



NAVIGATING GRIEF

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HELP

SUPPORT

ADVICE

GUIDANCE



Our partners represent more than 80 organizations that bring expertise and evidence-based strategies in compassionate care for individuals, families, and professionals impacted by illness, trauma, homicide, overdose, suicide, and pregnancy loss serving families and children grieving prenatal through adult deaths.





WHAT BROUGHT YOU HERE TODAY?



Holding Space For Both Grief And Joy

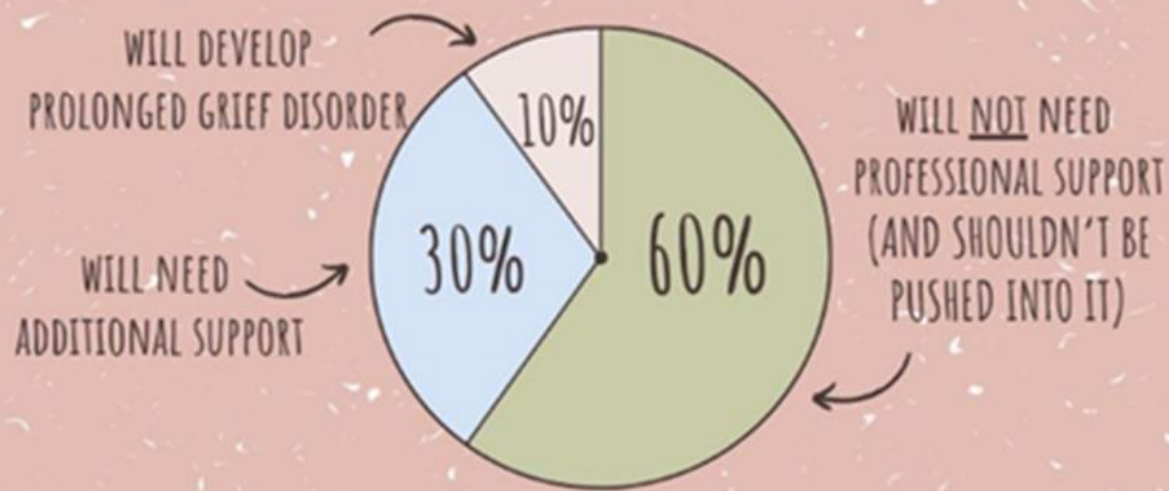
- We are here today as mothers, daughters, husbands, sons, grandparents, grandchildren and compassionate humans
- Today is a reflection of who's missing and a love that still lingers in their hearts.

WHY IT MATTERS

RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH ADULT GRIEF

- Psychological, Physical, Social, Developmental, Spiritual, Marital, Financial challenges
- Decisional regret
- High rates of depression & anxiety
- Sleep disturbances
- Marital disruptions
- Increased psychiatric hospitalizations
- Increased physician visits, health complications
- Work instability
- Even early death- Increased mortality

WHAT ARE THE NEEDS OF THE BEREAVED?

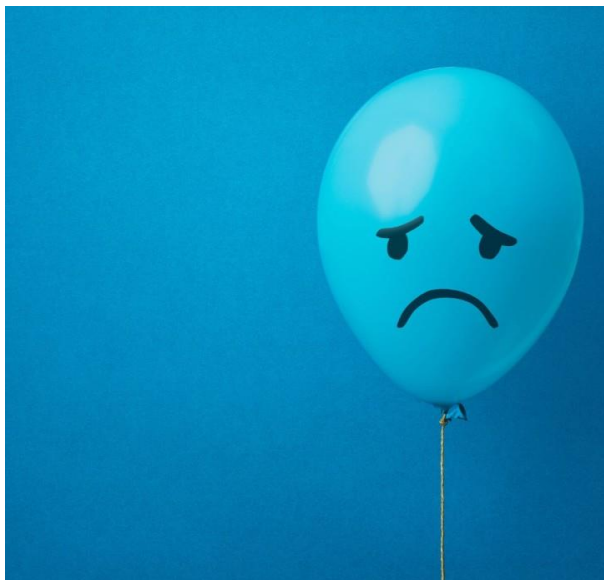


BUT 100% OF BEREAVED PEOPLE WILL NEED

- ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THEIR LOSS
- SUPPORT FROM FAMILY, FRIENDS & COMMUNITY
- INFORMATION ABOUT GRIEF



Grief Fundamentals



What is the fear about opening the conversations?

What do we fear about sharing our grief ?

What do we fear about witnessing others who are grieving?

