

Inspired with Love Series



Grief and Loss in Supervised Visitation

Session 1: Monday, June 6, 2022

Presented by: Danielle Larsen, LCSW, CADC
In collaboration with Inspire Action for Social Change

Learning Objectives

- **Help staff define and identify the different types of grief and loss**
- **Learn how culture and grief interact**
- **Explore the impact on individuals, families, organizations, and institutions**
- **Provide strategies for supporting grieving participants and team members**

Presenter

Danielle Larsen, LCSW, CADAC

Danielle Larsen is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor committed to advancing anti-oppressive mental health care. Danielle has experience leading programs using trauma-informed approaches, harm reduction, Motivational Interviewing, gender-responsive care, and LGBTQIA affirmative practices.

Danielle co-created and led Illinois' first recovery support team with the non-profit Thresholds, providing community-based mental health services, Medication Treatment, opioid overdose prevention and reversal training, and case management for people who use drugs. Danielle has also provided clinical supervision as a Field Instructor for graduate-level social work students at the University of Chicago. Danielle currently offers outpatient therapy services and treats pre-adolescents, adolescents, and adults.



Living with Loss

Making the unspeakable, speakable



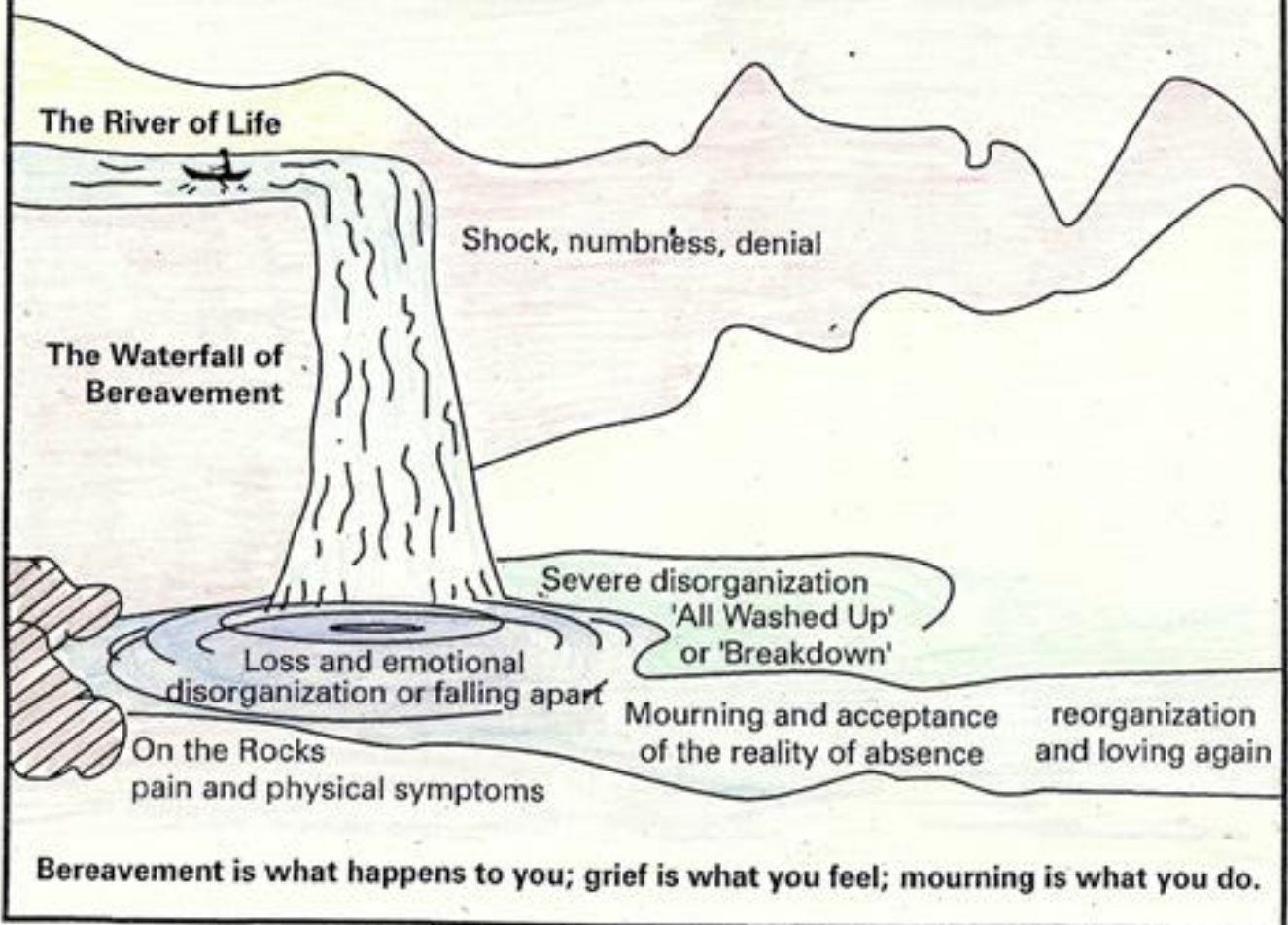
“Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world’s grief. Do justly, now. Love mercy, now. Walk humbly, now. You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it.” - The Talmud

