

The background of the slide is a solid brown color with a pattern of stylized, overlapping autumn leaves in various shades of brown and tan. The leaves are scattered across the entire frame, creating a textured, seasonal feel.

Grief Recovery

Presented by Angela Linger, LPC

Objective

- To provide facts on grief, statistics, and strategies for interventions...

Grief Recovery

- Each year 8 million Americans suffer the death of someone close to them.

Grief Recovery: Grief Costs

- Generally 3 days is what is allotted for grief. Individuals with a broken leg or cast receive more empathy than grievers.
- In a 2003 Grief Index study conducted by the Grief Institute said 75.1 Billion dollars were lost in productivity due to grief/loss
- Death of a loved one 37.6 billion
- Divorce 11.1 billion
- Family Crisis 9 billion
- Financial loss 4.5 billion
- Death (extended family, colleagues, friends) \$7 billion
- Major Lifestyle alterations 2.4 billion
- Pet Loss 2.4 billion
- Other losses 1.2 billion
- **Total Billion 75.1**

Grief Recovery: Freud, Deutsch, and Lindemann agree Grief is work

- 1917 Freud published a paper comparing Grief and depression. He coined phrase “work of mourning”
- “Freud observed, bereaved people cling to the memory of that person so intensely that ‘a turning away from reality ensues’. This reaction has an almost hallucinatory quality, as if the bereaved cannot and will not accept that the person is gone.”*
- Joan Didion published “The Year of Magical Thinking” The belief that thoughts or wishes had the power to reverse the narrative, change the outcome.”*
- Helene Deutsch published “The Absence of Grief” Believed absence of mourning was root of most therapeutic interventions
- 1944 Erice Lindemann published a paper stating that delayed grief lurked in the subconscious of everyone.
- Fifty years later researchers got around to examine the issue of delayed grief and found delayed grief simply does not occur.
- *Bonanno, P19/20

Grief Recovery: Stage Model that is Myth

- The 5 stages of grief were for the dying not the survivors, and the subtitle of her book, which was on death and dying, explained the book's primary focus... What the Dying have to teach doctors, nurses, clergy and their own families. Introduced in the '60s by psychiatrist Elizabeth Kubler Ross.

Grief Recovery: Stage Model that is Myth

- Stage theory for grief recovery has been found to do more harm than good. It would be more accurate to speculate that the following emotions operate more like a pendulum that swings from emotion to emotion, sometimes based on triggers. A smell, a birthday, an anniversary date, etc. The suggestion to grievors that they're in a stage of denial or disbelief can freeze them into inaction. They bury their feelings waiting for time to make things pass.

Grief Recovery: Stage Model that is Myth

- 5 Stages were introduced to assist the dying
- Denial, disbelief, shock and numbness... “I can’t believe he’s gone.
- Anger
- Bargaining, Yearning
- Depression
- Acceptance

Grief Recovery: Stage Model that is Myth

- Kubler-Ross rebuts the 5 myths... “The stages have evolved since their introduction, and they have been very misunderstood over the past 3 decades. They were never meant to help tuck messy emotions into neat packages. They are responses to loss that many people have, but there is not a typical response to loss, as there is no typical loss. Our grief is as individual as our lives. Not everyone goes through all of them or goes in a prescribed order.”

Grief Recovery: What is Grief

- Grief is the conflicting group of human emotions caused by an end to or change in a familiar pattern of behavior.
- Grief is the normal and natural reaction to loss of any kind.
- Grief is the conflicting feelings caused by a change or an end in a familiar pattern of behavior.

Grief Recovery: What is Grief

- Grief is:
- Grief is emotional, not intellectual.
- Grief is individual, and relates directly to the uniqueness of all human relationships. No two relationships are the same.
- Grief is a crisis and in a crisis we tend to go back to our oldest, longest held beliefs that relate to dealing with loss of all kinds.
- Grief affects each person differently, therefore the application of ideas about grief is different.

Grief Recovery: What Grief Isn't

- What Grief is not:
- Grief is not a process
- Grief is not an identifiable set of stages
- Grief is not rational
- Grief is not a disease or an illness
- Grief is not a diagnosis
- Grief is not PTSD

Grief Recovery: “I’ve never experienced Grief. Why am I in this Group?”

- There are 43 losses which can produce the range of emotions we call grief. Among them are:
- Death of a loved one
- Divorce or End of a relationship
- Death of a pet
- Loss of Health/Loss of capability or ability
- Major Financial Changes
- Moving
- Starting School
- Death of a former Spouse
- Marriage

Grief Recovery: “I’ve never experienced Grief. Why am I in this Group?” (cont.)