Why do we feel the pressure to hide our grief, to tuck it away like it's something to be ashamed of? We all lose, we all grieve, and we all heal in our own way. But there's something powerful about sharing our grief - Sarah

Myths about Grief

Time

- After a certain amount of time, you should be over it.
- Time heals all things.
- What didn't hurt last year, won't hurt this year.

Pain

- Avoid the pain and it won't hurt you.
- Crying makes things worse.
- Talking about a loss makes it worse.
- Getting angry won't help.

Being Strong

- I shouldn't bother anyone with my pain.
- If I only had faith, I wouldn't be struggling so much.

Over It

- If I can't get over this loss, I will never be happy again.
- If I begin really living again, I'm dishonoring my lost loved one.
- Grief is a terrible emotion.

Convenient Myths: Stages of Grief, There is an ending to grief, Grief is linear with a timeline



Fundamentals of Grief

Grief is natural and healthy

Grief is individual and influenced by culture

There are no “right” answers or ways to grieve

Grief lasts forever

Grief comes in waves and ripples

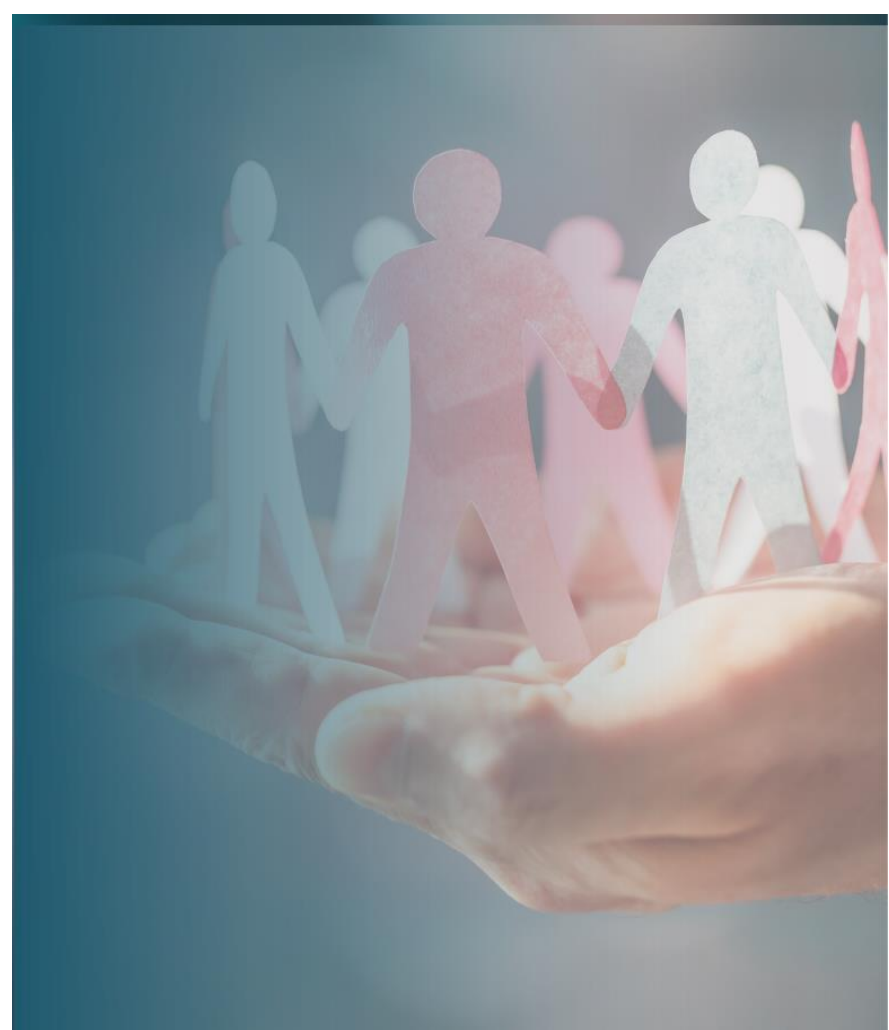
Grief does not happen in a vacuum

Grief overlaps and intersects with all areas of life

All grief is complicated and prolonged

What no one tells us about grief:

- Grief is isolating
- There are so many secondary losses
- The pain of grief can hit unexpectedly
- Grief is exhausting
- We may experience many feelings in one day
- Grief lasts longer than expected
- Grief profoundly changes us
- Grief brain is real
- We feel it in our body
- You may lose your patience
- There may also be physical issues
- Grief is disorienting
- Grief is transformative



How do you experience your grief? What are ways that people may express their grief?

