

Decoding Grief:

How to Cope & Where to find Support

"HOW LUCKY I AM TO HAVE
SOMETHING THAT MAKES
SAYING GOODBYE SO HARD."

— WINNIE THE POOH

By: Ariana Avezzie M.Ed, LMHC & Dallas Pilecki M.Ed, LMHC

Workshop Overview:

This workshop will focus on the loss of a love one. But some of the information on the ways to cope can be helpful when dealing with any form of grieving.

- **Defining the Stages of Grief**
- **Identifying Symptoms of Grief**
- **Defining the Types of Grief**
- **Coping Skills & Strategies**
- **Provide Supports & Resources**

HOW WE
WANT
GRIEF TO
WORK



HOW GRIEF
ACTUALLY
WORKS



Additional losses could include:

- Loss of a Job
- Health Problems
- Relationship/Friendships
- Retirement
- Home/Living Situation
- Financial stability



“Loss can manifest itself in a variety of ways. It is not necessarily as a result of a person's death.”

“And once the storm is over you won’t remember you how made it through, how you managed to survive. You won’t even be sure, in fact, whether the storm is really over. But one thing is certain. When you come out of the storm you won’t be the same person who walked in. That’s what the storm’s all about.”

~ Haruki Murakami, Kafka on the Shore



**Grief Is Not
One-Size-Fits-All**

****Loss is hard, and at time unbearable but its important that we remember is there no “right” way to grieve** Please note this workshop is basic overview of Grief.**



“It takes strength to make your way through grief, to grab hold of life and let it pull you forward.”

~ Patti Davis

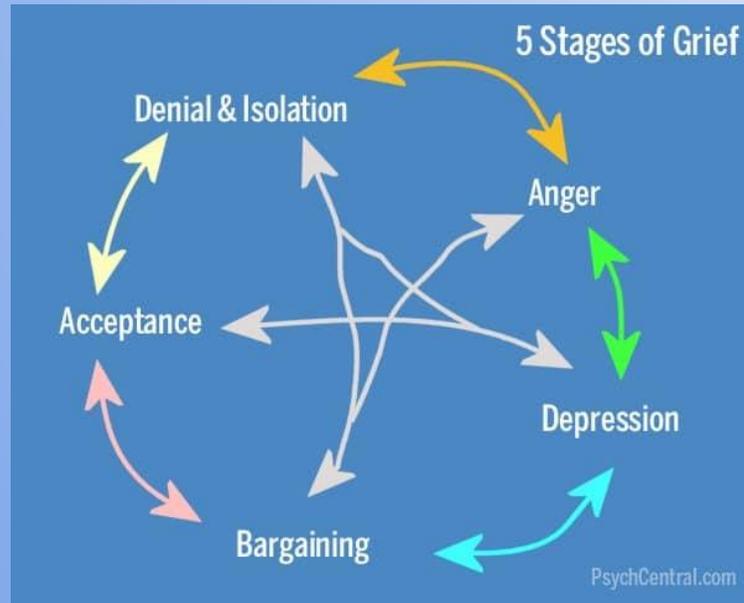
**“When a loved one leaves us,
it feels as if we’re drowning,
stuck in a terrible dream.”**

“But there was no need to be ashamed of tears, for tears bore witness that a man had the greatest of courage, the courage to suffer.”

~ Viktor E. Frankl, Man’s Search for Meaning

Stages of Grief:

- Elisabeth Kübler-Ross created the widely known 5 stages of grief
 - Denial
 - Anger
 - Bargaining
 - Depression
 - Acceptance
- Grief is not linear there is no pattern to what you might feel or when.



Some Common Myths:

Myth 1: Everyone goes through phases of grief.

Fact: Grief does not play by the rules.

Myth 2: Mourning and grief are the same thing.

Fact: Grief can result in a variety of behaviors, one of which is grieving.

Myth 3: You aren't truly grieving if you aren't sobbing.

Fact: Crying isn't required for grief.

Myth #4: If you ignore your suffering, it will go away.

Fact: Ignoring your discomfort is at best a band-aid remedy.

Myth #5: Grief has a time limit.

Fact: Grief does not end, but it does change.