- Graduation
- End of addictions
- Major Health Changes
- Retirement
- Holidays
- Tragedies (OKC bombing, Columbine, 911)
- Legal problem
- Abortion
- Miscarriage
- Empty Nest
- Loss of trust
- Loss of safety
- Loss of control of one’s body
- And many others
- Grief is normal and natural; however, many of the ideas we have been taught about dealing with grief are not helpful.

Grief Recovery: Listening

- The most important thing a clinician can do is hear what the patient is telling you, as opposed to having your own agenda. Grief is an act of recovery that doesn't fit nicely into a timeframe. Additionally, by dealing with others grief professionals are most likely to become clinically depressed, experience early job burnout, get divorced and commit suicide.

Grief Recovery: Coping Skills

- Be Gentle with yourself
- Expect to be distracted
- Have someone hear you
- Accept help of friends
- Accept help caring for children
- Ask someone to take calls and check mail
- Seek assistance with final arrangements
- Go back to work and return to hobbies/activities

Grief Recovery: Confusing and Cumulative

- Grief is a neglected and misunderstood process. One may feel relief and loss after a death, and that may create conflicting feelings. We might see this at the death of an elderly loved one.
- Grief is normal and the natural response to loss. Grief is emotional and not intellectual. Grief is cumulative.

Example

- 1950 Dog died
- 1953 moved
- 1958 Grandpa died
- 1962 Break up
- 1964 Vietnam
- 1966 Dad died
- 1969 Brother died
- 1977 Son died
- 1978 Divorce

Again, the “hidden” aspects of grief may be the most costly.

Taking The Stress Test: In a now-famous American study from 1967, Dr. Thomas H. Holmes and Dr. Richard H. Rahe created a do-it-yourself stress test. They examined the stress—measured the Life Change Units (LCU)—induced by experiences ranging from the death of a spouse to getting a traffic ticket. By adding the LCU values of the past year, you can predict the likelihood of stress related illness or accident.

Total LCU below 150	35%
Total LCU between 150 - 300	51%
Total LCU over 300	80%

% = chance of illness/accident w/i 2 years

The Test

<input type="checkbox"/> Death of a spouse	100
<input type="checkbox"/> Divorce	73
<input type="checkbox"/> Marital separation	65
<input type="checkbox"/> Detention in jail or institution	63
<input type="checkbox"/> Death of a close family member	63
<input type="checkbox"/> Major personal injury or illness	53
<input type="checkbox"/> Marriage	50
<input type="checkbox"/> Being fired at work	47
<input type="checkbox"/> Marital reconciliation	45
<input type="checkbox"/> Retirement	63
<input type="checkbox"/> Major change in health or behavior of a family member	44
<input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy	40
<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Difficulty	40
<input type="checkbox"/> Getting a new family member through birth, adoption or remarriage	39
<input type="checkbox"/> Major business readjustments	39
<input type="checkbox"/> Major change in financial status	38
<input type="checkbox"/> Death of a close friend	37

<input type="checkbox"/> Change to a different line of work	36
<input type="checkbox"/> Change to a different line of work	36
<input type="checkbox"/> Major increase in fights with spouse	35
<input type="checkbox"/> Taking on a mortgage	31
<input type="checkbox"/> Foreclosure on a mortgage or loan	30
<input type="checkbox"/> Major change in responsibility at work ..	29
<input type="checkbox"/> Son or daughter leaving home	29
<input type="checkbox"/> In-law troubles	29
<input type="checkbox"/> Outstanding personal achievement	28
<input type="checkbox"/> Spouse seeks work outside the home ...	26
<input type="checkbox"/> Go back to school	26
<input type="checkbox"/> Major change in living condition (rebuilding, remodeling)	25
<input type="checkbox"/> Revision of personal habits	24
<input type="checkbox"/> Troubles with superior, boss	23
<input type="checkbox"/> Major change in working hours and/or conditions	20
<input type="checkbox"/> Change in residence	20
<input type="checkbox"/> Change to a new school	20
<input type="checkbox"/> Major change in usual type or amount of recreation	19
<input type="checkbox"/> Major change in church activities	19
<input type="checkbox"/> Major change in social activities	18
<input type="checkbox"/> New car, or other big purchase	17
<input type="checkbox"/> Major change in sleeping habits	16
<input type="checkbox"/> Major change in number of family get togethers	19
<input type="checkbox"/> Major change in eating habits	15
<input type="checkbox"/> Vacation	13
<input type="checkbox"/> Christmas or holiday observance	12
<input type="checkbox"/> Minor violations of the law	12

Grief Recovery: Physical Effects of Grief

- Exhaustion
- Days of Distraction
- Denying the new reality
- Anger

Grief Recovery: Recognizing the World is Upside Down

- Assumptions are shattered
- Loss of purpose
- Redefining who one is
- Renewing priorities
- Questioning Why did this happen
- Dealing with Awkward Questions
- Difficulty with holidays
- Difficulty with coming years
- Make a conscious effort to ask the patient to identify what isn't making sense? Interrupt negative self talk and synapses being formed. What's puzzling? What part of the grief is troubling? What other things are troubling? Explore grief in spiritual traditions if the patient goes there.

