



DEVELOPMENTAL PRESENTATION OF GRIEF AND TOOLS TO SUPPORT GRIEVING CHILDREN AND TEENS

Presented

by

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**“Education is for improving
the lives of others and
for leaving your community and
world better than you found it.”**

Marian Wright Edelman



DISCLAIMER

Materials that are included in this course may include interventions and modalities that are beyond the authorized practice of mental health professionals.

As a licensed professional, you are responsible for reviewing the scope of practice, including activities that are defined in law as beyond the boundaries of practice in accordance with and in compliance with your profession's standards.



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Recognize how grief can present itself in children and teens
2. Recall 3 effective interventions to better support children and teens who are grieving



Developmental Grief Responses

1 in 14 children (5.3 million children)
in the US will experience the death
of a parent or sibling by the age of 18 (2021)



OVERVIEW OF GRIEF

Grief/Mourning

Acute Grief

Integrated Grief

Chronic Grief/Complicated Grief

PROLONGED GRIEF DISORDER DSM-V-TR

“The inclusion of the diagnostic criteria for prolonged grief disorder in *DSM-5-TR* allows clinicians to use a common standard to differentiate between normal grief and this persistent, enduring, and disabling grief.” - APA

<https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/prolonged-grief-disorder>

PROLONGED GRIEF DISORDER DSM-V-TR

A. Symptoms last most days at least 12 months after the death for adults and at least 6 months for children and adolescents.

B. At least one of the following symptoms is present, in addition, the symptom(s) has occurred nearly every day for at least the last month prior to the diagnosis:

Intense yearning/longing for the deceased

Preoccupation with thoughts or memories of the deceased person (in children and adolescents, preoccupation may focus on the circumstances of the death).

PROLONGED GRIEF DISORDER DSM-V-TR

C. Since the death, at least three of the following symptoms:

Identify disruption (e.g., feeling as though part of oneself has died) since the death

Marked sense of disbelief about the death

Avoidance of reminders that the person is dead (in children and adolescents, may be characterized by efforts to avoid reminder).

Intense emotional pain (e.g., anger, bitterness, sorrow) related to the death

Difficulty reintegrating into one's relationships and activities after the death (e.g., problems engaging with friends, pursuing interests, or planning for the future).

Emotional numbness (absence or marked reduction of emotional experience) as a result of the death.

Feeling that life is meaningless as a result of the death.

Intense loneliness as a result of the death.

PROLONGED GRIEF DISORDER DSM-V-TR

Disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

The duration and severity of the bereavement reaction clearly exceeds expected social, cultural or religious norms for the individual's culture and contact.

Associated Features

Intense yearning/longing for the deceased person including intense sorrow and frequent crying

Person experiences maladaptive cognitions about the self, guilt about the death and diminished future orientation

Somatic complaints occur

Decreased self-care

Hallucinations about the deceased

Bitterness, anger, restlessness, blaming others for the death and decreased sleep quantity and quality

KEY DIFFERENCES

Adapted from the APA Dictionary of Psychology

- Grief is “the anguish experienced after significant loss...Grief often includes **physiological distress**, separation **anxiety, confusion, YEARNING, obsessive dwelling on the past**, and apprehension about the future.”
- PTSD “may develop in some people after extremely traumatic events...People with PTSD may relive the trauma in **painful recollections**, flashbacks, or recurrent dreams or nightmares; **avoid activities or places** that recall the traumatic event; or experience **physiological arousal**, leading to symptoms such as an exaggerated startle response, **disturbed sleep, difficulty in concentrating or remembering**, and **guilt** about surviving the trauma when others did not.
- Depression is “**extreme sadness** or **despair** that last more than days...can cause **physical symptoms** such as pain, **weight loss or gain, sleeping pattern disruptions**, or lack of energy. People with depression may also **experience an inability to concentrate, feelings of worthlessness** or excessive **guilt**, and **recurrent thoughts of death or suicide.**”

GRIEF OVERVIEW

Primary Loss - Initial Loss

Secondary Loss - Hidden Losses

- Voids left after initial loss





ASSESSMENTS FOR GRIEVING YOUTH

Assessment Tools Disclaimer

Some assessment tools may have specific costs, copyright, or licensing requirements associated with them.

Please be aware of any such requirements before use of any assessment tool.

ASSESSMENT FOR GRIEVING YOUTH

Ways of dealing with bereavement and grief are influenced by the norms of one's cultural identity. Cultural assessment of bereavement and grief is therefore needed for a comprehensive evaluation of grief –related psychopathology and for negotiating appropriate treatment.” ... “How one deals with bereavement and grief is influenced by the norms of one's cultural identify.

Smid GE, Groen S, de la Rie SM, Kooper S, Boelen PA. Toward Cultural Assessment of Grief and Grief-Related Psychopathology. *Psychiatr Serv.* 2018 Oct 1;69(10):1050-1052. doi: 10.1176/appi.ps.201700422. Epub 2018 Jul 25. PMID: 30041592.