Myth 6: People who are grieving simply need to get over it.

Fact: You cannot just move on from grief, and professional counseling is sometimes required.

Different types of Grief:

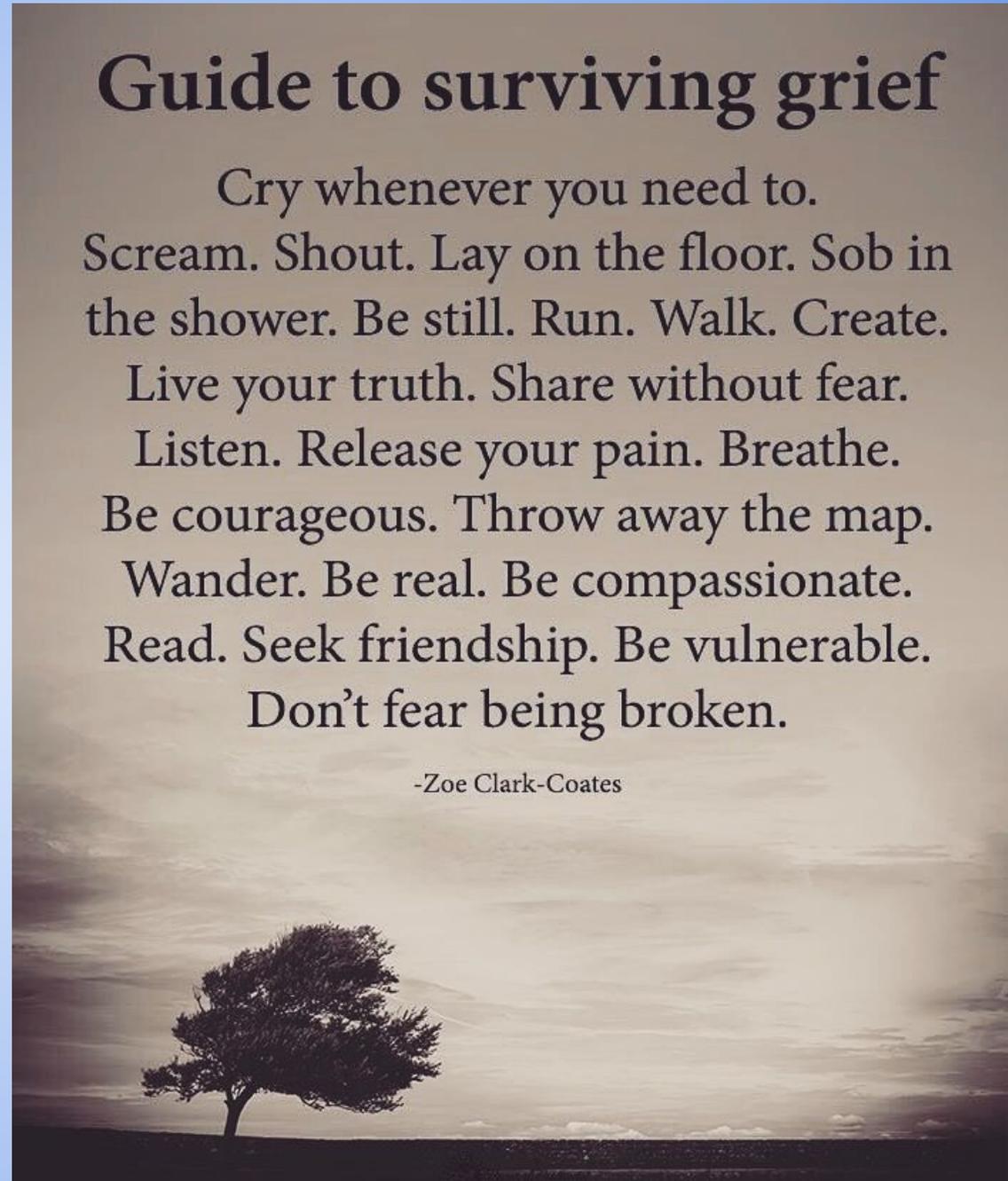
There are many different types of grieving, but in this workshop, we will concentrate on a handful of them.