Grief Recovery: Challenging Myths as they Occur & Acknowledging feelings

- Myths: If you are a good enough Christian you don't have to grieve
Grief and mourning are the same thing
- There is a predictable and orderly stage like progression to grief
Just get over it
Move away from Grief
Tears are a sign of weakness
- Grief Recovery means to acknowledge that it is perfectly alright to feel sad from time to time and to talk about those feelings no matter how those around you react. Recovery is being able to recall fond memories without having them precipitate painful feelings of regret or remorse.
- Help the individual recognize hurtful self-talk, impulsive thinking, and recognizing and stopping instant replaying and obsessive thoughts.
- Challenge myths when they occur and hurtful coping skills.

Some typical physical reactions

- Numbness
- Changes in eating habits and patterns
- Changes in sleeping habits and patterns
- Emotional roller coaster with high low mood swings
- Grief and Dreams—sometimes the subconscious mind tries to work things through while sleeping. Dream journaling can be effective. Individuals can work to reprogram dreams, discuss thoughts, and if dreams are traumatizing seek meds short-term.

Grief Recovery: Clinicians can ask two questions about Grief

- Who are you there for?
- What are they trying to get you to understand?
- When treating an individual you have created an emotional relationship. The patient may feel fear of what it is that you will discover, or what you might tell them.

Grief Recovery: The Function of Sadness (DBT)

- With sadness comes accuracy. People made to feel sad are also more accurate in the way they view their own abilities and performance and are also more thoughtful and less biased in their perceptions of other people.
- During bereavement, the functions of sadness become essential tools that help us accept and acclimate to the loss. Sadness helps us make these kinds of adjustments by giving us a forced “timeout” *
- *Bonanno

What's not helpful

- Grievers don't have broken heads, they have broken hearts.
- Most of what we have learned about dealing with grief is intellectual.
- Myths of grief carry unhelpful messages.

Grief Recovery: What's not helpful

- Some common responses to loss are:
- Reduced concentration
- Disturbed sleep Patterns
- Changed eating habits
- Roller coaster of emotional energy
- There are no stages to grief. The above are all normal and natural responses. There is no prediction on how long they will last and are unique to each individual.
- It is helpful to remind grievers that they also have fond memories if they should say “my heart is permanently broke.” Ask if they recall good times? If so, they can reframe their statement: “I recall good times with John where we laughed and enjoyed sports, and other times I am saddened.”

Grief Recovery: What's not helpful

- A sense of numbness



Other common myths

- Time Heals all Wounds
- Grieve Alone
- Be Strong
- Don't Feel Bad
- Replace the Loss Keep Busy
- Tears are a sign of weakness
- Grief and mourning are the same thing
- Get over it
- You should move away from grief
- If you were a better Christian you would not be grieving
- Feelings inside not expressed
- In grief recovery it is the communication that was unsaid that requires closure. By completing the historiograph, writing/journaling regarding individual occurrences, and then voicing it to another individual it assist in the grief recovery process.

Grief Recovery:

- **Solution**
- Gaining awareness—that an incomplete emotional relationship exists
- Accept responsibility—that in part you are the cause of the incompleteness
- Identify recovery communications—that you have not delivered
- Take actions—to communicate them.
- Moving beyond loss—saying goodbye to undelivered communications and to pain

Goal is to discover relationships that are incomplete

- If patient is unwilling to think about or talk about someone who has died, or any other loss, that may signify unresolved grief.
- If fond memories turn painful, patients may be experiencing unresolved grief.
- If patients want to talk only about positive aspects of the relationship it might be unresolved grief.
- Wanting to talk only about negative aspects of the relationship may be a sign of unresolved grief.
- Unresolved grief may be at the root of any fear associated with thoughts or feelings about the relationship.

Effects of grief are cumulative

- To communicate and complete the graph, you must put them in three categories.
- Amends—apologize for anything you did or did not do to hurt someone else.
- Forgiveness—To cease to feel resentment against (an offender). It is an action, not a feeling.
- Significant emotional statements—Emotional communication (i.e. I loved you, hated you, was proud of you, thank you)
- For each event listed on the historical graph, have a prepared sheet labeled
 - Amends
 - Forgiveness
 - Significant Emotional statements

Effects of grief are cumulative (cont.)