“There is much agreement that level of cultural sensitivity in the health care that patients perceive experiencing positively influences their adherence to treatment and, ultimately, their health outcomes”

Tucker, C. M., Marsiske, M., Rice, K. G., Nielson, J. J., & Herman, K. (2011). Patient-centered culturally sensitive health care: model testing and refinement. *Health psychology : official journal of the Division of Health Psychology, American Psychological Association*, 30(3), 342–350. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022967>

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ASSESSMENT TOOLS FOR GRIEVING YOUTH

Hogan Sibling Inventory of Bereavement(HSIB)(Hogan, Neimeyer,& Laurie, 2008)

- ▶ Modified version of the adult Hogan Grief Reaction Checklist (Hogan, Nancy S. 1987)
- ▶ 46-item questionnaire with 2 Subscales:
 - ▶ Grief
 - ▶ measures hopelessness, sadness, survivor guilt, fear, sleep difficulties, and trouble paying attention to schoolwork.
 - ▶ Personal Growth
 - ▶ measures increased sense of being kinder, more tolerant, more aware of others feelings, and having grown up faster than friends.

ASSESSMENT TOOLS FOR GRIEVING YOUTH

Inventory of Complicated Grief Revised (Melhem et al 2007)

- ▶ a modified version of the adult Inventory of Complicated Grief (Prigerson et al 1995)
- ▶ Ages 8-17
- ▶ 36-item assessment to measure child maladaptive grief
- ▶ Responses are scored on a 5-point scale, ranging from never to always

An Inventory of People, Places, and Things that I Miss (Nader & Prigerson 2005)

- ▶ Losses include people, pets, home placement, home and belongings, person who died, parent separation
- ▶ A Parent Form

ASSESSMENT TOOLS FOR GRIEVING YOUTH

Quick screening for possible bereavement complications:

Symptoms Snapshots

Concrete comparisons

Investigate Integration

Retell story of the death or relationship dynamics

Blocking or incongruence

Credulous Questioning

“If you want to know what is wrong with a person, ask him. He may just tell you.”

Dr. George Kelly

Such screens do not substitute for a more complete assessment, but they can help indicate whether such an assessment could be useful.

IMPACT OF ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment Theory- John Bowlby
 - Attachment is a “lasting psychological connectedness between human beings.”
- 1970's Mary Ainsworth
 - Secure Attachment-** distressed when mother left and joy when reunited with mother
 - Ambivalent-Insecure Attachment-** very distressed when mother left
 - Avoidant-Insecure Attachment-** avoided parents and showed no preference between mother and a stranger
- 1980's Main and Solomon
 - Disorganized-Insecure Attachment-** mixed behaviors including disoriented, dazed, or confused; avoided or resisted mothers

IMPACTS OF ATTACHMENTS

- **Pre-attachment**- infant shows no particular attachment to a specific person
- **Indiscriminate**- infant begins to show preference for the primary and secondary caregiver
- **Discriminate**- infant shows strong attachment to one specific caregiver
- **Multiple**- baby shows growing bonds with other caregivers

- **Key Factors:**

Opportunity for attachment

Quality Caregiving

- Attachment Injuries in Children and How to Help by Catherine A. Young

Developmental Grief Responses

Babies and Toddlers (0-2)

Separation anxiety

Changes in feeding or sleeping habits

Increased distress

Preschool (2-4 years)

Vocabulary

Anxiety

Repeating the story

Elementary School (5-9 years)

Death is irreversible

Strong emotional reactions/ nothing happened

Responsibility

Developmental Grief Responses

Middle School (10-13 years)

Suppression

Social lens

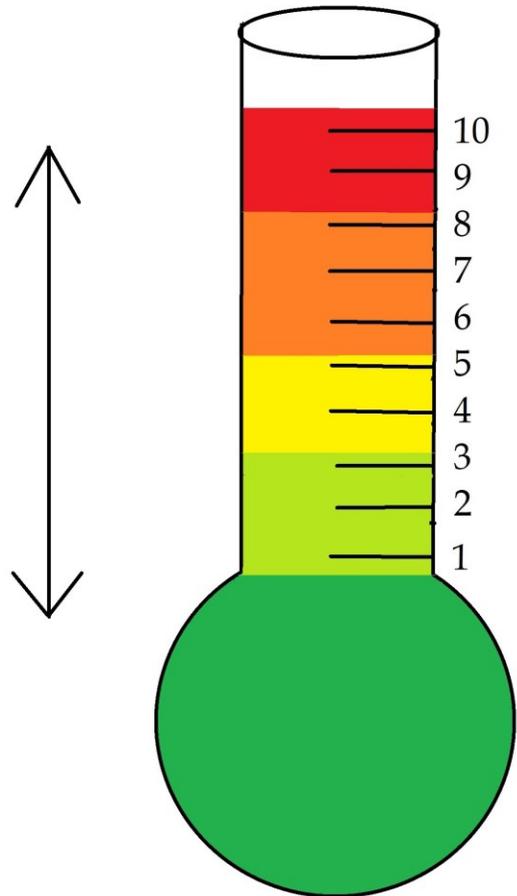
High School (14-18 years)

