

Decoding Grief:

How to Cope & Where to find Support.

We are a small private practice in Westfield with big goals of making positive impact on our community. We wanted to help our community especially the families who are going through this time of uncertainty. At Serendipity we take the time to get to know each of our clients' unique journeys which have led them to this moment. Helping our clients' & their families grow & rebuild themselves is our priority. A major component of this is we invest not only our time but our passion into helping them attain their goals.

Thank you for downloading our workshop! This workshop will focus on the loss of a loved one. But some of the information on the ways to cope can be helpful when dealing with any form of grieving.

Stages of Grief: Breaking down the 5 types of grief, remember that everyone experiences these stages differently. It is not as simple as proceeding through each stage in order or only once.

Types of Grief: There are numerous types of Grief that you could experience however we will be focusing on 4 of them in this workshop. This handout breaks down all of the possible types of griefs.

Coping Skills: Taking care of yourself is critical when coping with a loss, we will review some coping skill strategies to keep in mind.

Resources & Supports: We will be providing list of local therapists in the area as well numerous other resources and supports in the area.

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

If you or someone you know could benefit from Mental Health Services, please reach out for help. If you have any questions or are looking for additional support, please reach out at 413-579-8887 or www.SerendipityPsych.com



5 Stages of Grief:

DENIAL:

The first of the five phases of grief is Denial. It assists us in surviving the loss. The world becomes meaningless and overpowering at this point, life is illogical. We are in a condition of disbelief and horror, we become numb. We worry how we will continue, if we will continue, and why we should continue. We attempt to find a way to get through each day as quickly as possible. Denial and shock assist us in coping and ensuring our survival.

ANGER:

Anger is an important part of the recovery process, allow yourself to feel your rage, even if it seems infinite. The more you feel it, the more it will fade away and you will begin to heal. There are many other emotions behind the anger, and you will learn about them as time goes on, but anger is the one we are most familiar with. The truth is that rage knows no bounds and it can expand not just in size but also in scope.

BARGAINING:

Prior to a loss, it appears as though you would go to any length to save your loved one. We get tangled up in a maze of "If only..." and "What if..." statements. We want life to be the same as it was before; we want our loved one to be resurrected. We wish we could travel back in time and locate the tumor sooner, recognize the illness sooner, and prevent the accident. The "if onlys" lead us to criticize ourselves and what we "believe" we could have done better. We could even make a deal with the suffering. We will go to any length to avoid feeling the anguish of this loss. We are stuck in the past, attempting to find a way out of the pain. The stages are frequently thought to last weeks or months.

DEPRESSION:

Grief enters our lives on a deeper level, deeper than we ever imagined. Empty sensations appear, and grief enters our lives on a deeper level, deeper than we ever anticipated. This depressed phase feels as if it would never end. It's critical to recognize that this depression is not a symptom of mental disease. It is the proper response to a significant loss. We shrink from life, lost in a haze of deep melancholy, wondering if there is any point to it all. To not experience depression after a loved one dies would be unusual. When a loss fully settles in your soul, the realization that your loved one didn't get better this time and is not coming back is understandably depressing. If grief is a process of healing, then depression is one of the many necessary steps along the way.

ACCEPTANCE:

Acceptance is frequently conflated with the idea of being "fine" or "OK" with what has occurred. This isn't the case at all. Most people never feel OK or all right after losing a loved one. This stage is about accepting the fact that our loved one is no longer physically there and understanding that this is the new normal. We frequently feel as though we are betraying our loved one as we begin to live again and enjoy our lives. We will never be able to replace what has been lost, but we can form new bonds, meaningful relationships, and interdependencies. Rather than ignoring our sensations, we pay attention to them; we move, develop, grow, and evolve.

Brief Breakdown of Types of Grief:

Anticipatory Grief: For family caregivers, grieving can start long before the person you are caring for passes away. Anticipatory grief often starts when the person you are caring for gets a significant diagnosis and their health begins to deteriorate. Feelings are related to the loss of what was or what you thought life was going to be like. It can be difficult to speak with others about anticipatory grief because the person you care for is still alive and you may have feelings of guilt or confusion as to why you are feeling this kind of grief.

Normal Grief: Contrary to what the name might suggest, there really are no set guidelines to define normal grief in terms of timelines or severity of grief. Instead, think of normal grief as any response that resembles what you might predict grief to look like (if that makes any sense!). Many people define normal grief as the ability to move towards acceptance of the loss. With this comes a gradual decrease in the intensity of emotions. Those who experience normal grief are able to continue to function in their basic daily activities.

