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# HANDLING EXPECTATIONS



**GOOD GRIEF**  
PUTTING THE GOOD IN GRIEF WITH  
COMPASSION, SUPPORT & COMMUNITY  
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## ABOUT GOOD GRIEF

Good Grief's mission is to provide free and unlimited support to grieving children, teens, young adults, and their families after the death of a parent, primary caregiver, sibling, or child through peer support programs, education, and advocacy.



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## GOOD GRIEF PROGRAMS

- **Peer Support Programs**
  - 793 people, 322 families served in 2016.
  - Community based peer support.
  - Goals & outcomes to build resilient communities.
- **Education**
  - Workshops, presentations, online resources.
  - Schools, nonprofits, religious organizations, others.



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## LEARNING GOALS

- Intro to Good Grief & approach to grief and loss.
- Discuss a common cultural misconception related to grief.
- Review components & process of grief.
- Highlight the impact of expectations.
- Share strategies for managing expectations and interactions with others.
- Q&A.



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## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Paper
- Writing utensil



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## WHAT IS GRIEF?

- ✓ Grief is a multifaceted response to loss.
- ✓ Grief is a compilation of emotions, but it is more than emotions.
- ✓ It is an emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and physical response.
- ✓ Grief is part of the universal human experience.



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## NAMING LOSSES

- Death (family, friend, pet, etc.)
- Divorce/relationship
- Illness/accident/health
- Job/financial security
- Safety/security
- Innocence
- Home
- Incarceration
- Deployment
- Other



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## DETERMINANTS OF GRIEF

- Age of those involved.
- Type of loss (i.e. death, broken relationship, health, diagnosis, etc.)
- Nature of the relationships.
- Personal characteristics of griever.
  - Mental and spiritual health.
- Family and cultural influences.
- Previous exposure to crisis, loss, and hardship.
  - Cascading effect.
- Existing support systems?



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## THE TAKE-AWAY

**EVERYONE'S GRIEF IS UNIQUE!**



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## THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM?



The image shows a large grey elephant standing in a white room. The words "IGNORE ME" are written in white on its side. Two women are touching the elephant's legs, one on the left and one on the right, as if to ignore it. In the bottom right corner, there is a logo for "GOOD GRIEF" with a stylized "G" and "g" in green.

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## ELISABETH KÜBLER-ROSS



- Swiss psychiatrist; worked with terminally ill patients.
- No hospice or "death and dying" field of study.
- *On Death & Dying* (1969) was groundbreaking.
- Most famous for "Five Stages of Grief"



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## 5 STAGES OF GRIEF?



The image shows a staircase with five steps. Each step has a sign on it. From front to back, the signs are labeled: DENIAL, ANGER, BARGAINING, DEPRESSION, and ACCEPTANCE. The staircase is set against a dark background with a grid pattern. In the bottom right corner, there is a logo for "GOOD GRIEF" with a stylized "G" and "g" in green.

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## GOOD GRIEF'S 3 PROCESSES

1. THINKING
  - To understand the reality and permanence of the loss.
2. FEELING
  - Expression thoughts and feelings without judgment.
3. LIVING & LOVING
  - Reinvest in relationships and the future.



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## PARADIGM SHIFTS

<u>ASSUMPTIONS</u>	<u>SHIFTS</u>
1. A problem to be fixed.	1. A part of being human.
2. People are vulnerable.	2. People are resilient.
3. Intervene if necessary.	3. Proactive engagement.
4. Closure the goal.	4. Integration the goal.



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## GRIEF, LOSS, & EXPECTATIONS

- Grief & loss happen within a context.
- That context brings a host of expectations...
  - The gravity of your loss.
  - How you should respond.
  - How long you should grieve.
  - How you should move forward.



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## THE “SHOULDs”

- You **should** be getting over it by now.
- You **should** be more emotional than you are.
- You **should** be talking to someone.
- You **should** keep it to yourself.
- You **should** be reaching out for more help.
- You **should** be doing more independently.
- You **should** be taking better care of yourself.
- You **should** be taking better care of others.
- And on, and on, and on...



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## EXPECTATIONS ARE TRICKY

- Everyone has expectations:
  - You.
  - Kids.
  - Relatives.
  - Friends.
  - Others.
- It is hard to get perspective in the moment.
- Back to your reflection: I’m guessing every one of you has different expectations around how others can help.



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## CONSIDER THESE QUESTIONS...

- Who’s expectations do I care about most?
- What are the things I can control?
  - Can’t control your feelings. They just are.
  - You can control how you respond.
  - Can’t control other’s expectations. They just are.
  - You can control how you respond.
- Focus on what you can control, leave the rest.



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## WHO IS MOST IMPORTANT?

- How can I plan ways to meet the needs of my family?
- How can I plan ways to meet my own needs (i.e. self-care)?



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## SELF-COMPASSION IS IMPORTANT

- A common result of hardship and loss:
  - Primary loss and then cascade of effects = secondary losses.
- Secondary losses have a negative impact on different parts of our lives including:
  - Loss of self-confidence.
  - Loss of self-compassion.
- Self-Compassion: approaching yourself with the same kindness you would show to a friend.



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## FOLLOW THE PLATINUM RULE

- You have often heard, “Treat others as you would want to be treated.”
- The problem...
  - In grief, the way you want to be treated may be completely different than someone else.
- Treat others as they want to be treated.



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## A FEW TIPS TO SUPPORT GRIEF

1. Stable, caring relationships are most important:
  - Research and our experience shows this ([www.developingchild.harvard.edu](http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu))
2. Listen first:
  - Withhold your need to just "say something."
3. Talk about the person:
  - Use their name, share memories, open sharing.
4. Don't try to fix it.
  - Because...you can't.
5. Troubleshoot challenges & connect to resources:
  - Especially if you are a professional working with children



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## GRIEF IS...

- ✓ Not letting go; it's holding on in a new way.
- ✓ A normal, healthy part of human experience.
- ✓ A lifelong process.
- ✓ Not a problem to be fixed. We can't make it all better, but we can learn to be comfortable with other people's pain.



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## TAKE-AWAY: REFLECT & WRITE

- Reflect on your experience with loss...
  - Who or what was lost?
  - How has it changed your life now and in the future?
  - The best way others can help is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Who can I reach out to for support?

Take 5 minutes to reflect & write



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**Q&A**

- What questions do you have?



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**LEARNING GOALS**

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- ✓ Q&A.



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The screenshot shows the 'RESOURCES' page of the Good Grief website. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for ABOUT, PROGRAMS, EDUCATION, RESOURCES, EVENTS, GIVING, CONTACT, and MAKE A GIFT. Below the navigation is a green banner with links for HOME, ABOUT GRIEF, GOOD GRIEF BOOKS, TRULYPROOF, TRULY SUPPORT, and OFFICE. The main content area is titled 'ABOUT GRIEF' and contains a paragraph explaining that grief is a normal and natural reaction to death, loss, and grief are inseparable. Below the text are two blue buttons: 'WHAT IS GRIEF?' and 'GRIEF IN DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES'. At the bottom, there is a section for 'GOOD GRIEF BOOKS' with a note that they are available in Amazon.

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**GOOD GRIEF**  
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COMPASSION, SUPPORT & COMMUNITY

WWW.GOOD-GRIEF.ORG  
38 Elm Street | Morristown | NJ | 908.522.1999  
5 Mapleton Road | Princeton | NJ | 609.498.6674

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest icons

Four photographs of diverse families and children: a family of three, a woman hugging a child, two young girls, and a woman with two children.

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