



UNDERSTANDING GRIEF  
AND GUIDING CLIENTS  
TOWARD HEALING

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## DEFINITION OF GRIEF

Grief is the anguish experienced after significant loss, usually the death of a beloved person.

Grief may also take the form of regret for something lost, remorse for something done, or sorrow for a mishap to oneself.

*-APA Dictionary of Psychology*

# EXPERIENCES THAT CAN TRIGGER GRIEF

- Death of a beloved person
- A medical diagnosis
- Loss of a limb, breast, or womb
- Miscarriage
- Moving
- Divorce



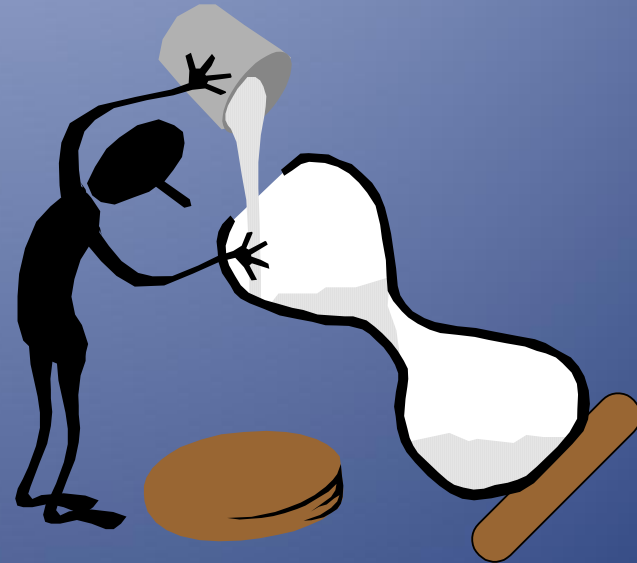
# MORE EXPERIENCES THAT CAN TRIGGER GRIEF

- End of a friendship
- Death of a beloved pet
- Losing a job or a career
- Aging
- Retirement
- Tragedies of war



# MYTHS ABOUT GRIEF

- Bury your feelings.
- Replace the loss.
- Grieve alone.
- Just give it time.
- Regret the past.
- Don't trust.



# MORE MYTHS

- Be seen and not heard.
- Protect yourself.
- Don't get involved, they'll only leave you anyhow.
- Get all you can before it's taken away from you.
- Don't expect anything.

# OTHERS ILL-PREPARED TO HELP US

- Don't know what to say.
- Afraid of our feelings.
- Try to change the subject.
- Intellectualize.
- Think keeping "busy" helps.
- Don't want to talk about death.
- Want us to keep our faith.
- Want their help to be effective.



# WORST THINGS TO SAY

- “Be strong for the children.”
- “You can’t fall apart.”
- “We understand how you feel.”
- “You’ll find someone else.”
- “She is in a better place.”
- “God will never give you more than you can handle.”





# BEST THINGS TO SAY



- “I am so sorry for your loss.”
- “I wish I had the right words, just know I care.”
- “You and your loved ones will be in my thoughts and prayers.”
- “We all need help at times like this. I am here for you.”
- “I am always just a phone call away.”
- Saying nothing, just be with the person

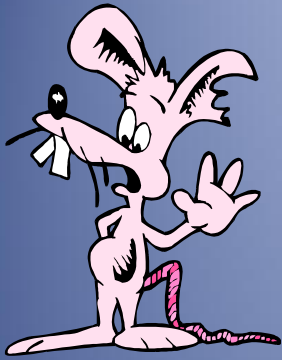
# FACTS ABOUT GRIEF

- Shortcuts through grief don't exist.
- People use different coping styles when it comes to processing losses.
- Your grief is as unique as you are.
- Grief is real because loss is real.
- Loss may happen in a moment, but its aftermath lasts a lifetime.