- Complete these items for each entry on the historical graph. Then discuss. It is important for communication to occur. We hear of times that messages are written, buried with loved ones, sent off with balloons, etc. It is important to have actually communicated these thoughts to someone.
- Certification program for grief by the Grief Recovery Institute taught around the country for approx. \$2000

STERBs (Short Term Energy Relieving Behavior)

- A STERB is any behavior or activity that we participate in that creates the illusion that we are dealing directly with the feelings created by an event or a reminder of an event from the past.
- Food
- Alcohol
- Drugs
- Sex
- Entertainment (TV, Film, books, music)
- Shopping
- Anger
- Work

STERBs (Cont.)

- A healthier alternative is to talk about the loss to release the energy. The emotions generated by witnessing or talking about tragic events create tangible energy. Three things can happen with that energy.
- It can be stored in the body and then misdirected in short term energy relieving behavior.
- The stored energy can have tremendous negative physical consequences on the body, in the form of illnesses and conditions that accrue when emotional energy is either misdirected or left unattended.
- The energy can be healthy when directly and effectively talking truthfully with someone about the very specific events that affected you and the emotions they spawned.
- Note: Gallows humor may appear as improper joking at overwhelming tragedies where masses of emotion in all who are affected by them or witness them. People will find ways to dispel energy with nervous laugh or humor that might seem inappropriate. Recall teens laughing during death scene in Private Ryan.

Grief: What's helpful?

- Recovery from loss is accomplished by discovering and completing all of the undelivered communications that accrue in relationships.
- Relationships have 3 components: Spiritual, emotional, and physical; after what's left is the spiritual and emotional.
- Grief institute conducted a study with those who suffered a loss and asked what they would like from others during a loss:
 - 98% responded for someone to listen to me talk about what had happened

Grief: What's helpful?

- Schedule Activity



Grief: What's helpful?

- Remember to Pamper Yourself



Grief: What's helpful?

- Grief institute asked 3000 people what they thought people suffering from a loss wouldn't like: 95% said not to talk about the loss.
- In 1984 a study concluded that there are 141 comments that are so common that a grieving person will hear them within 72 hours of the death of a loved one. Some of those comments were determined to be helpful to grieving people while some were not, even though all of them were said with helpful intent. Over 85% of these remarks are NOT HELPFUL to grieving people. They either appeal to the intellect; which is not damaged or broken ; or they give advice which is dangerous or difficult to follow.

What they don't want to hear.

- I know how you feel
- Your young you can have another baby
- Go get another pet
- He's no longer in pain
- Be Strong or be strong for others
- It's God's will
- Time Heals all wounds
- Keep busy
- Don't be afraid of feelings. Don't change the subject. Don't intellectualize.

What to say

- Create an emotional acknowledgement. This must be devastating to you. It must be difficult to find your most cherished memories gone.
- I can't imagine what this is like for you
- I just heard what happened to you, and I don't know what to say
- I can't imagine what this is like for you
- In the hours and days following your exposure to powerful negative events, you may not consciously be aware of emotions you've experienced. Do not let that stop you from talking openly with trusted colleagues and friends about what you witnessed. Sometimes the talking will help you identify some of your feelings, and keep them from getting buried inside of you. Buried feelings are like landmines that can explode anytime, unrepentantly.

Grief Recovery: What can families do to help a grieving child?

- Keep a daily routine
- Listen
- Express unconditional love and acceptance
- Keep child's environment same as much as possible
- Allow child to discuss death
- Reassure about their own security
- Use proper words: died, death, car accident
- Include child in plans and participation in memorial services
- Allow them to say goodbye if they wish

Grief Recovery: Helpful children's story books

- “Saying Goodbye to Lulu” (review loss of pet and is also helpful with other loss)
- Corrinne Demus
- “I Miss You, A first look at Death”
- Pat Thomas
- “Sad Isn’t Bad”
- Michaelene Mundy
- “What’s Happening to Grandpa”
- Maria Shriver
- “What’s Heaven”
- Maria Shriver

Grief Recovery: Resources

- “The Grief Recovery Handbook”, John W. James and Russell Friedman.
- “The Other Side of Sadness
What the New Science of Bereavement Tells Us
About Life After Loss”
- George A. Bonanno
- “I Wasn’t Ready to Say Goodbye,” Brook Noel & Pamela D. Blair, PhD
- Special thanks to Steve Moeller of Floral Haven



Questions?