Behavioral Cognitive Physical Emotional Developmental Spiritual Social



EMOTIONAL

- ☐ Anger
- ☐ Anxiety
- ☐ Depression
- ☐ Despair
- ☐ Disorganization
- ☐ Emptiness
- ☐ Emptiness
- ☐ Fear
- ☐ Frustration
- ☐ Guilt
- ☐ Hate
- ☐ Helplessness
- ☐ Hopelessness
- ☐ Loneliness
- ☐ Numbness
- ☐ Overwhelming feeling
- ☐ Panic
- ☐ Reconciliation
- ☐ Regret
- ☐ Relief
- ☐ Remorse
- ☐ Resentment
- ☐ Sadness
- ☐ Self-pity

MENTAL

- ☐ Absent minded
- ☐ Confusion
- ☐ Denial
- ☐ Detachment
- ☐ Disbelief
- ☐ Disorganized thinking
- ☐ Insecurity
- ☐ Lack of concentration
- ☐ Loss of control
- ☐ Lowered self-esteem
- ☐ Preoccupation
- ☐ Sense of presence
- ☐ Sense of unreality
- ☐ Think you're going crazy
- ☐ Yearning
- ☐ _____

BEHAVIORAL

- ☐ Avoidance
- ☐ Carrying objects that have memories
- ☐ Crying
- ☐ Depersonalization
- ☐ Dreams of deceased
- ☐ Isolation
- ☐ Overactivity
- ☐ Restlessness
- ☐ Searching
- ☐ Social withdrawal
- ☐ Visiting places with memories
- ☐ _____

SPIRITUAL

- ☐ Anger at the Deity
- ☐ Closer to or more distant from the Deity
- ☐ Exploring new dimensions of faith
- ☐ Looking for meaning, is this the Deity's will, why is this happening to me, etc?
- ☐ Reassessing values and beliefs
- ☐ Seeking faith or questioning faith
- ☐ Visions
- ☐ Visitations
- ☐ _____

PHYSICAL

- ☐ Blood pressure changes
- ☐ Blurred vision
- ☐ Chest pain
- ☐ Diarrhea or constipation
- ☐ Difficulty breathing
- ☐ Digestive problems
- ☐ Dizziness
- ☐ Fatigue
- ☐ Headaches
- ☐ Lack of energy
- ☐ Lowered immune system
- ☐ Nausea
- ☐ Numbness
- ☐ Sensitivity to light
- ☐ Sleep disturbance
- ☐ Stomachache
- ☐ Tightness in throat
- ☐ Weight loss or gain
- ☐ _____

Grief Expression Across Cultures



- Level of cultural identification of family
- Level and type of emotional expression expected
- Length of bereavement
- Type of funeral and commemorative rituals
- Degree of involvement of children
- Length of integration of faith-based rituals
- Public or private processing of grief
- Roles of each family member in the grieving process



Types of Grief



Disenfranchised Grief

"Grief that persons experience when they incur a loss that is not or cannot be openly acknowledged, socially support or publicly mourned".

- loss isn't seen as worthy of grief (ex. non-death losses)
- relationship is stigmatized (ex. partner in an extramarital affair)
- mechanism of death is stigmatized (ex. Suicide, homicide overdose, AIDS death)
- person grieving is not recognized as a griever (ex. co-workers or ex-partners)
- way someone is grieving is misunderstood, stigmatized. (ex. the absence of an outward grief response or extreme grief responses)

Examples:

Preganancy loss, grandparent/elderly, ex-partner, friend, colleague, pet, famous person, death of person you can't remember, died before you were born, estranged from family