Delayed Grief: Delayed grief is when reactions and emotions in response to a death are postponed until a later time. This type of grief may be initiated by another major life event or even something that seems unrelated. Reactions can be excessive to the current situation and the person may not initially realize that delayed grief is the real reason for becoming so emotional.

Complicated grief (traumatic or prolonged): Complicated grief refers to normal grief that becomes severe in longevity and significantly impairs the ability to function. It can be difficult to judge when grief has lasted too long. Other contributing factors in diagnosing complicated or prolonged grief include looking at the nature of the loss or death (was it sudden? violent? multiple?), the relationship, personality, life experiences, and other social issues. Some warning signs that someone is experiencing traumatic grief include: self-destructive behavior, deep and persistent feelings of guilt, low self-esteem, suicidal thoughts, violent outbursts, or radical lifestyle changes.

Disenfranchised Grief (ambiguous): Disenfranchised grief can be felt when someone experiences a loss, but others do not acknowledge the importance of the loss in the person's life. Others may not understand the importance of the loss, or they may minimize the significance of the loss. Disenfranchised grief can occur when someone experiences the loss of an ex-spouse, a pet, or a co-worker. The other side of disenfranchised grief is when you experience a loss such as when the person you are caring for has dementia or a decline in their physical abilities. The person is physically present, but they are also absent in other significant ways.

Chronic Grief: This type of grief can be experienced in many ways: through feelings of hopelessness, a sense of disbelief that the loss is real, avoidance of any situation that may remind someone of the loss, or loss of meaning and value in a belief system. At times, people with chronic grief can experience intrusive thoughts. If left untreated, chronic grief can develop into severe clinical depression, suicidal or self-harming thoughts, and even substance abuse.

Cumulative Grief: This type of grief can occur when multiple losses are experienced, often within a short period of time. Cumulative grief can be stressful because you don't have time to properly grieve one loss before experiencing the next.

Breakdown of Types of Grief continued:

Masked Grief: Masked grief can be in the form of physical symptoms or other negative behaviors that are out of character. Someone experiencing masked grief is unable to recognize that these symptoms or behaviors are connected to a loss.

Distorted Grief: Unfortunately, distorted grief can present with extreme feelings of guilt or anger, noticeable changes in behavior, hostility towards a particular person, plus other self-destructive behaviors.

Exaggerated Grief: Exaggerated grief is felt through the intensification of normal grief responses. This intensification tends to worsen as time moves on. This may result in self-destructive behavior, suicidal thoughts, drug abuse, abnormal fears, nightmares, and even the emergence of underlying psychiatric disorders.

Inhibited Grief: This type of grief is when someone doesn't outwardly show any typical signs of grief. Often this is done consciously to keep grief private. Problems can arise with inhibited grief through physical manifestations when an individual does not allow themselves to grieve.

Secondary losses in Grief: Secondary loss is felt after the primary loss and can affect multiple areas of an individual's life. The grief from secondary loss is the emotional response to the subsequent losses that occur because of a death (the primary loss).

Collective Grief: Collective grief is felt by a group. For example, this could be experienced by a community, city, or country because of a natural disaster, death of a public figure, or a terrorist attack.

Abbreviated Grief: Abbreviated grief is a short-lived response to a loss. This could occur due to someone or something immediately filling the void, the distance that was felt, or the experience of anticipatory grief.

Absent Grief: Absent grief is when someone does not acknowledge the loss and shows no signs of grief. This can be the result of complete shock or denial of the death. It can be concerning if someone experiences absent grief for an extended period.

Serendipity Psych
Counseling & Consultations

Scheduling Worry Time:

WORRY TIME.



Have a special time scheduled to worry. If anything else appears outside that special time, write it down in a small notepad or on your smartphone. Save this worry for later, and then you will be relieved and able to go about your day and keep your focus.

Setting time aside each day for Worrying/Racing thoughts/Anxiety can start the process of you getting control back. It also allows you to get the thoughts of your head and onto paper where solutions might be easier to figure out & new perspectives gained.

- 1.) Start by scheduling worry time once a day for 1 week. Set aside 20-30 minutes during the morning or afternoon (put an alarm on phone to remind you if needed).
- 2.) For that 20-30-minute time frame, write down ALL your worries that you can think of and pop into your head. This time is to just get them out onto paper and out of your mind not to find the solutions/fix what your worried about, but this could occur as well.

*Writing your worries & thoughts down is therapeutic because it lets us gain a new perspective of our thoughts. This perspective is much different & powerful than one from internal reflection alone.