- **Anticipatory**
- **Complicated**
- **Delayed**
- **Incomplete**

Guide to surviving grief

Cry whenever you need to.
Scream. Shout. Lay on the floor. Sob in the shower. Be still. Run. Walk. Create. Live your truth. Share without fear. Listen. Release your pain. Breathe. Be courageous. Throw away the map. Wander. Be real. Be compassionate. Read. Seek friendship. Be vulnerable. Don't fear being broken.

-Zoe Clark-Coates



Anticipatory Grief:

- **Anticipatory grief is starting the grieving process before someone has past**
 - *Common with Chronic Illness & Common Among Caregivers*
 - *Can occur when a loved one is deployed in the Military to a War Zone*
- **Individuals may feel sadness, anger, isolation, forgetfulness, anxiety, dread, and depression**
- **Individual who are coping with Anticipatory grief can become hyper-aware**
 - *This can create panic during things like when the phone rings.*
- **During Anticipatory grief individuals are grieving**
 - *The loss of hope - The future they planned or imagined - The Loss of Stability*
- **Individuals may struggle watching someone they love suffer and feel guilty when they do past that they are no longer suffering.**
- **With Anticipatory grief Its important to focusing on the remanding time you have with your loved one**
- **Research shows that Anticipatory grief can reduce the symptoms of grief after a death however everyone grieve differently so its not always the case.**

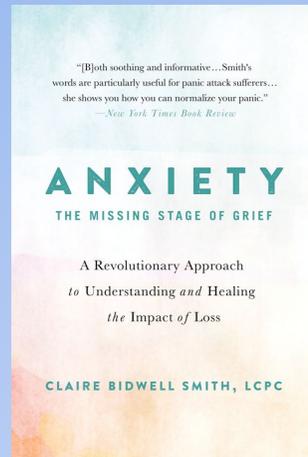
Complicated Grief:

- **10%-20% of individuals who lose someone experience Complicated Grief**
- **Complicated Grief**
 - *This is when the feeling of loss not decreasing over months*
 - *chronic and debilitating*
 - *Impairing daily routine*
 - *Feeling “trapped” in your grief*
- **It can occur when**
 - *There are more than one loss during a period of time*
 - *When the loss is unexpected*
 - *When the person passing away is witnessed*
 - *When the person was dependent on the person who passed away*
- **With this type of grief it is especially important to get support/help.**



Delayed Grief & Incomplete Grief:

- This occurs when the “normal” grieving process is postponed this can be intentional or unintentional and reoccurs later.
- This can happen due to:
 - Being unable to attend the funeral
 - Being away when the person passed
 - To much going on in the individuals life to process the loss
 - Being support for others grieving
- This was common during COVID-19 due to not being able to have funerals, see loved one while they were passing.
- With delayed grief it often shows up in other areas of our lives due to it not being processed such as our relationships, increased anger, fear of loss, ability to enjoy things, or numbness.



Anxiety after a loss:

Online Resource for Anxiety: Coping with Grief and Anxiety

- Claire Bidwell Smith Is one of the lead therapist to do research and write about this area of grief.
- She wrote: [Anxiety: The Missing Stage of Grief: A Revolutionary Approach to Understanding and Healing the Impact of Loss](#)
- She explains that individuals often experience Hypervigilance, panic attacks, racing thoughts, racing thoughts, and excessive worry after the loss of a loved one. This is different from regular anxiety because it is linked to the passing of a loved one and often occurs shortly after. It is normal to feel anxious after a loss, and to utilize your support system. Its important to stay present, and using grounding techniques/coping skills when this is occurring.

Anxiety is a huge issue in grief.

When you feel anxious, make your exhale longer than your inhale.

Lengthening your exhale soothes your nervous system, shutting down the flood of stress hormones that trigger anxiety.

Making your exhale longer than your inhale soothes the flight-or-fight response in the nervous system.

Focus on your breath gives you an anchoring thought in your mind rather than chasing one fear thought to the next.

That it's simple is great:
one option, under your control,
always accessible.