Moment of Remembrance

Please take a moment in silence to remember and honor a personal loss



THE WHIRLPOOL OF GRIEF



Grief vs. Mourning

Grief is:

The internal thoughts and experiences following a loss

Mourning is:

The outward expression of grief

“Grief can be the garden of compassion. If you keep your heart open through everything, your pain can become your greatest ally in your life’s search for love and wisdom.” – Rumi

Brief Grief Questionnaire*

1. How much are you having trouble accepting the death of _____?

Not at all..... 0 Somewhat..... 1 A lot..... 2

2. How much does your grief still interfere with your life?

Not at all..... 0 Somewhat..... 1 A lot..... 2

3. How much are you having images or thoughts of _____ when s/he died or other thoughts about the death that really bother you?

Not at all..... 0 Somewhat..... 1 A lot..... 2

4. Are there things you used to do when _____ was alive that you don't feel comfortable doing anymore, or that you avoid? Like going somewhere you went with him/her, or doing things you used to enjoy together? Or avoiding looking at pictures or talking about _____? How much are you avoiding these things?

Not at all..... 0 Somewhat..... 1 A lot..... 2

5. How much are you feeling cut off or distant from other people since _____ died, even people you used to be close to like family or friends?

Not at all..... 0 Somewhat..... 1 A lot..... 2

A score of 4 or more suggests an individual may have complicated grief.

(M.K. Shear, personal communication, January 2014).

Refer the individual to a grief specialist for further evaluation.

What Grief Can Look Like

Thoughts

- ▷ Disbelief, thinking the loss did not happen
- ▷ Confused, forgetful, difficulty concentrating
- ▷ Preoccupation
- ▷ Sensing the deceased's presence
- ▷ Seeing/hearing the deceased

Feelings

- ▷ Sadness
- ▷ Anger
- ▷ Guilt
- ▷ Anxiety
- ▷ Loneliness
- ▷ Fatigue
- ▷ Helplessness
- ▷ Shock
- ▷ Yearning ("If only...")
- ▷ Emancipation /relief
- ▷ Numbness

Physical

Sensations

- ▷ Hollowness in stomach
- ▷ Tightness in chest/throat
- ▷ Hypersensitive to noise
- ▷ Feeling like nothing is real
- ▷ Shortness of breath
- ▷ Muscle weakness