**Remember your objective as you start and finish each time. An example could be: "I am using this time to get my worries out; I will do my best to not put attention on these worries outside of this time each day." **

- 3.) Delaying worry in between Worry time will be tough at first, remind yourself to let the thoughts go until the next designated worry period. Reinforcing with positive self-talk (Redirecting your thoughts, Grounding techniques & mindfulness can be helpful) can assist through this transition.
- 4.) After the first week, reflect on what you have written, check for patterns, resolutions, does any day jump out at you. Your mind find common themes throughout which keep showing up.
- 5.) As you practice this more, you will start to have more control of when and where you find yourself worrying. It will take some time, but it is a skill you can strengthen.

Worry is our minds attempt to problem solve & an avenue to cope with uncertainty which we face often. People who find themselves constantly worrying often find themselves in "what-ifs" which can be a tough road to go on constantly. But by utilizing this technique in conjunction with additional coping skills managing Anxiety & worry is possible.

Breaking Down Self Care:

Being able to break down what Self-Care is can help us all see what areas we can work on. Try incorporating a few of these into your life can have a direct impact on your overall health. Take some time to slow down and evaluate your needs and goals. Taking care of ourselves is not selfish at all, it is needed for us to not burnout.

1) **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

2) **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

3) **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

4) **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.

5) **Professional Self-Care:** Sharing your strengths and gifts, having clear professional boundaries, and living your purpose. Some examples of professional self-care-

- Eating balanced diet - Negotiating your needs - Having clear professional boundaries

6) **Environmental Self-Care:** Having an organized, well maintained and clutter-free work, business, and home environment, having clean clothes and a clean and well-maintained mode of transport. Some examples of environmental self-care-

- Decluttering at Home/Work - Monitoring technology time -Maintaining a clean/safe living environment.

7) **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

8) **Financial Self-Care:** Being responsible with your finances and having a conscious relationship with money. Some examples of financial self-care-

- Knowing where your income is coming from & What Expenses are - Completing your tax responsibilities on time - Spending and saving money wisely.

Resource Links from PowerPoint:

What's Your Grief: Articles-Resources-Online Courses-Books & more.
<https://whatsyourgrief.com/>

Psychology Today: Search for local Therapist & Psychiatrist. Can narrow search by Insurance, Location & more. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us>

Web Healing: Articles-Forums-Blog-Resources. <https://webhealing.com/>

Good-Grief: Tips & Support-Books available. <https://good-grief.org/resources/>

My Good Grief Journal - Apps based Grief journal.
<https://www.mygoodgriefjournalforkids.com/>

Child Bereavement Resources - This is a site with a list of Resources.
<https://childbereavement.org/>

Kids Resources and Activities - This is activities for children experiencing loss.
<https://www.dougy.org/resources/audience/kids?how=&who=&type=activities&age=>

Comprehensive Guide for Child Grief - Detailed breakdown by age groups of discussing loss & grief.
<https://www.everystep.org/filesimages/Grief%20and%20Loss/ATP%20Childrens%20Guide%20to%20Grief.pdf>

Coping Skills for Grief - List of Activities, metaphors & more to help children cope & understand.
<https://www.wholechildcounseling.com/post/helping-children-teens-cope-with-grief-loss>

Serendipity Psych
Counseling & Consultations

::Resources & Supports::

::Supports/Hotlines::

BHN Crisis-Westfield-413-568-6386
BHN Crisis-Springfield-24/7-413-733-6661
CSO Greenfield Crisis-413-774-5411
CSO Northampton Crisis-413-586-5555
WARM line-413-536-3003
Substance Abuse Hotline-1-800-662-3457

:: Outpatient Therapy ::

Carson Center-413-568-6141
West Central Family Counseling-413-592-1980
Serendipity Psych – 413-579-8887
Center of Human Development (CHD)-Park St-413-781-6556
River Valley Counseling Center-Springfield-413-737-2437
River Valley Counseling Center-Holyoke-413-540-1100
Community Support Options (CSO)-413-737-9544

::Food Pantries::

Westfield Food Pantry-413-572-0802
West Springfield Parish Cupboard-(serving: Agawam & West Springfield)-413-734-7969
Springfield-Open Pantry Community Services-413-737-5353
Westfield Soup Kitchen-413-572-9147
Lorraine's Pantry/Soup Kitchen-413-592-9528

::Homeless Shelters::

Westfield-Samaritan Inn-413-568-3122
Springfield-Worthington Street-413-732-3069
Taylor Street-413-732-0516
Springfield Rescue Mission-413-732-0808

::Substance Abuse/IOP::