~Megan Devine
It's OK That You're Not OK
refugeingrief.com



Coping Strategies to keep in mind:

- ★ **Turn to Friends & Family members:** Even though you pride yourself on being tough and self-sufficient, this is the moment to lean on those who care about you.
- ★ **Take solace in your Religion:** If you belong to a religious tradition, accept the comfort that its grieving rituals provide.
- ★ **Face your emotions:** You can try to suppress your grief, but you won't be able to do so indefinitely. You must accept the grief in order to heal. Trying to escape pain and loss simply makes the grieving process take longer.
- ★ **Feelings should be expressed in a tangible or imaginative way:** In a journal, write about your loss. If you've lost a loved one, write a letter to say all you didn't get the chance to say.
- ★ **Maintain your hobbies and interests as much as possible:** Routine provides comfort, and returning to the activities that bring you joy and bring you closer to others can help you cope with your loss and improve the grieving process.
- ★ **Join a support group:** Even when you have loved ones around, grief can feel quite lonely. Sharing your grief with people who have suffered similar losses might be beneficial.
- ★ **Speak with a therapist or a bereavement counselor:** Find a mental health expert who has experience with grief therapy if your grief is too much to bear.
- ★ **Take care of your physical well-being:** The mind and body are inextricably linked. You'll be better equipped to manage emotionally if you're physically healthy. Get adequate sleep, eat well, and exercise to combat stress and weariness.

Reaching to Others:

When we are brokenhearted, we may question not only our sanity, but also whether we have what it takes to withstand our agonizing loss. We can progress through our feelings by allowing and expressing them. Feelings persist when we hold on to them. Feelings that have been voiced vanish. We begin to heal as we let go of our grief and pain.

Feelings can be released by speaking them loudly, verbally, and via tears, as well as by writing them down. Each feeling must be distinguished, named, and examined. Then we may visualize our emotions as clouds or skywriting passing in front of us before disappearing. We must believe that grief is a gradual process that will diminish our suffering over time.

Most importantly, we must trust that we have latent healing skills and untapped courage to get through this trying moment. We need to remind ourselves that we can and will get back on our feet. We will recover and move away from the emotional roller coaster of loss if we allow our sentiments to be addressed.

It's okay to be upset.

It's okay to be angry.

It's okay to feel stuck.

It's okay to feel confused.

It's okay to feel lonely.

It's okay to feel hurt.

It's okay to cry.

It's okay to not be okay.

- Talk to a friend or loved one
- Spend time with Family/Friends
- Reachout to a Therapist
- Group Therapy/Support Group
- Online Support Groups

Online Resources:

(Click the [blue highlight](#) to visit website)

☐ [Whats Your Grief:](#)

- ★ Articles
- ★ Resources
- ★ Information for individuals, professionals, people providing support.
- ★ Online courses
- ★ Shop with books and more

☐ [Psychology Today:](#)

- ★ Search for local Therapist & Psychiatrist
- ★ Can narrow search by Insurance, Location & more

☐ [Web Healing:](#)

- ★ Articles
- ★ Forums
- ★ Blog
- ★ Resources
- ★ videos
- ★ A page to honor your loved one

☐ [Good-Grief:](#)

- ★ Tips & Support
- ★ Books available

Self-care in times of loss:

Taking time for self-care is critical especially when you are processing a loss and experiencing a wide range of emotions. Even doing a few small things a week can make a huge impact on your mental state.

Physical Self-Care: Movement of the body, health, nutrition, sleep, and resting needs. Some examples of physical self-care- Going for a walk - Taking a bath - Getting enough sleep (7-9 hours per night) - Eating Healthier - Exercising.

Psychological Self-Care: Learning new things, practicing mindfulness and creativity. Some examples of psychological self-care. Practicing mindfulness - Reading - Learning a new skill or hobby - Doing a Digital detox - Yoga & Meditation.

Emotional Self-Care: Enhancing emotional literacy, navigating emotions, increasing empathy, and managing stress effectively. Some examples of emotional self-care: Saying No (setting new boundaries with others) - Reflecting on your feelings - Practicing self-compassion - Being aware of your Emotional boundaries

Social Self-Care: Having a supportive group and network of relationships around you that you can trust and turn to. Some examples of social self-care: Honoring your Commitments - Asking for Help - Meeting New People - Trying new Activities - Spending time with family and friends.

