

Occupational Therapy and Healthy Bereavement: The Occupation of Remembering

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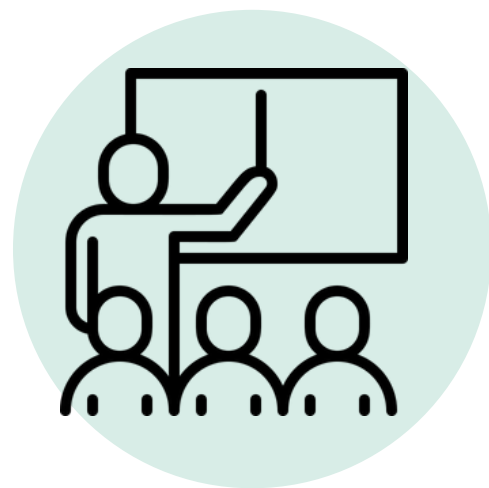
Roles and Occupations



Occupational Therapist



Partner/Parent



Assistant Professor



Minnesota
peaceful protester



Ordained United
Methodist Clergy



Knitter

Objectives:

OT and Healthy Bereavement

- Describe healthy bereavement and OTs role working with grieving individuals.
- Identify occupation-based interventions that support healthy bereavement across the lifespan through a case study.

Priority #1: YOU

- Grief can sneak up on us unexpectedly
- Listen to your body, mind, and spirit
- Take care of yourself, so that you can offer care to others

AOTA Position Statement

(AOTA, 2023)

End-of-Life Care

- Framework for role of OTs/COTAs
- Emphasis on interprofessional care
- Death = normal part of life
- Focus on quality of life and meaningful participation

3 barriers in OT

- Limited training on death and bereavement
- Varying levels of comfort
- Lack of knowledge of OT/COTA role and insurance coverage

OT's and OTA's can

- Provide care in palliative and hospice settings
- Focus on identifying meaningful occupations
- Emphasize occupational participation over performance
- Support families in healthy grieving through legacy projects
- Support IADL skills the bereaved might need to take on for the first time.

(AOTA, 2023; Chow & Pickens, 2020))

Case Study



This is Jen. She is a Navy chaplain.



Jen met and fell in love with Steve, who was also in the Navy.



Baby Thaddeus
joined Jen and
Steve.

New mom occupations

- Coffee
- Shopping
- Baby carrying



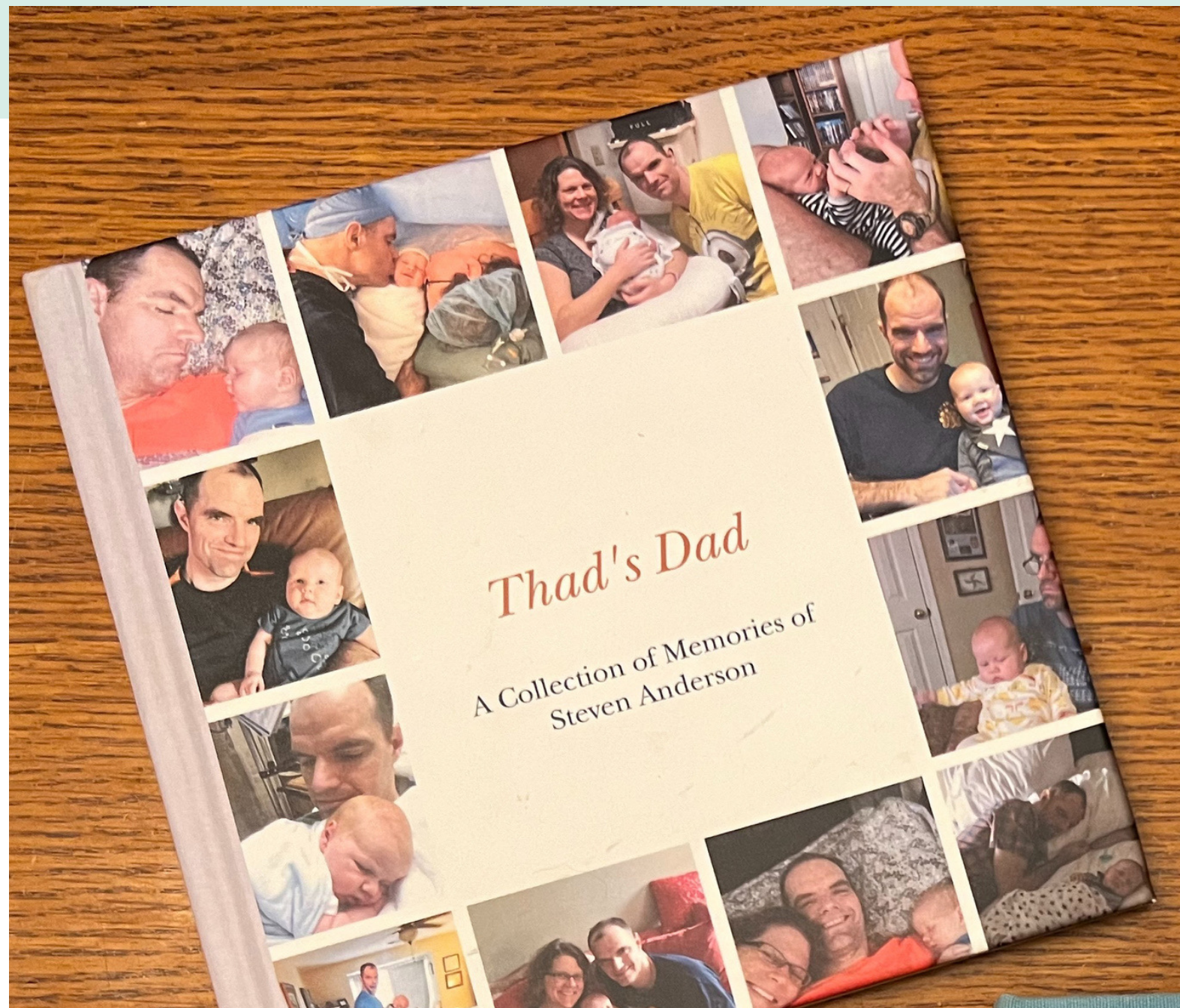
6 months later...



How can Thadddeus begin to know his dad?



Storytelling is important



Rituals of Remembrance



Annual Traditions



9 years later...





References

- American Occupational Therapy Association. (2023). Position Statement–End-of-life care and the role of occupational therapy. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 77(Suppl. 3), 7713410210. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2023.77S3002>
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- Institute of Medicine. (2015). *Dying in America: Improving quality and honoring individual preferences near the end of life*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/18748>.