Ambiguous Loss

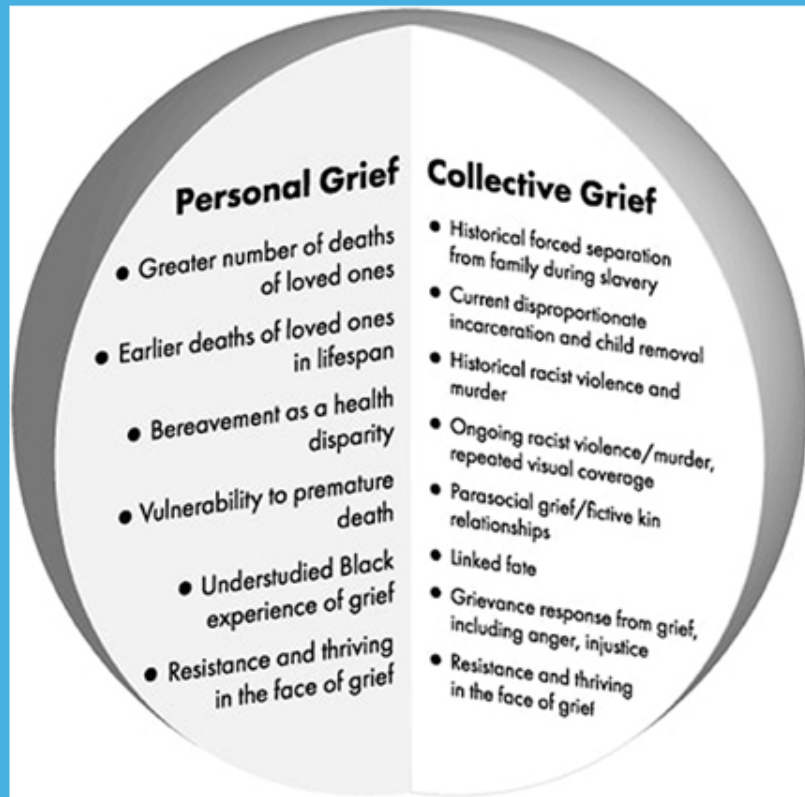
- Physically absent but psychologically present in your life.
 - Divorce
 - Deployment
 - Incarceration
- Physically present and alive but psychologically absent in your life.
 - Estrangement in a family
 - Breakup or divorce
 - Alzheimer's disease.
 - Mental health or other illness
 - Substance use disorder.



Suffocated Grief: When Mourning is Silenced

- Suffocated grief refers to the suppression or invalidation of mourning, where individuals feel unable to openly express their emotions or process their loss.
- Key Characteristics:
 - - Inhibited mourning due to societal or personal pressures.
 - - Feelings of invalidation or dismissal of grief.
 - - Isolation from a supportive environment.
 - - Prolonged emotional or physical distress from unprocessed grief.

Black Americans and Grief



Communal Impact of Grief

- While grief is a personal experience, it also impacts communities.
- Some communities have higher grief burdens (personal and collective) than others.
- Communities that hold space for grief through collective support, rituals, and mutual aid have the power to ensure that grievers don't feel left behind.

Han (Korean)- collective & cumulative grief in human suffering

GRIEF ISN'T JUST FOR DEATH

it's also for

FRIENDSHIPS THAT HAVE ENDED

1

LOSING YOUR COMMUNITY

2

MISSING THE CERTAINTY
YOU ONCE HAD

3

QUESTIONING YOUR JUDGMENT

4

RELEASING WHO YOU ONCE WERE

5

FEELING LOST AND UNANCHORED

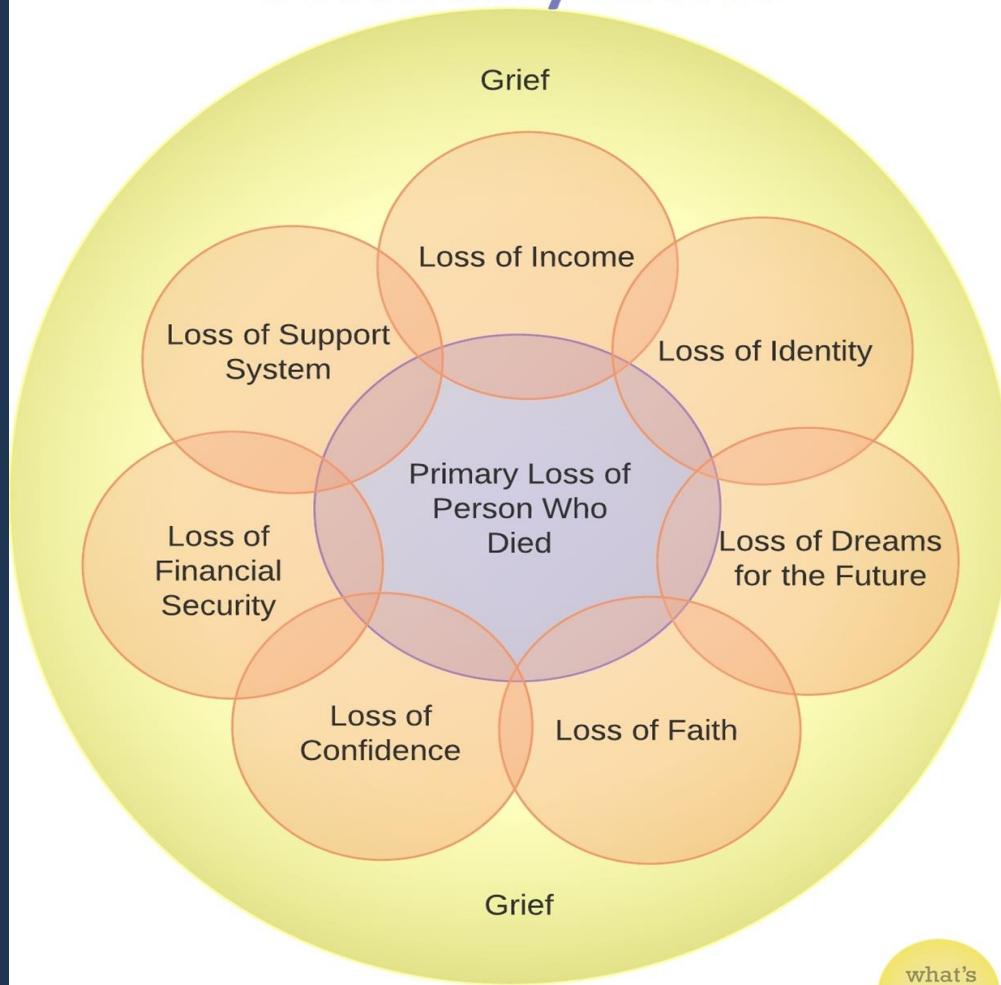
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LOSING TRADITIONS YOU LOVED