Behaviors

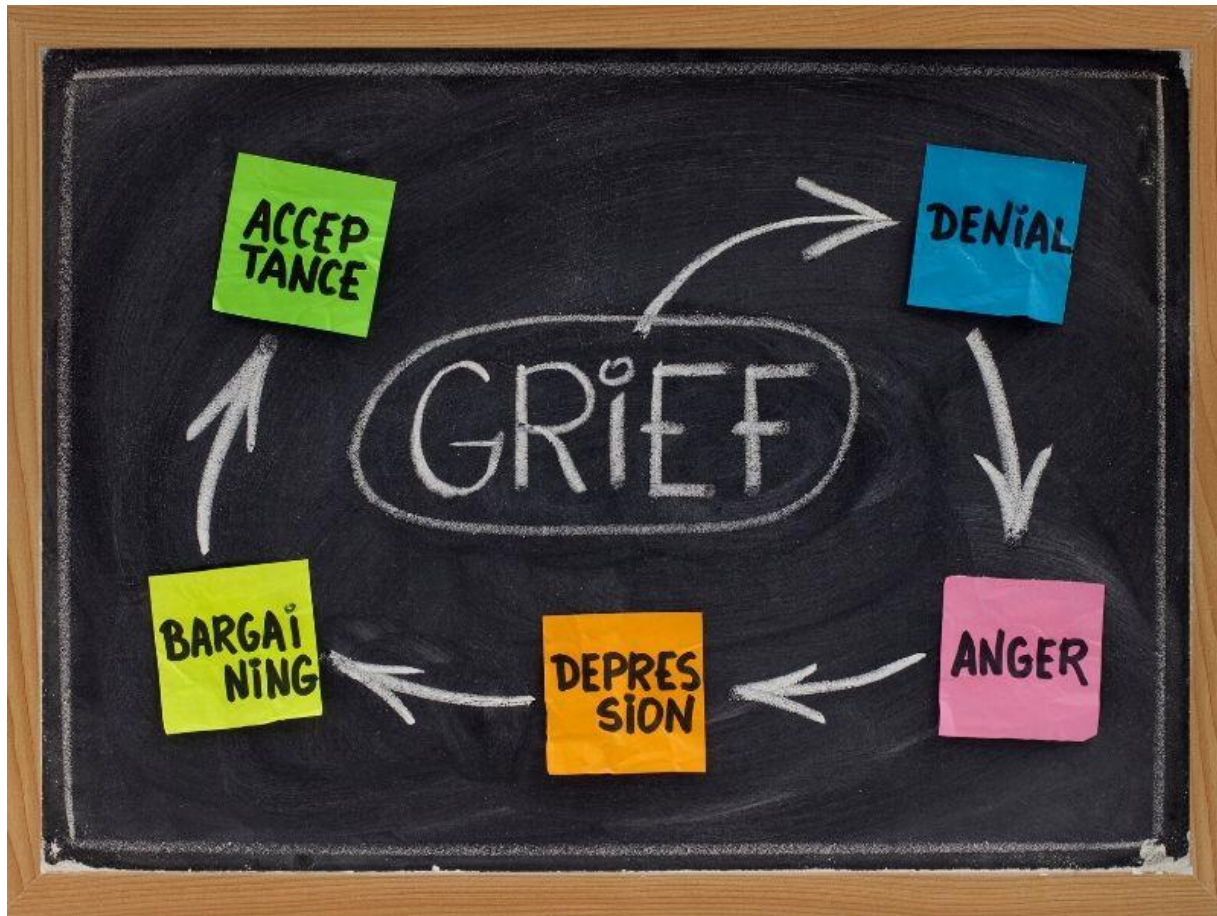
- ▷ Trouble falling asleep or waking up too early
- ▷ Eating too much or too little
- ▷ Social withdrawal
- ▷ Dreaming of the deceased
- ▷ Avoidance
- ▷ Calling out for deceased
- ▷ Restless
- ▷ Crying

What Grief and Loss Look Like for Children

0-2 years old	Crying, withdrawn, apathy, clingy, cranky, disturbed sleep, rocking, biting, anxious behaviors
2-5 years old	Clingy, anxious, “stubborn”, regression in talking/feeding/toileting, bad dreams, temper tantrums
5-9 years old	Crying, regression, anxiety, headaches, stomach problems, hostility, trouble concentrating, bad dreams, school problems. May try to hide feelings or exhibit need to control behaviors.
9-11 years old	Learning issues, preoccupation/worries, anger/hostility, anxiety, physical pain, inattention
12-18 years old	Withdrawal, “acting out”, mood swings, risky behaviors (SU, ED, self-harm), sleep problems, anger, depression, suicidal ideation

Models of Grief

- ▷ **5 Stages of Grief** (Elizabeth Kubler-Ross)
- ▷ **4 Tasks of Mourning** (William Worden)
- ▷ **Dual Process Model** (Margaret Strobe & Henk Schut)
 - Loss-oriented stressors
 - Restoration-oriented stressors
- ▷ **Growing Around Grief** (Lois Tonkin)



