



COMMUNITY
HEALTH CARE
ASSOCIATION
of New York State

Community Care Corner

Health Center Staff Wellness Resources

Trauma-Informed Toolbox Strategy Session: Honoring Grief and Loss During a Pandemic

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“

We're talking about grieving a
living loss — **one that
keeps going and going.**

”

(Robert Neimeyer, 2020)

What is Grief?

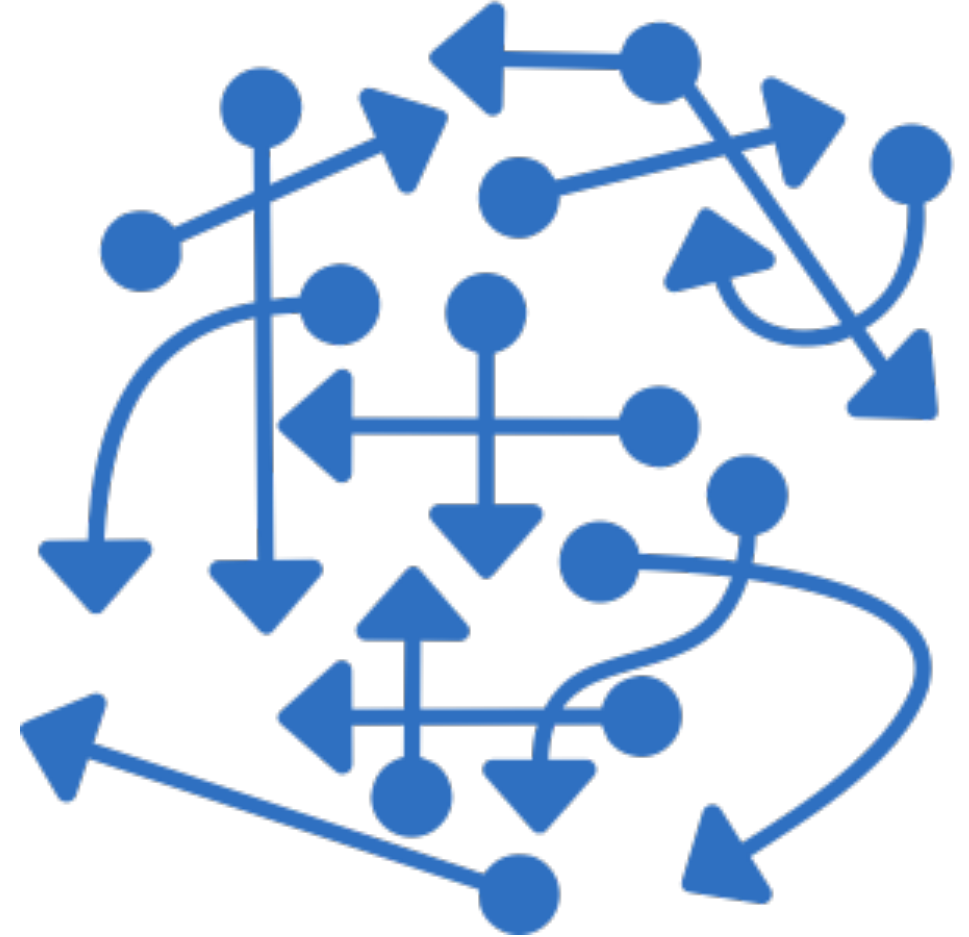
Grief is a **natural** response to loss—a strong, sometimes overwhelming reaction, that may include:

- Feeling sad
- Feeling empty or numb
- Feeling angry
- Heartache
- Confusion
- Physical reactions, such as weakness, nausea, trouble sleeping, etc.



Grief Myth #1: Everyone Grieves in Predictable “Stages”

- Everyone grieves differently.
- Some people go through stages like:
 - *denial, anger, bargaining, sadness, and/or acceptance*
- There is no recipe for grief.



Grief Myth #2: Grief and Mourning Are the Same

- Grief is defined as the emotional state related to the loss of something or someone.
- Grief includes all of the emotions that the bereaved feel; the numbness, acute emotional pain, anger, and so on.
- Mourning includes the *actions* that come from grief.
- Mourning is how the person going through the grief process expresses it.



For example: a person that is in mourning may choose to wear black clothing, fast for a certain period, write in a journal, or follow certain cultural rites.

Grief Myth #3: Grief has an End Point

- Grief is not something that simply goes away.
- The face of grief is ever-changing.
- Grief is often triggered by external reminders.
- It is not something one “will eventually get over” but is instead something one integrates into self.



Tips to Manage Grief and Loss

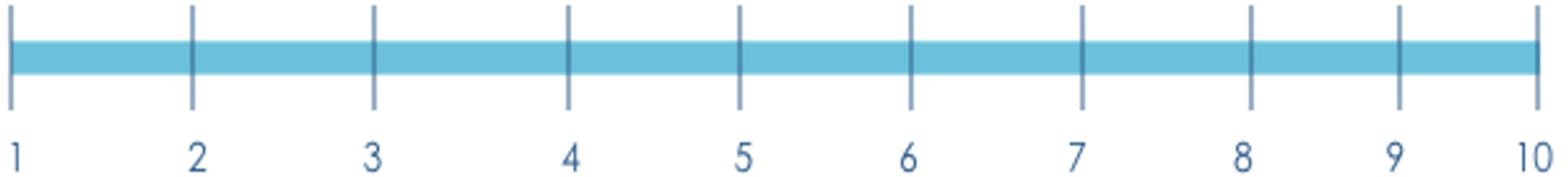
- Balance bad thoughts with good
- Admit the feelings
- Build a realistic sense of hope
- Stock up on compassion
- Set up a routine that includes a balance between loss-related and restorative activities
- Maintain boundaries re: news/social media
- Find time to rest and be still
- Focus on what you *can* control
- Social connection
- General healthy habits
- Help others





(The Institute on Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care, 2020)

How well are you honoring grief and loss?



1 = not well

5 = half-way there

10 = very well

What will it take to get just one point higher on the scale?



Additional Resources Re: Grief and Loss

- American Psychological Association – [*Grieving Life and Loss*](#)
- Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress – [*Grief Leadership During COVID-19*](#)
- Harvard Business Review – [*That Discomfort You're Feeling Is Grief*](#)
- Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network – [*Grief: Cultural Responsiveness*](#)
- Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network – [*Evidence-Based Treatments for Grief*](#)
- NYS Office of Mental Health – [*Reminders When Coping With Grief*](#)
- NYS Office of Mental Health – [*Ten Tips for Helping Others Grieve*](#)
- Very Well Mind – [*Understanding Grief in the COVID-19 Pandemic*](#)