Spiritual Self-Care: Having beliefs and values that are important to you and guide your life. Some examples of spiritual self-care: Meditating - Reflecting in a journal - Going on a Retreat/Getaway - Walking in nature

Grief Meditation:

The rush of emotions and experiences that comes with bereavement can be overwhelming at times. While meditation does not alter our sentiments, it does alter our perception and experience of them. Practicing mindfulness meditation for mourning, which is observing thoughts and sensations without reacting or judging them, can help the body and mind find serenity and comfort during a difficult time.

Benefits of Meditation:

- Developing stress management abilities.
- Self-awareness is growing.
- Concentrating on the present moment.
- Negative emotions are being reduced.
- Expanding one's imagination & ingenuity.
- Patience & tolerance are being improved.

Example of Guided Grief Meditations:

- [*Coping with Grief Meditation*](#)
- [*10 minute Guided Meditation*](#)
- [*Mindfulness Guided Meditation*](#)
- [*Let Go of Anxiety Meditation*](#)



Meditation for grief does not change what has happened, but it can help you care for yourself with the compassion you deserve.

HEATHER STANG

How to help someone who is Grieving:



Grief Is Not
One-Size-Fits-All

- Reach Out
- Find a way to connect
- Listen more, talk less
- Acknowledge how they feel
- Do not try to fix them
- Do not diminish their grief

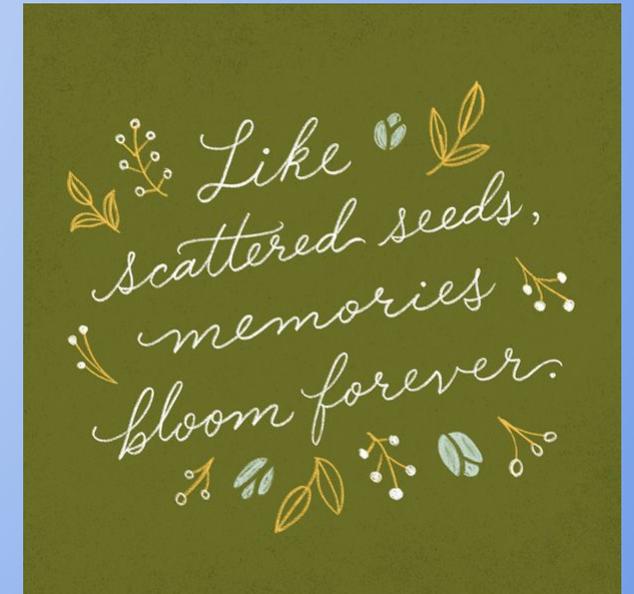
- Remember everyone is different & are coping on at their own pace. Understand it is okay to not have all the answers, being there for someone does not always look the same.
- Reach out & understand that they might not be ready to talk or know what they need right away.
- Make it clear to your bereaved loved one that you are available to listen. Listen if they need to talk and use active listening skills.

“The only cure
for grief is to grieve.”

EARL GROLLMAN
writer

Resources for a Grieving child:

- [My Good Grief Journal](#)
 - *Apps based Grief journal.*
- [Child Bereavement Resources](#)
 - *This is a site with a list of Resources.*
- [Kids Resources and Activities](#)
 - *This is activities for children experiencing loss.*
- [Comprehensive Guide for Child Grief](#)
 - *Detailed breakdown by age groups of discussing loss & grief.*
- [Coping Skills for Grief](#)
 - *List of Activities, metaphors & more to help children cope & understand.*



Suicide Hotline:

If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health emergency or suicidal ideation please call & get help! There is support available 24/7, get the help you need now!

