



CARNEVALE JONES GROUP



Support Practices Adapted for the Challenging Era

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New Task Force Publishes Guidance for Coping with Loss During the Pandemic

**GriefSPACE™ generates content to educate and support the bereaved,
their loved ones, and all involved in the grief process**

Orlando, FL. (May 26, 2020) - With the increasing number of deaths from COVID-19 and other causes, our nation is struggling to understand how to lay loved ones to rest and mourn their loss without the comforting physical presence of family and friends. [GriefSPACE \(www.internationalgriefinstitute.com/griefspace\)](http://www.internationalgriefinstitute.com/griefspace), a nationwide task force, was launched with the mission to develop, curate and share recommendations for end-of-life care, funerals and grief support adapted for the pandemic era.

Tasked with developing helpful content for those faced with saying goodbye to loved ones during the pandemic and for their support circles, GriefSPACE was created by [Joanne Fink](#) and [Lynda Cheldelin Fell](#). Fink is a world-renowned designer, inspirational speaker, grief educator and bestselling author, who lives in Orlando. Cheldelin Fell is a national grief educator, founding partner of [International Grief Institute](#), and bestselling author of 35 grief-related books who hails from the Seattle area.

The duo invited experts spanning the funeral, grief support, crisis management, mental health, ministry, and academia fields to join the collaboration. The resulting resources offer advice and strategies on what to do after losing a loved one, including managing immediate tasks, self-care, how to support the bereaved, and more. A soul-boosting section includes prayers, poems, and other resources to provide comfort in the aftermath.

Fink and Cheldelin Fell are no strangers to profound grief. Fink lost her 53-year-old husband in 2011, when he had a fatal heart attack two days before their son's 12th birthday. Dealing with this sudden loss inspired Fink to devote her energy and her heart to write a book, *When You Lose Someone You Love* and to use her artistic gifts to design memorial art and other offerings to support the bereaved. She leads a widows' support group and recently introduced a Widow-Buddy program to partner widows who can support each other during COVID-19.

After volunteering as a firefighter/EMT for 7 years, Cheldelin Fell lost her 15-year-old daughter in 2009, in a car accident. Feeling alone and isolated, she started the radio show, *Grief Diaries*, in 2014, to open the dialogue about grief. She went on to host the National Grief & Hope Convention in 2015, created the largest award-winning anthology series on loss, and founded the International Grief Institute to help organizations invest in community resilience.

"As a grief educator, people often ask me what to do when they, or someone they know, loses a loved one. Until recently I have been able to advise them—but the pandemic changed everything!" Fink shared. "In mid-March I got five phone calls in less than two days from people who were anticipating or had experienced the death of a loved one—and I didn't know what to tell them. How can we support the bereaved during social distancing when we can't attend the funeral, pay a condolence call, be together to hug and share stories and remember the deceased?" Fink said. "I'm fairly active in the grief world, and I didn't see anyone sharing information on how we, as a society, could deal with grief during the pandemic and knew that the need for this information would be critical in the weeks and months ahead. I

also knew that I was not capable of figuring this out on my own, so I reached out to my friend and colleague, Lynda Cheldelin Fell, and GriefSPACE is the result.”

Little did Fink know that she would lose a dear cousin and close friend to COVID-19 and then rely upon the very words she and her collaborators wrote, shortly after GriefSPACE launched.

"Even during a pandemic, we continue to live in a largely griefphobic society, leaving mourners feeling more isolated," says Cheldelin Fell. "It's important for families to know that although we're physically distant, we're still connected. The GriefSPACE resources are a beautiful collaborative effort to support people and empower them with practices adapted for social distancing and beyond."

For information about GriefSPACE, please visit www.internationalgriefinstitute.com/griefspace. To request an interview, contact Diane Carnevale Jones at 616.446.6833 or diane@cjonesgroup.com.

ABOUT GriefSPACE™

GriefSPACE (Support Practices Adapted for this Challenging Era), was founded in March 2020 in response to the need for new ways to support the bereaved during COVID-19. Launched by Joanne Fink and Lynda Cheldelin Fell, in conjunction with subject matter experts and an advisory board, the mission of GriefSPACE is to develop, curate and share recommendations for end-of-life care, funerals and grief support, adapted for the pandemic era.