7

- Health Changes- Abilities
- Independence, Autonomy, Identity
- Friendships
- Incarceration
- Immigration
- Divorce
- Military- Deployment
- Job Changes
- Moves
- Loneliness
- Decision Making

Secondary Losses



what's
your
grief?

Context Matters

Relationship & Attachment to the Person Cause of Death

- Child
- Parent
- Spouse
- Sibling
- Grandparent
- Cousin
- Aunt/Uncle
- Friend
- Colleague
- Pet
- Personal relationship or perceived connection with the deceased
- Prior experience with loss
- Age & level of understanding about death
- Pre-existing coping mechanisms
- Method of expressing emotions
- Available support systems
- Level of empathy for the needs of other
- Natural order death
- Cancer
- Trauma
- Homicide
- Suicide
- Overdose/Substance Use
- Pregnancy Loss
- Accident
- Sudden
- Unexpected
- Prolonged

Types of Grievors

Intuitive (Feel & Express)

- Outwardly expressive
- Visible emotions
- Process through emoting and talking
- Not stuck or overly emotional
- Support by listening (therapeutic silence)
- Encourage to share experiences

Instrumental (Think & Do)

- Expressed in a physical/cognitive manner
- Use actions to process
- Grieving with their hands
- Won't necessarily be talking about their feelings
- Not cold or in denial
- Support by explaining this is an acceptable way to grieve

The Needs of Grieving Children



WHAT HELPS WITH KIDS AND TEENS



Intentional Interactions & Compassionate Communication



When Caring People Say Dumb Things

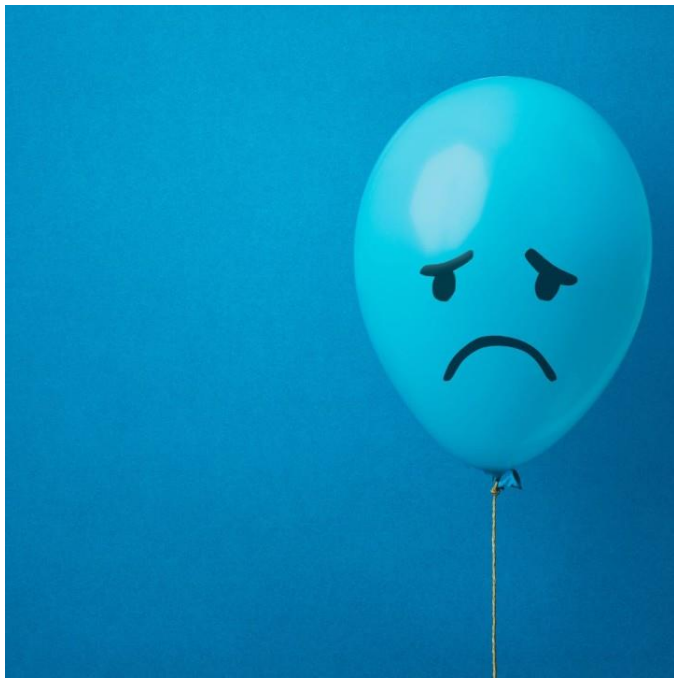
What things have people said to you that are
NOT HELPFUL? What