National Suicide line:

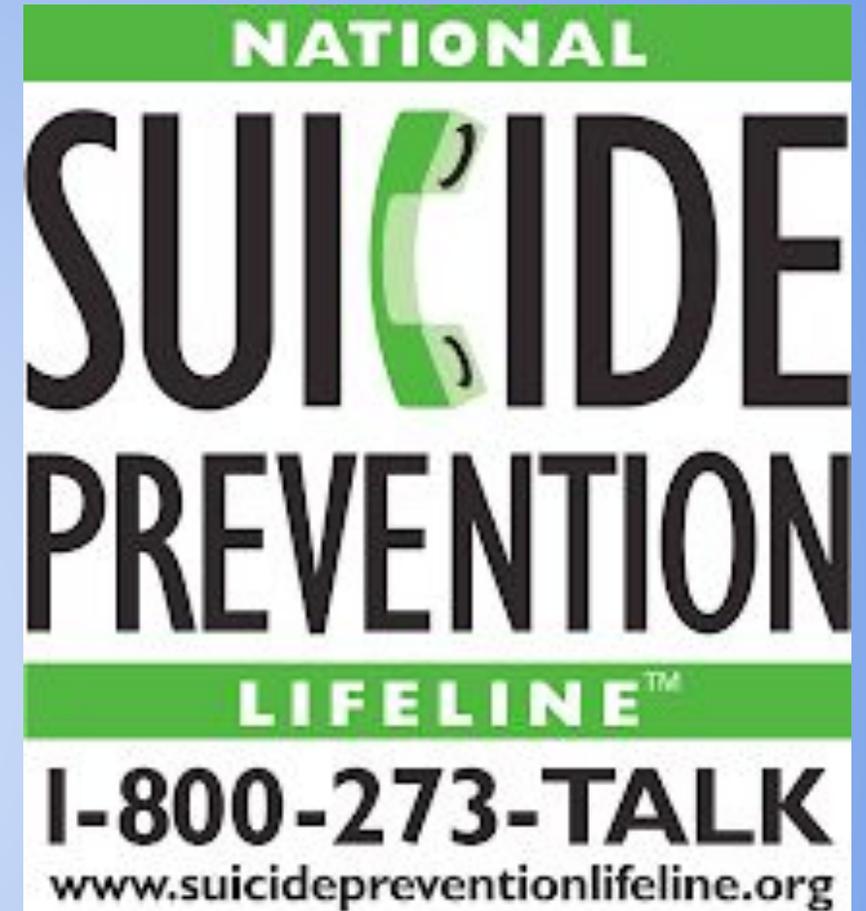
1-800-662-HELP

BHN Crisis (Western Mass Crisis)

413-733-6661

Crisis Text Line:

Text "Talk" to 741741



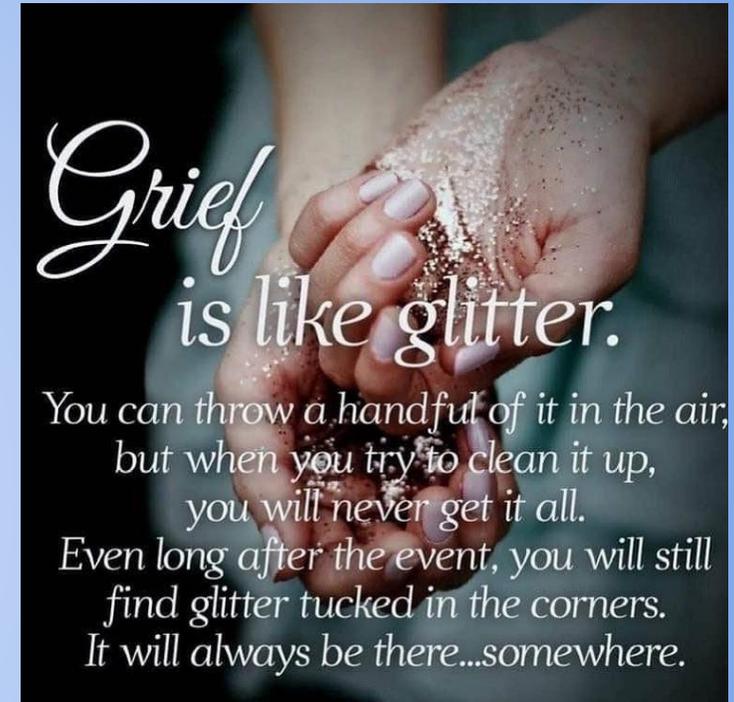
**HOPE WILL
NOT BE
CANCELLED.**

Workshop Wrap-Up

The past year has been filled with so much loss, uncertainty & change. There is no timeline on Grief and it can look differently for everyone, but support is available. You are not alone in this journey through grief. If you or someone you know could benefit from Mental Health Services please reach out for help.