Existential questions

Justice/fairness

GROUNDING TECHNIQUES FOR ACUTE GRIEF

SUD
Subjective Units of Distress



Music

Mindfulness

Muscle Relaxation

3-3-3 Rule

Anchoring Phrases/Reciting

Math/Numbers

Ride The Wave



GRIEF TOOLBOX

Color Breathing



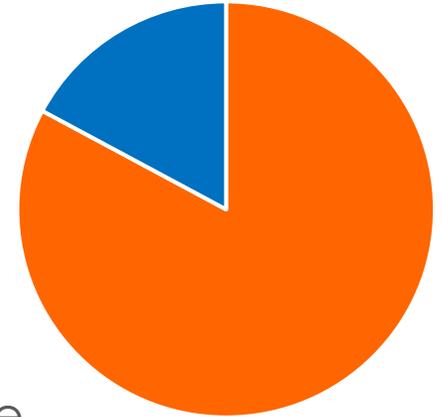
Grief Toolbox

Guilt Work

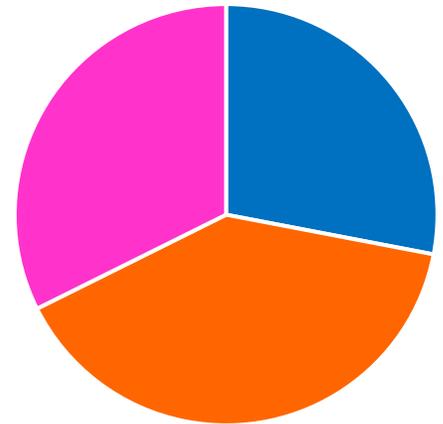
Validate and Normalize

Apology Letter/Goodbye Letter

Responsibility Pie Chart
Fault vs. Responsibility



Me-Orange
Driver-Blue



Me-Orange
Driver-Blue
Alcohol- Pink



GRIEF TOOLBOX

Connection

Memorial Acrostic Poem

Memory Box



MEMORIAL ACROSTIC POEM

- Sammie Joe
 - Stable and Strong
 - Amazing Man
 - Mentor
 - Memorable
 - Innovative
 - Encouraging
 - Joy to be around
 - Objective
 - Embracing

Grief Toolbox

LIFE IMPRINT

The person whose imprint I want to trace is: _____

This person has had the following impact on:

My mannerisms or gestures:

My ways of speaking and communicating:

My work and pastime activities:

My feelings about myself and others:

My basic personality:

My values and beliefs:

The imprints I would most like to affirm and develop are:

The imprints I would most like to relinquish or change are:

Grief Toolbox

Family Sculpting (Bowenian)
Sculpting Process
De-Rolling

Love after loss Illustration



SELF CARE

Vicarious Grief
Workload
Work Performance

Identify your coping skills
Daily relaxation techniques
Daily or weekly check-ins
Quality time with others outside of work
Open communication with your organization





Empathy is a finite resource.

You can run out.

As a normal, psychological response, you cannot give of yourself again and again and again without replenishing.

Emmett Fitzgerald,
Contemplative-Based Resilience Project



RESOURCES

Camp Sunshine

National Cancer Institute

Dougy Center

Kate's Club

National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

WhatsYourGrief.com

Griefincommon.com

DrKenDoka.com

Childrengrieve.org

Peacefully.com

RECOMMENDED READING

The Day My Dad Turned Invisible by Sean R. Simmons

The Sad Dragon by Steve Herman

But I Didn't Say Goodbye by Barbara Rubel

Don't Sweat the Small Stuff by Richard Carlson

Talking with Children about Loss: Words, Strategies, and Wisdom to Help Children Cope with Death, Divorce, and Other Difficult Times by Maria Trozzi

Disenfranchised Grief: New Directions, Challenges, and Strategies for Practice by Kenneth J. Doka

<https://missdilworth.com/therapy-resources-for-trauma-grief/>



GRIEF MODELS AND APPROACHES

- Art Therapy
- Play Therapy (PCIT?)
- Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy/ Grief-Focused Components- TFCBT.org
- Trauma and Grief Component Therapy for Adolescents- TGCTA.com
- Grief Groups



“Grief is like a long valley,
a winding valley where any bend
may reveal a totally new landscape.”

-C.S. Lewis

“Children are often the forgotten grievers.”

-David Kessler

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