"I am more than these five stages. And so are you." - Kubler-Ross

the tasks of grief

T = To accept the reality of
the loss

E = Experience the pain of the loss

A = Adjust to the new environment
without the lost person

R = Reinvest in the new
reality



Lois Tonkin – Growing around grief

- Expectation

Before loss



Loss



Eventually



- Reality



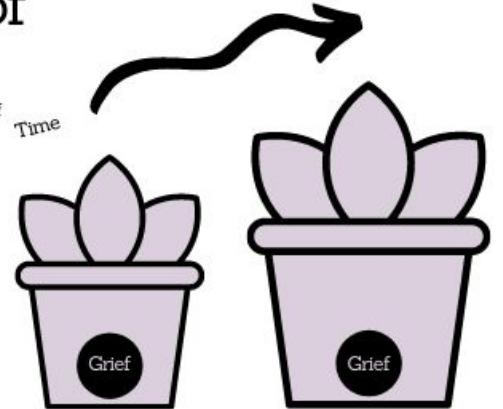
Tonkin's Model of Grief

Growing around grief

Your life



Source: Cruise Bereavement Care



Cultural Myths about Grief

- ▷ Grief and mourning are the same experience
 - Many people in our society grieve, but they may not mourn
- ▷ Grief progresses in an orderly and predictable way
- ▷ Grief should last about a year
- ▷ It is best to move away from grief and mourning instead of towards it
- ▷ Crying is a sign of weakness, should be discouraged
 - “He wouldn’t want you to cry.”
- ▷ A sign of healing/recovery is returning to work
- ▷ The goal is to “get over it”

“Grief can express itself through thoughts and feelings that seem utter contradictions.

Love that sounds like fear,

pain that sounds like joy,

doubt that sounds like faith,

arguments that sound like prayers,

prayers that sound like earthquakes,

yes that sounds like no,

*and stories and dreams and dramas and songs and poems, and, and,
and...*

In the face of this, a listener can simply be overwhelmed in the way that both a breaking wave and a slow surge can flood us out.”

— W. Dow Edgerton

Grief and Loss Types

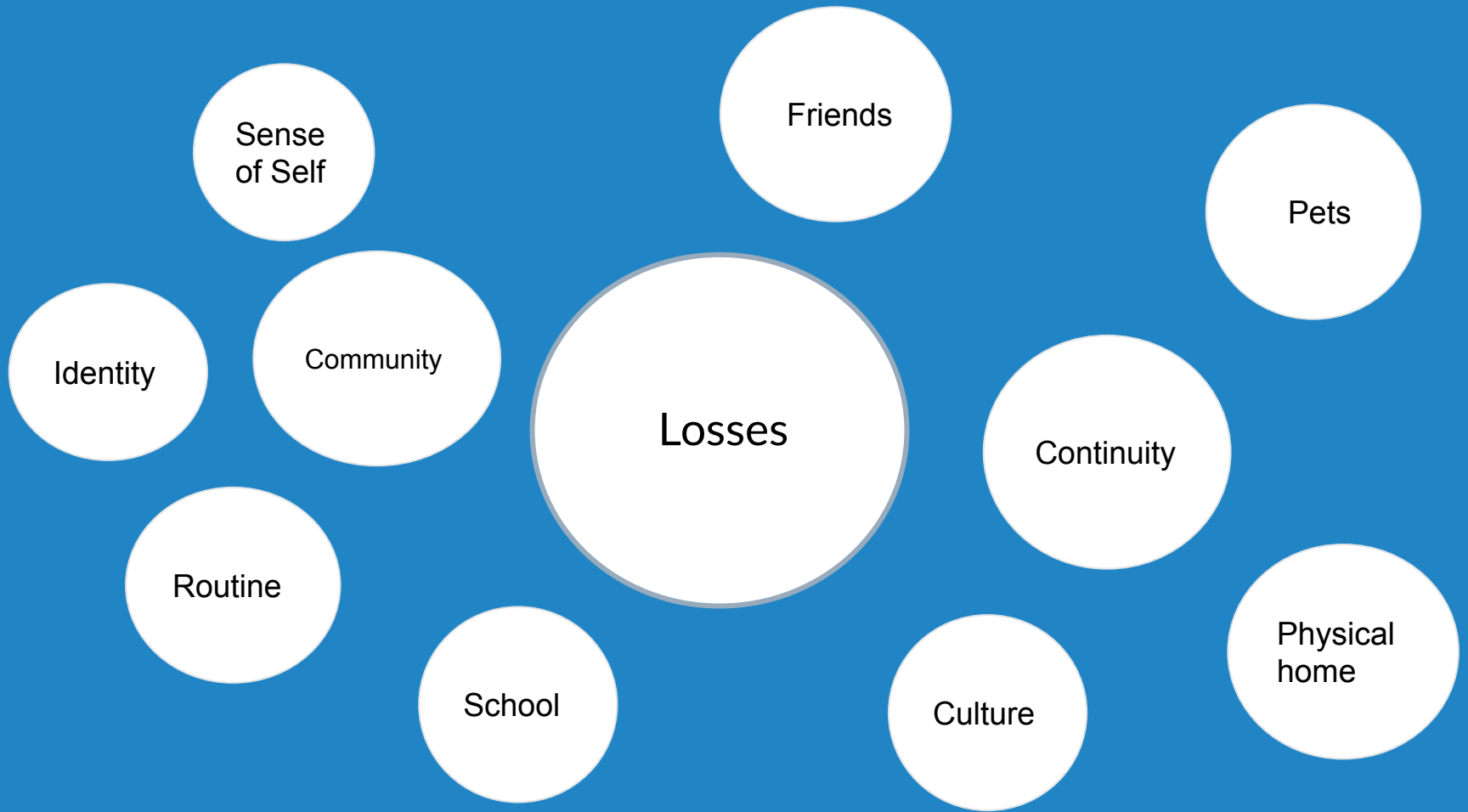
- ▷ Ambiguous loss
- ▷ Chronic Sorrow
- ▷ Nonfinite loss
- ▷ Disenfranchised grief
- ▷ Primary and secondary loss
- ▷ Complicated grief
 - Prolonged Grief Disorder
 - Added to DSM-5