Common cliches that unintentionally hurt

- "They're in a better place now."
- "Everything happens for a reason."
- "At least they lived a long life."
- "God needed another angel."
- "I know how you feel."
- "Time heals all wounds."
- "Be strong."
- "Stay busy to keep your mind off it."
- "They wouldn't want you to be sad."
- "It was their time to go."
- "At least they didn't suffer."
- "You'll find someone else."
- You can have more kids
- "Focus on the good memories."
- "It's part of God's plan."
- "Look on the bright side."
- "At least you had time to say goodbye." (for anticipated deaths)
- "He/she lived a full life."





What do you find helpful?

What does a “compassionate community” look like?

What do we need in our grief?



Core Principles of the Companionship Model

Listening vs. Fixing

Emphasis on deep listening and presence

Respecting Individual Grief Journeys

Honoring diverse background and unique grief processes

Presence Over Prescriptions

Creating space for emotions without rushing to solutions

Creating a Safe Space for Grief

Encouraging open sharing without fear of judgement

Non-Pathologizing Grief

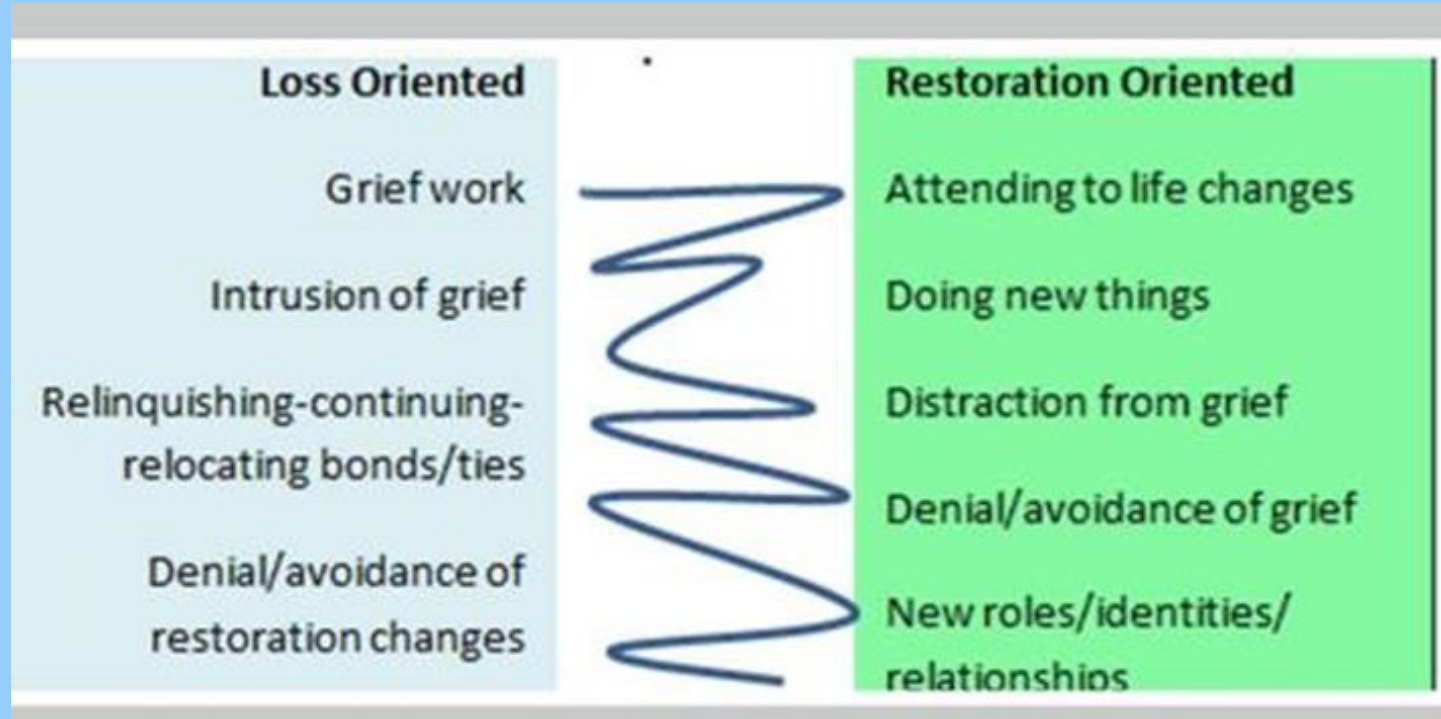
Normalizing grief as a natural human process