# TYPES OF GRIEF



- *Complicated Grief* - intense, persistent symptoms, making it difficult for sufferers to function normally
- *Maladaptive Grief* – consumed by their loss and attempt to cope in harmful ways
- *Broken Heart Syndrome* – stress caused by grief, taking a physical toll
- *Depression*

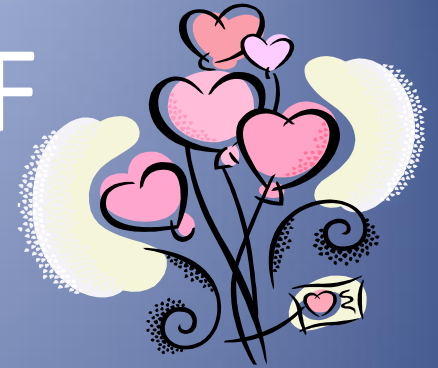


# FIVE STAGES OF GRIEF

- *Denial* – shock and disbelief that the loss has occurred.
- *Anger* – that someone we love is no longer there
- *Bargaining* - what-ifs and regrets
- *Depression* – sadness from the loss
- *Acceptance* – acknowledging the reality of the loss



# SIXTH STAGE OF GRIEF



- *Meaning*

- Find rituals that commemorate your loved ones loss.
- Offer some contribution honoring the person.
- Deepen your connection to those who are still with you.
- Discover a heightened sense of beauty of the life we are privileged to have on earth.



“Ultimately, meaning comes through finding a way to sustain your love for a person after their death while you’re moving forward with your life. That doesn’t mean you’ll stop missing the one you loved, but it does mean that you will experience a heightened awareness of how precious life is.”

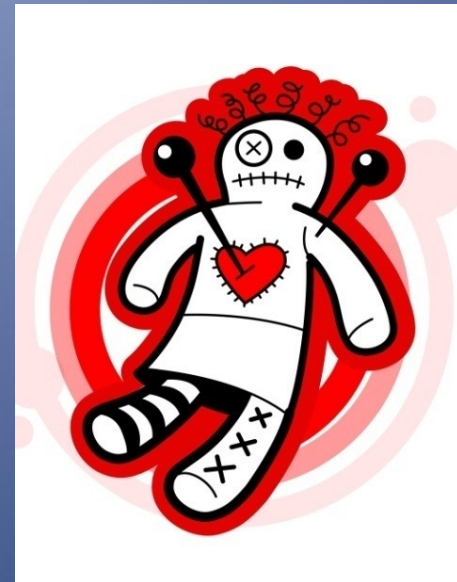
- *Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief* by  
David Kessler



# GRIEF VISUALIZATION AND EXERCISE

# OBJECTIVES OF GRIEF COUNSELING

- Accept the loss.
- Work through the pain.
- Adjust to life.
- Maintain a connection.





# WHY GRIEF COUNSELING?

- Reduces anxiety, guilt, and depression.
- Offers an understanding of the grieving process.
- Explains that there's more than one way to grieve.
- Helps in honoring the loss without trauma.
- Clarifies the different kinds of loss.
- Guides clients back to self-care.

# CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING OF DEATH

- *Birth to six months* - no concept of death
- *Six months to two years* - some grasp of the idea of death but don't fully understand it
- *Two to five years* - don't realize death is irreversible or final
- *Five to ten years* – beginning to understand death is final and may worry about their loved ones dying or even their own death

# HELPING CHILDREN UNDERSTAND GRIEF AND LOSS

- Use concrete language and be honest.
- Honor family cultural background.
- Integrate faith and belief system.
- Develop rituals to remember loved ones.
- Provide information on the grief process.
- Let the child take the lead.



# GRIEF COUNSELING FOR TEENS

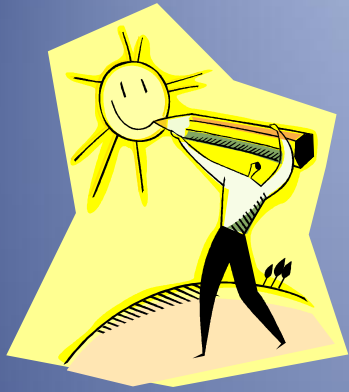


- Provide a safe place for them to talk about their feelings.
- Allow them to take the lead.
- Assure the teens there is no correct way to grieve.
- Understand the importance of social connections.

# GRIEF ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

- Read a children's book about death and grief.
- Write a goodbye letter.
- Create a memory box.
- Write a letter to your person.
- Make a handprint.
- Construct an anagram.





## MORE ACTIVITIES

- Draw “before and after family” pictures.
- Create a memory box.
- Make a memory bracelet.
- Write or draw an answer to the “I wonder, I wish, I hope” question.
- Compose a poem based on the name of the person they lost.

# ANOTHER ACTIVITY

- Finish the sentence:
  - When I am alone ...
  - If I could change things, I would ...
  - Since the death, my family doesn't ...
  - When the person died, I ...
  - My worse memory is ...
  - If I could take to the person who died, I would ask ...