Ambiguous Loss

- ▷ A feeling of grief or distress combined with confusion about about the lost person or relationship
- ▷ No verification of death or certainty that the person will come back/return to normal
- ▷ 2 Types:
 - Physically present but psychologically unavailable
 - Physically absent but psychologically present
- ▷ Ex. Foster care/adoption, divorce, incarceration, caregiver with chronic illness or addiction, grieving parent, missing person

How to Help with Ambiguous Loss

- ▷ Identify what has been lost
- ▷ Validate and speak to the ambiguity
- ▷ Acknowledge and empathize with the loss
- ▷ Give permission to grieve
- ▷ Be aware that certain events or times can trigger feelings of loss
- ▷ Check out your own expectations



Disenfranchised Grief

- ▷ Occurs when the loss is outside of society's "grieving rules"
- ▷ Not openly recognized by others, publicly shared, socially validated → isolation, loneliness
- ▷ Society may not fully recognize right to grieve, which can exacerbate the grief
- ▷ Ex. Non-death losses, divorce, mental or physical illness, suicide, addiction, incarceration, unemployment, losses when working in professional capacity

Primary → Secondary Losses

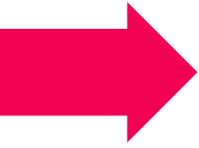
- ▷ Secondary losses stem from the primary loss
- ▷ Ex. Job loss → loss of income, identity, purpose
- ▷ One may re-experience previous losses activated by a primary loss
- ▷ Name and grieve all losses

Collective Grief

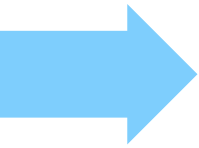
- ▷ COVID-19 pandemic
- ▷ Community and structural violence
- ▷ Systemic oppression
- ▷ Cultural constraints
- ▷ Intergenerational trauma



How many of our families are experiencing grief or loss?



How many of our staff are experiencing grief or loss?



100%

Impact on Workers

Compassion Fatigue

- ▷ Emotional, physical, spiritual distress in those providing care to others
- ▷ When helpers are unable to refuel themselves
- ▷ Can result in decreased empathy or ability to feel joy

Burnout

- ▷ Emotional and physical exhaustion
- ▷ Low job satisfaction, feeling powerless, overwhelmed
- ▷ Increased cynicism
- ▷ Changing jobs can provide relief