Little changes each day can lead to monumental growth & happiness. Don't wait for the perfect time to make your mental health and happiness a priority. Challenge yourself to start building positive momentum toward change today!

Thank you for Downloading our PowerPoint if you have any questions please feel to reach out (413)579-8887 or www.SerendipityPsych.com





Serendipity Psych

Counseling & Consultations

We are a small private practice that opened in January of 2020. We opened Serendipity in order to provide our clients the best care we can offer, we achieve this by carrying smaller caseloads and are client centered in our approach. Helping our clients' & their families grow & rebuild themselves is our priority. A major component of this is truly knowing our clients, we invest not only our time but our passion into helping them attain their goals. You will never feel like a number at Serendipity, we are a small practice where each referral is treated with unrivaled care & compassion.

****No Waitlist****

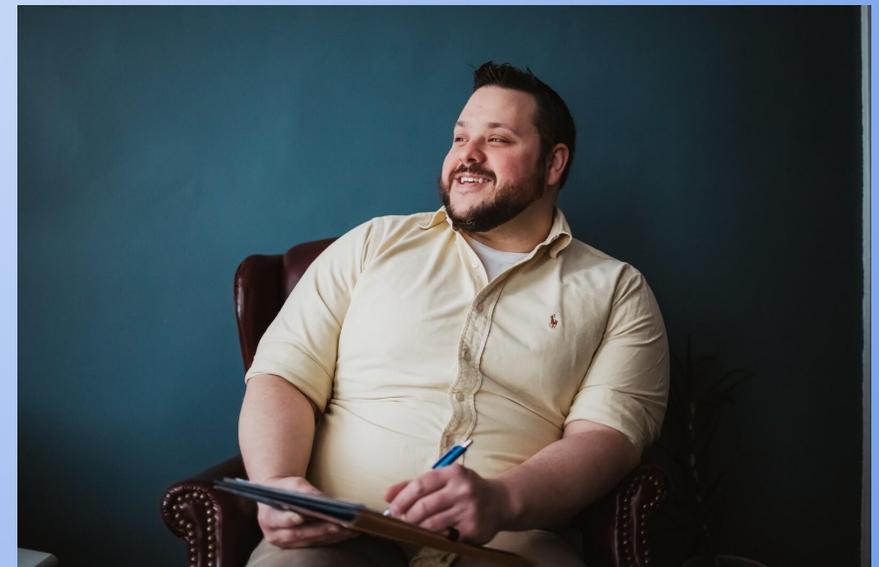
Call Today for Free Phone Consult 413-579-8887
Telehealth & In-Person Services Available

For More Information Check out:

Website: www.SerendipityPsych.com

Email: Dallas@serendipitypsych.com

Email: Ariana@serendipitypsych.com



Information was gathered from the following Resources

- <https://webhealing.com/grief-and-powerlessness/>
- https://whatsyourgrief.com/resources/?resource_type=grief-professional
- <https://www.verywellhealth.com/grief-and-mourning-process-11325>
- <https://whatsyourgrief.com/anticipatory-grief/>
- <https://www.griefrecoverymethod.com/blog/2017/09/chronic-and-prolonged-grief>
- <https://www.verywellmind.com/five-stages-of-grief-4175361>
- <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/grief/coping-with-grief-and-loss.htm>
- <https://mindfulnessandgrief.com/meditation-for-grief/>
- <https://www.healthline.com/health/stages-of-grief#denial>
- <https://www.bridgestorecovery.com/complicated-grief/signs-complicated-grief-disorder/>
- <https://www.apa.org/topics/grief>
- <https://time.com/5118994/advice-for-helping-grieving-friend/>
- <https://www.mhanational.org/bereavement-and-grief>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/15/books/review/erica-feldmann-hausmagick.html>
- <https://willowgreen-inc.myshopify.com/pages/grief-advice>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3384440/>