Carlson-413-733-1423
Franklin-413-223-5246 x1
Providence-413-539-2971
Adcare-(508)-799-9000
Comm. Health Link-508-860-1200
Arbour-800-222-2337
STAR-508-324-7763
Highpoint-774-213-8435
Adcare IOP-West Springfield-413-209-3124

:: Residential Programs Substances::

BHN-Cole's Place-413-747-0705
BHN-Hope Center-413-746-4673
BHN-My Sister's House- 413-733-7891
BHN-Northern Hope-413-733-1423

::Domestic Violence::

Safe Passages-413-586-1125
DV Hotline-1-800-799-7233
YWCA-DV Shelter-413-732-3121
Planned Parenthood-1-800-258-4448

::Elder Services::

Springfield Senior Services-413-781-8800
Highland Valley Elder Services-413-586-2000
Hilltown Elder Network-413-296-4536

::Financial/Resource Aid::

Fuel Assistance-1-800-370-0940
Community Action-413-774-2310
SNAP Info-1-877-382-2363
WIC-413-534-2460
HAP Housing-413-233-1600
Welfare-1-800-249-2007

::Masshealth/Transportation::

Member #-1-800-841-2900
MART-transportation-1-978-345-7711
PVRTA-413-781-7882
Michael's taxi-413-568-8811

::Day Structure::

DMH-413-452-2300
Forum House-413-562-5293

::VNA/PCA::

Noble VNA-413-562-7049
Amedisys Health-413-789-0027
Gentiva-413-733-1132
Baystate VNA-413-781-5070
Epic VNA/PCA-413-205-1696
Starvos PCA-413-781-5555
Kindred Health PCA-413-733-1132

::PCPS::

Family Medicine-413-562-5173
Noble PCP-413-572-6050
Hampden County Physicians-413-569-2257
Riverbend Medical-Westfield-413-533-2900
Westside Adult Medicine-413-794-9110

::Urgent Care::

Noble Express-413-642-7200
MedExpress-413-562-0482
AFC Urgent Care-413-781-0100

::Outpatient Mental Health Referrals::

Check on:: PsychologyToday.com-To Search for Therapists by location & insurance.

Behavioral Health Network (BHN) –Central Intake: 413-737-2439 & 413-733-1423

Agawam Counseling Center-

30 Southwick Street, Feeding Hills, MA
Agawam intake: 413-786-6410

Liberty St Clinic-

417 Liberty St, Springfield, MA
413-733-1423

BHN The Carson Center-

77 Mill Street, Westfield, MA
413-568-1421

Mt. Tom Center for Mental Health-

40 Bobala Rd, Holyoke, MA
Mt. Tom intake: 413-536-5473

BHN Valley Human Services-

96 South Street, Ware, MA
413-967-6241

School Street Clinic-

110 Maple Street, Springfield, MA
413-733-1423

Center for Development-

120 Maple Street, Springfield, MA
413-737-3730

Sloan Clinic-

471 Chestnut St, Springfield, MA
Intake: 413-733-1423

Child Guidance Clinic-

110 Maple Street, Springfield, MA
Intake: 413-733-1423

City Clinic-

230 & 235 Maple St, Holyoke, MA
Intake-413-532-0389

West Central Family & Counseling-

103 Myron St, West Springfield, MA
413-592-1980

Community Support Options:

130 Maple St, Suite 325, Springfield, MA
413-737-9544

River Valley Counseling-

Locations:

303 Beech Street, Holyoke MA
249 Exchange Street, Chicopee MA
35 Mt. Carmel Ave., Chicopee MA
120 Maple Street, Springfield MA
2 Mechanic Street Easthampton MA
Central Intake: 413-540-1234

Psych Care Associates:

185 West Ave, Suite 301, Ludlow, Ma
413-583-6750

Center for Human Development (CHD)-

Locations:

246 Park Street, West Springfield, MA 01089
Intake-413-737-4718
Appleton Street, Holyoke, MA 01040
Intake-413- 420-2302
367 Pine Street, Springfield, MA 01105
Intake-413-737-1426
622 State St, Springfield, MA 01109
Intake-413-654-1602

MacMunn Counseling

30 Court St, Westfield MA
413-562-8045

Westfield Counseling Services:

102 Elm St, Suite 9-Westfield MA
Janice L. Pagano,PP,RP-413-569-0444
Lesley Love, LMHC-413-579-6371
Gary Loomis, LMHC-413-237-1928
Anne Hotchkiss,LICSW-413-297-5564494

Wendy Kellaher-

7 Hadley St, 2nd Floor-South Hadley MA
413-536-7677 or 413-344-2545

::Crisis/Phone Support::BHN Crisis-Springfield-24/7-413-733-6661