of Counseling at Hospice of San Luis Obispo County. Tony will take us on a journey to explore some of the questions around grief, such as:

- What is grief and what does it look like?
- What are the differences between grief and depression?
- Are there theories of grief?
- What exactly is grief counseling?
- What services are available through Hospice of SLO County?

ing with death and loss are less available to us than before. Okun and Nowinski call this the “new grief,” and one of our challenges as therapists is to help families during and after this potentially extended process.



Many people, including therapists, feel uncomfortable discussing grief, and view it as a “heavy” topic. There

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### President's Column

Hello!

Hope you are having a wonderful spring! The rains have really helped our lovely area look beautiful with the lush green vegetation and beautiful wildflowers!



To give you a short update, we recently had our Law and Ethics work-

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#### DATE

Friday, May 27, 2016

#### TIME

9:00–11:00am  
(for longer socialization,  
you may arrive at 8:30!)

#### LOCATION

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

#### COST

\*Free\* or 2 CEUs \$20 Chapter Members,  
2 CEUs \$25 Non-Chapter Members

#### Meeting

#### Location & Directions

**Unitarian Universalist Fellowship**  
2201 Lawton Avenue  
San Luis Obispo, CA

UUF is located on South Street between Higuera and Broad in San Luis Obispo. It is just east of Meadow Park. You may turn on Lawton or on Meadow to park in the lot.

Although grief is a universal process, it's also experienced uniquely by each individual – no two people experience grief the same way. Medicine has extended our lifespans, but also altered the way we die, often greatly lengthening the process of dying. At the same time, death often occurs in a hospital rather than a home setting. One result is that we often aren't exposed to death until adulthood. Concurrently, as many of our traditional community and religious settings become fragmented and less influential, rituals for deal-

## Central Coast CAMFT 2016 Board of Directors

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## Central Coast CAMFT 2016 Program Dates

Please note that our meetings are on the 4th Friday of the month with the exception of November, when our meeting is on the 3rd Friday.

**May 27** Working with Grief & Loss

**July 22, September 23 & November 18, 2016**—Programs TBA



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shop and I must say it was very good. Dave Jensen does such a great job of providing us with information that is practical and applicable to our work, and he does so in a way that is engaging and fun. If you didn't attend this year—or even if you did—I encourage you to attend next year; it is very helpful and well worth it.

I need to put it out there again, we will be needing someone to take on the role of President next year. My two-year term will be up and a successor is vital to keeping the Board active in our community. It is great experience for someone who is wanting to expand their leadership skills, while being very supported by

## President's Column

the entire Board. This position does not take a lot of time commitment, but it does take some. However, you will be gaining really good experience and have the opportunity to get to know some really great people. If you are interested in learning more about the role please contact me via email and I will be happy to talk with you. We need my successor to start on the Board as soon as possible in the President-Elect position so you can see how things work prior to starting your position. If you are at all thinking about it, then take that leap and contact me.

Hope to see you at our next training in May!

*Susan Harney, LMFT  
Chapter President*

## May Meeting: Working with Grief & Loss

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are many attempts to bring information to the public in a lighter, more accessible way. Websites like “Modern Loss” and “What’s Your Grief” are two examples. Gail Rubin, the self-styled “Doyenne of Death,” on her website “A Good Goodbye,” discusses the “Frozen Dead Guy Days” celebration in Nederland, Colorado. The “Go Wish” card game helps people set their priorities for end of life choices. Having information about death helps therapists normalize and validate their clients’ experiences.

Educating people about death and dying is a large part of the mission of Hospice of SLO County. For over 38 years as a volunteer hospice, Hospice SLO has continued to offer nonmedical services free of charge



through the dedication and support of professional and hospice trained volunteers. Tony will discuss some of the services available through Hospice of SLO County, including in-home volunteers, Reiki services, the Threshold Choir and Pet Peace of Mind, as well as individual and support group grief counseling.

Hope to see you on May 27<sup>th</sup>. To paraphrase Rubin’s catchphrase: just as talking about sex won’t make you pregnant, talking about grief won’t make you dead!

## Behind the Scenes, Part I

Your 2016 Board members are special. They are also busy and less than inclined to speak of themselves! When I first asked them, at our recent “welcome to the board” dinner at Apple Farm, to write a blurb about themselves for the newsletter that had nothing to do with their profession, I was met with Bambi times six! Their eyes held a hint of panic. Upon reflection, I thought perhaps directing them a bit would take the pressure off, so I offered up two questions for them to answer: (1) What was your most recent vacation, and (2) How do you nourish/nurture/restore yourself? Here are a few responses...more in upcoming issues of the newsletter!

### Pam Miller

When the suggestion was made to write a blurb about our recent travel adventure or to write about self-care for the newsletter, my first thought was, “Oh hell no!” What can I say Vegas or self-care that would be of interest? There isn’t much about Vegas that I find redeeming. My self-care methods are the same methods we recommend to our clients. Despite my resistance, this assignment has been a gift to me. Writing this has turned out to be a great exercise in self-care.

There is little value to the content of our trip. Just as in a clinical setting, most of the value is beneath the content of the session and is found within the process. Our “process” is the unspoken, the interactions, the cultural, family roles and way we deal with things. Writing forced me to look longer and deeper, exploring meaning.

Our Vegas trip is the way we honor my mother-in-law on her birthday. She turns 87 this week so we celebrated. Since she speaks Japanese, I just guess what most of the conversations are about. I am pretty much the “tag along.” For years, I sat playing penny slot machines, smiling and clapping when my mother-in-law wins. Always wishing, I could communicate and wondering if she understands how much I honor and respect her or how much I love her son.



This year as in all previous years, she shows me her muscles, she shows me how fast and far she can walk, and says in her limited English “healthy.” She hugs her 89-year-old sweetheart to show me she is happy. She slips me gambling money when no one is looking. Somehow she lets me know to take care of her son, that he is overweight, and that I should not eat sugar. We don’t speak about the fact that it was my father who dropped the last bombs over Tokyo when she was a girl, or of the many struggles of her life.

It was all the same this year but nothing was the same! We did not speak of liver cancer, biopsies or explain hospice. We did not speak of last birthdays or last trips. There was no space or interest in talking feelings. But the unspoken was with us in the casino and at the dinner table. For me there was respect for her process, gratitude for the ability to look beyond the content and to reflect. There is also gratitude for having spent one more birthday in Vegas!

### Cheri Love

After finally becoming licensed in July 2015, I decided to fulfill my lifelong dream of studying the cello, something I had wanted to do since middle school. Unfortunately my high school did not have an orchestra. I began studying with a teacher in Los Osos and just completed practicing 100 days in a row. Most days I love to



play. However, as an adult learner it is easy to feel frustrated and discouraged. This video is a good reminder of being in the moment and accepting where I am as a player:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8q7ytYZ-Ke8>

My goal is to one day play with the San Luis Chamber Orchestra.

### Kim Richards

My favorite self-care practice is yoga. Depending on my mood and what my mind and body need, I sometimes like restorative yoga to help soothe the nervous system and other times Vinyasa yoga to build strength and move energy. I also enjoy the kind community that yoga provides.



### Jill Pesavento

My favorite self-care practice is to put in an audible book on my iPhone and walk Laguna Lake park. The open vistas allow my imagination to transport itself to the story and moving my body is a great antidote to sitting all day.

My most recent vacation was to Yosemite National Park last October, where I hiked North Dome and saw the effects of our drought on that area. I look forward to going back and seeing Yosemite Falls active again.

