

TRANSCRIPT OF MEDIA- National conversations starting to make grieving OK, especially during the holidays

Amy Brooke, licensed clinical professional counselor, OSF HealthCare

Anderson Cooper's podcast is opening up national conversations about grief.

"I think it's a great thing that they were talking about it, because a lot of times people who are grieving feel very alone and isolated and they're afraid of doing it wrong, and so what the podcast does is it helps people see how things are similar and even how people grieve differently." (:22)

Talking about loved ones, no matter how much time has passed, can be an important part of healing and remembrance, Brooke emphasizes.

"A lot of times, when people are grieving, they sometimes feel like they're bothering people if they talk about it, because 'Oh, my mom died a year ago. I shouldn't still be talking about her,' but what the podcast does, it says, 'No, it's okay to talk about it if it's 20 years ago.'" (:20)

Allowing people to share memories and talk about their loved one is important to helping them honor that loving relationship.

"What it does is it makes it about transforming the loss rather than removing the person. We don't want to remove the person from our lives. We're grieving them because they were so important to us. Why would we want to get rid of them?" (:16)

Support groups, she adds, provide a unique type of connection that friends and family sometimes cannot, especially for people who fear burdening those closest to them.

"It is very different than talking to your friends, because a lot of times with our friends, we're afraid we're burdening them, where, with a support group, you have time set aside to actually talk about that person, and even if you're not talking about it, you're listening to somebody else, and you're giving that support to them, which can feel really good if you feel like you've just been taking." (:24)

Brooke advises people grieving to be gentle with themselves and lower expectations.

"The energy we put into trying to make it the same is kind of harmful, because we're using all of our energy to really try to do something that's impossible." (:15)

Society puts unrealistic expectations on grief.

"We put a time limit on grief, and for example, if someone's mother dies, we say you actually have three days off to deal with that grief, and three days is not enough time to deal with a loss. (:16)