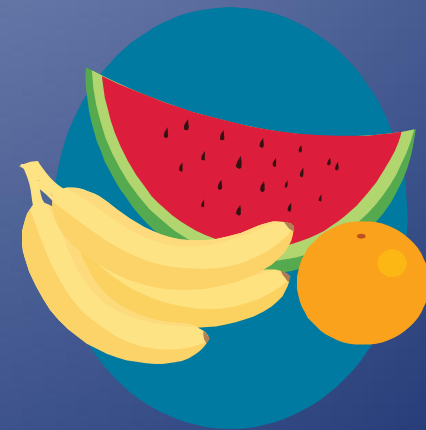
# GRIEF COUNSELING FOR ADULTS

- Talk about the deceased.
- Distinguish grief from trauma.
- Minimize the trauma associated with memories of loved one's death.
- Deal with guilt.



# GRIEF ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR ADULTS

- Eat a healthy breakfast.
- Pamper yourself.
- Netflix and chill with yourself.
- Make your bed.
- Reactivate your senses.
- Browse a magazine.



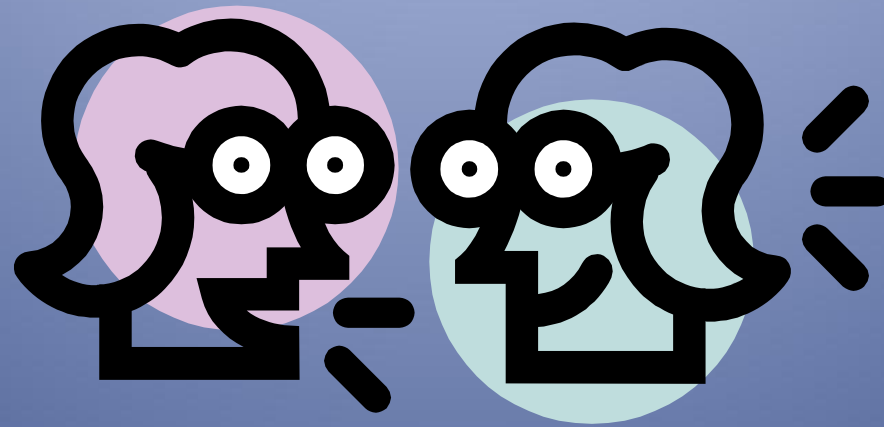
# MORE IDEAS

- Color me grieving.
- Rage journaling.
- Spend time playing with children.
- Jump on a trampoline.
- Participate in an exercise class or group.
- Join a grief group.



# FAMILY COUNSELING

- Different ways of grieving
- Unresolved issues
- Making arrangements
- Kind communication



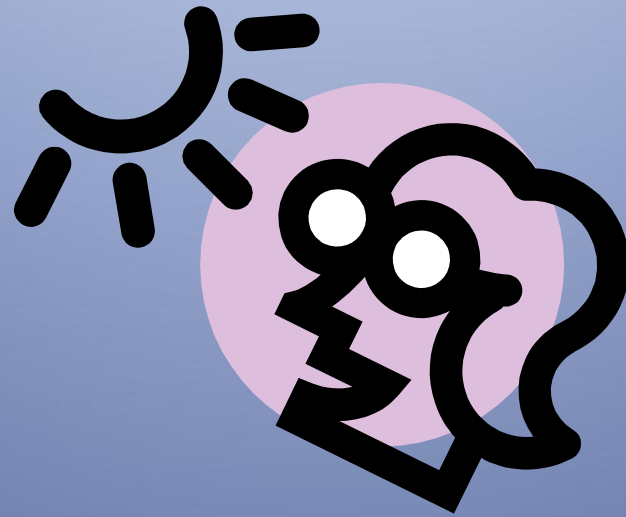
## CASE STUDY EXERCISE



## “On the Death of the Beloved”

*By John O'Donohue*

Though we need to weep your loss,  
You dwell in that safe place in our hearts.  
Where no storm or night or pain can reach you.  
Let us not look for you only in memory  
Where we would grow lonely without you.  
You would want us to find you in presence,  
Beside us when beauty brightens.  
When kindness glows.  
And music echoes eternal tones.



I hope these ideas can help you in . . .

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ANY QUESTIONS?



# REFERENCES

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*The Grief Recovery Handbook: A Step-by-Step Program for Moving Beyond Loss?* by John W. James and Frank Cherry (1988)

*Finding Meaning: The Six Stages of Grief* by David Kessler (2019)