



A BREATH OF *Fresh Air* WITH TAPS OUTDOORS

Seasons of Grief • December 2020



DECEMBER THEME: SEASONS OF GRIEF

WEEK 1: DECEMBER 2 – 8

ACTIVITY: SEASON OF DARKNESS

We are welcoming a new theme, Seasons of Grief, on our ninth episode of [A Breath of Fresh Air](#) with #TAPSOudors. During this week we are exploring the *Season of Darkness* in our grief by exploring dark spaces and places in nature.

There are many seasons we experience in our grief, and winter can bring a multitude of challenges from [navigating the holidays](#) without our loved ones to the [impacts of colder weather](#).

As we begin exploring these season, we want you to know that your TAPS family is here for you beyond A Breath of Fresh Air.

At TAPS we have resources to support you in every season of your grief with access to [local counseling services](#), peer outreach through our [Survivor Care Team](#), [education](#) and [casework services](#), and a wealth of [publications](#) and [more](#). We are available to you 24/7 through our Helpline at **1(800)959-8277**.

Seasons of Darkness in our grief are inevitable. These seasons both in nature and in our grief require a different set of tools to get us through these times. We need more warmth, more protection and new ways to see in the darkness.

In this week's activity, we invite you to become curious about the perceptions you have of dark spaces in nature and in your grief. Below we've shared a few easy activities and questions to ponder while exploring the natural world or in reflection of your nature experiences.

3 Outdoor Activities that Explore Dark Spaces:

1. **Take a stroll underneath the stars.** Taking a moment to go outdoors at night can open new

perspectives to what we experience during "normal, daylight hours." Just like in our grief, we often only move around in the light and retreat with darkness. As we step outside under the stars, they invite us to be curious about *moments of illumination in the dark*.

2. **Do a mindfulness walk around your natural environment looking at and in dark spaces.** Even in the light of day, there are dark spaces and moments. Tucked under bushes, hiding in holy trees, covered by clouds, waves of missed moments with our loved ones; nestled in these dark places there is the ember of life. We have the dark moments amidst the daylight, and this mindfulness walk can invite curiosity for these yin yang moments.
3. **Journal about a nature experience.** The simple action of pausing and writing in the *present moment* requires us to quiet the mind of daily tasks and just *be* where we are in nature and allows curiosity to arise.

Questions to ponder as you explore:

- What do I feel when I hear the word "darkness"?
- What emotions do I feel when I'm in the dark outside and in my heart and mind?
- What do I need when I'm in the dark?
- Who and what illuminates the darkness?
- When do I need or want that illumination?
- What are gifts of dark times? How can I use these gifts to foster growth?

When you're ready, remember you can share your experience with us by taking a photo or video and sharing it using #TAPSOudors or email us at expeditions@taps.org.

Read More about Navigating Dark Seasons of Grief

This week we've collected a few different articles and resources to support you in your exploration of the dark seasons of grief.

- First and foremost, know that your TAPS family is here for you 24/7 through our Helpline at **1(800) 959-8277**.
- [Read Lessons from the Hundred Acre Wood](#) and more from the **TAPS 2020 Winter Magazine**.
- **Read the article [United Through Darkness, Shining Together](#)** from a TAPS Expedition.
- **Learn from other survivors** in [Making Plans for the Holidays](#) as you do the same for yourself and family.
- **Register for our upcoming TAPS Institute for Hope & Healing webinar** on [Healing Trauma and Finding Hope in the Outdoors](#) with Dr. Christine Norton.

LEARN MORE AT [TAPS.ORG/OUTDOORS](https://taps.org/outdoors)