“Grief is
not a
problem to
be solved”

-Weller

(Sutton, 2022)

“Grief is as much about the future as it is about the past.”- Donald Rosenstein



What activates:
Anticipate potential challenges & grief-bursts



©COSHONALINE



And many find comfort
in “linking objects”



situations things
memories
special occasions people
places

HOW WE
WANT
GRIEF TO
WORK



HOW GRIEF
ACTUALLY
WORKS



Ways to Honor Mother's Day & Father's Day

- Light a candle
- Plant a garden or tree
- Be in nature. Take a walk
- Look through photos, create a photo book
- Listen to their favorite music, Dance
- Art project- painted rocks, collage
- Build, Make something
- Visit the ceremony or special place
- Balloon release or bubbles
- Write them a letter
- Journaling
- Volunteer
- Engage in Acts of Kindness



Allow yourself time and space
to grieve and celebrate

- Give yourself permission to feel whatever comes up—grief, joy, sadness, or even numbness.
- Take the day slowly, and do what feels right for you.



Anticipation can be the hardest

Make a Plan

Communicate Your Needs

Give Yourself Permission to Change
your Mind

Be kind to yourself...

Allow Moments of Self- Care &
Reflection

- Acknowledging Their Pain & Trauma
- Help Them Remember the Good Things-
 - They are more than their death
- Encourage Emotional Expression
 - Even the hard ones- anger, betrayal, guilt, blame
- Explore Their Faith, Mean-Making
- Focusing on Practical Support
- Encouraging Professional Help
- Assess and Address Other Family Member's Needs
 - Changing Roles, Changes in Identify
- Reassurance of Time and Healing



Are you **grieving?**

Things to
Remember





Reflection & Closing

Local Resources

Group	Location	Email	Phone
Adventist Health/Beyond Loss	Virtual	BeyondLoss@ah.org	818-409-8008
Agrace	Virtual	griefsupport@agrace.org	608- 327-7110
Center for Grief Recovery	Chicago		
Compassus	Virtual		815-220-1390
Grief in Common	Online Forum		
Grief Share	Local Chapters, Virtual	info@griefshare.org	800-395-5755
Heartlinks Grief Center	Belleville		618-277-1800
Hospice of Northern Illinois	Rockford		815-398-0500
JCFS	Chicago, Virtual		847-745-5404
JourneyCare/Addus	Barrington, Virtual	griefsupport@journeycare.org	"224-770-2273
Rainbow Hospice/Amita Health	Des Plaines		847-653-3141
St. Croix	N-NW Illinois; variety of locations		855- 278-2764
Unity Hospice	Chicago		312-427-6000
Uplifted Care	Kankakee	info@upliftedgrief.org	"815-939-4141

Local Resources

Suicide Loss Support:

- LOSS/Catholic Charities Local Chapters 312-655-7283
www.catholiccharities.net/behavioral-health-programs/loss-loving-outreach-to-survivors-of-suicide/
 - Willow House Deerfield 847-236-9300 www.willowhouse.org
 - Hope for the Day Chicago www.hftd.org
 - Erika's Lighthouse Winnetka 847-386-6481 www.erikaslighthouse.org
 - Elyssa's Mission Northbrook 847-697-9181 www.elyssasmission.org
 - Alliance of Hope for Suicide Loss Survivors online support www.allianceofhope.org
- *prevention: Hope for the Day, Erika's Lighthouse, Elyssa's Mission

Homicide Support:

- Chicago Survivors Cook County 877-863-6338 www.chicagosurvivors.org
- Illinois State's Attorney Statewide www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/victims
- Trauma Recovery Center/Advocate 708-346-7300
- BUILD, Chicago, 773-2880
- Kids Above All Chicago, Elgin, Naperville, Waukegan www.kidsaboveall.org
- Parents of Murdered Children Multiple chapters 888- 818-POMC/773-660-9659 www.pomc.org
- Family Advocacy Program Joliet

Overdose/Substance Use Death:

- GRASP/Grief Recovery After Substance Passing Local Chapters 847-275-7510 grasphelp.org
- HERO/Heroin Epidemic Relief Organization Local Chapters 708-557-8394
www.theherofoundation.org/grief.php
- Live4Lali Arlington Heights & virtual 844.584.5254 x801