Secondary traumatic stress

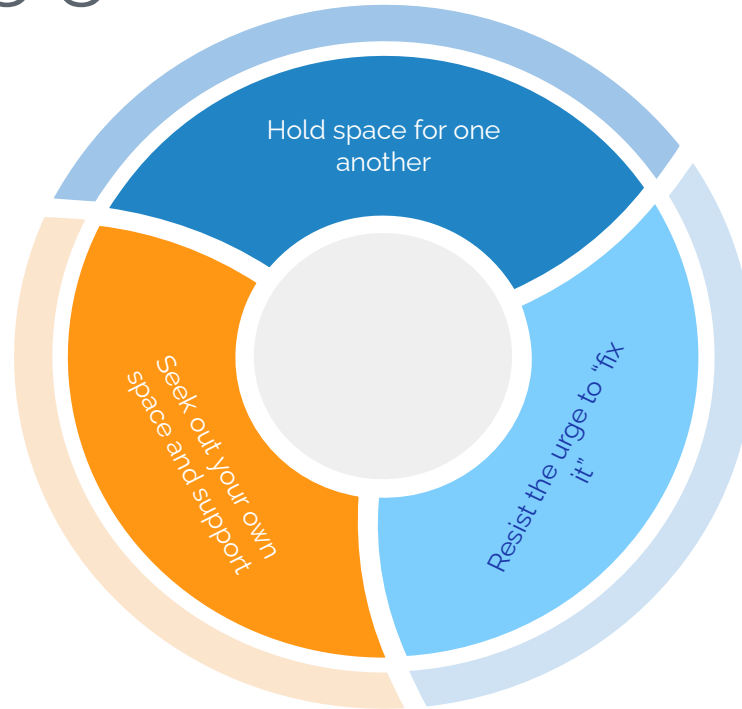
- ▷ Stress from helping a traumatized person and exposure to traumatic material
- ▷ Can change helping professional's worldview
- ▷ Similar symptoms to PTSD

Warning Signs

- ▷ Difficulty concentrating
- ▷ Intrusive images
- ▷ Hopelessness
- ▷ Exhaustion and irritability
- ▷ Avoidance
- ▷ High turnover
- ▷ Negative outcomes (boundary violations, ethical issues)
- ▷ Becoming a “workaholic”



Navigating grief



Talk about it as
a team

Take time off

Seek support &
connection -
therapy, friends,
family

TAKE CARE



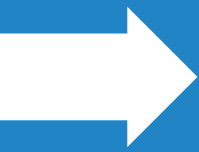
OF YOURSELF

Life-giving
activities
(creative, nature,
movement)

Spiritual
practices

Delegate, ask
for help, watch
out for “hero”
thoughts

Small Group



Reflection:

- ▶ How have grief and loss affected me in my work?
- ▶ How is grief and loss impacting the families that I am working with?
- ▶ What would it be like to integrate this knowledge about grief and loss into my work with families? My organization?

Growth-oriented Responses



Rituals and Support

Individuals

- Body movement
- Journaling
- Validate layers of loss
- Spiritual or cultural practices
- Build authentic relationships with coworkers

Teams

- Facilitated debriefings after a loss
- Visual reminders / place of honor
- Check-ins/Check-outs
- Supportive supervision
- Reward asking for help
- Acknowledge losses of staff and turnover

Organizations

- Offer therapy and counseling services as part of benefits
- Org-wide remembrance
- Implement policies that make space for staff & families to grieve (bereavement time)

Ritual Practice: Grieving is Essential

- Identify an object that symbolizes grief or loss in your life (photo, art, place, song, book, memento, poem, words)
- Hold your object in our hands or in your heart and mind



Ritual Practice: Grieving Is Essential

- Take a breath and offer gratitude for the love it represents
- I am grateful for ____.
- May this memory continue living
- I honor the loss of ____.
- I honor the pain of this loss



Thank you!

Q & A *

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Join Us for Session 2: Grief and Loss in Supervised Visitation

Monday, June 13, 2022: 12:00pm-1:00pm CT

- Addressing the challenges of grief and loss specific to supervised visitation
- More concrete strategies to support families, teams, and yourself with grief and loss
- Capacity-building in organizations

Upcoming Inspired Sessions



Session 2: Grief and Loss in Supervised Visitation

Date: June 13, 2022

Time: 7-8 AM Hawaii / 9-10 AM Alaska / 10-11 AM Pacific / 11 AM-12 PM Mountain / 12-1 PM Central / 1-2 PM Eastern/ 7-8 PM GMT

Summer Learning Series

Equity and Trauma-Informed Compassionate De-escalation

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Registration Information:

<http://www.inspireactionforsocialchange.org/inspired-sessions>



We are here to provide you support - please contact us anytime!

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