Local Resources

Family Grief Support:

- Willow House Bannockburn/Libertyville/Arlington Heights 847-236-9300 www.willowhouse.org
- Buddy's Place, a Program of Pillars Community Health - Countryside, IL www.pillarscommunityhealth.org
- Good Mourning/Rainbow Hospice Mt. Prospect 847-685-9900 rainbowhospice.org

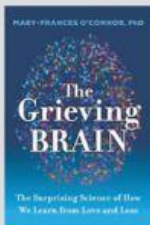
Child Loss:

- Heartlight/Lurie Children's Hospital Chicago 312-227-3930 www.luriechildrens.org
- Compassionate Friends/Local Chapters Waukegan/Lake Villa 630-990-0010 www.compassionatefriends.org
- Children's Wisconsin Milwaukee 414- 266-2995 griefsupport@chw.org
- Luella's Lodge Family Bereavement Retreat Center <https://www.luellaslodge.org/>
- Faith's Lodge www.faithslodge.org

Miscarriage/Infant Loss:

- Sudden Infant Death/Alliance of Illinois 800-432-7437 www.sidsillinois.org
- Northwest Suburban Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support Group Arlington Heights 847-618-8415
<https://www.nch.org/conditions/womens-health/obstetrics/pregnancy-infant-loss-program/>
- Sharing Hope/Edward-Elmhurst Naperville, Elmhurst Susan.Villa@EEHealth.org
- Beyond the Baby Blues In person/Virtual www.beyondthebabyblues.org
- Star Legacy Virtual 952.715.7731 x 716 www.starlegacyfoundation.org
- Return to Zero Virtual www.rtzhope.org
- National Share Virtual www.nationalshare.org
- Post-Partum Depression Hotline 1-800-944-4773

10 Books to Gift a Friend Who Is Grieving



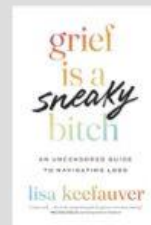
The Grieving Brain
Mary-Frances
O'Connor



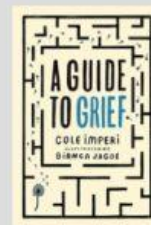
**It's OK That
You're Not OK**
Megan Devine



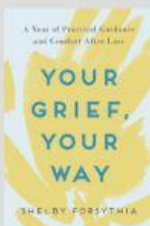
**Moving On Doesn't
Mean Letting Go**
Gina Moffa



**Grief Is A
Sneaky Bitch**
Lisa Keefauver



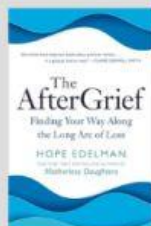
A Guide To Grief
Cole Imperi



**Your Grief,
Your Way**
Shelby Forsythia



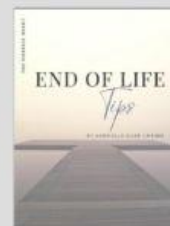
Can Anyone Tell Me?
Meghan Riordan
Jarvis



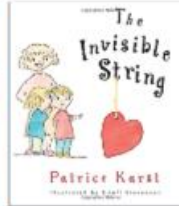
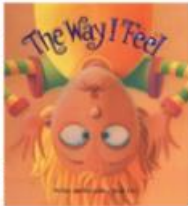
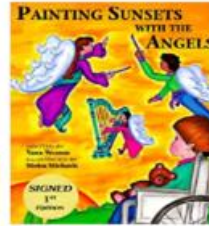
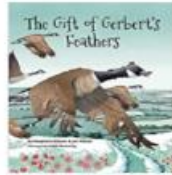
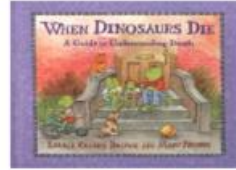
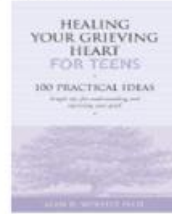
The AfterGrief
Hope Edelman



**The Hospice
Doctor's Widow**
Jennifer O'Brien



End of Life Tips
Gabrielle Elise
Jimenez



Children's Books

National Resources



NATIONAL CENTER
FOR SCHOOL CRISIS
AND BEREAVEMENT



COALITION *to* SUPPORT
GRIEVING STUDENTS





THANK YOU

Kristin James

Rev. Lin Stanford Keppert

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