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Info@GrieveWell.com

Grieve Well: Understanding Grief

Writing Prompts

1. Take a moment to write down any myths or beliefs that play a role in your life about grief?
2. Reflect on where you are in your grief journey.
3. Take a moment to write down all the normal symptoms of grief and stress that you might be experiencing.
4. Identify what type of grievers are in your family. Think about how the roles in your family may have changed. What do need more of from your family?
5. Make a self-care plan. Write down some tips that would be helpful for you to try.
6. If you are supporting someone in grief, write down two concrete ideas you can do to help a grieving friend / family member.

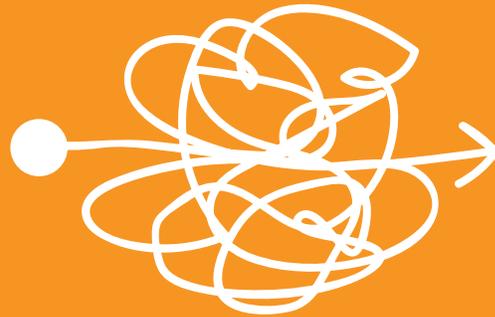
Grieve Well:

Understanding Grief

Participant Handbook



How we want
grief to work



How grief
actually works



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What is grief?

Many people use the words to grieve and to mourn interchangeably. However, they don't have the same meanings and understanding the differences in the two words can be helpful.

What is grief?

- Grief is a natural reaction to loss, various intense emotions such as deep sadness to anger, grief is the inward feelings that we experience after facing loss

What is mourning?

- Mourning is an outward reflection of feelings of grief
- Cultural examples of mourning include wearing black, armbands, and flags at half-mast
- People may express mourning through displays of emotion, art, journaling, making a memory box or album, setting up a scholarship in the loved one's honor, and other practices to memorialize a loss
- Mourning is important because it helps people to avoid unhealthy behavior such as isolation, substance abuse, or other pain avoidance behaviors
- When grieving individuals mourn, they are showing others that they feel grief. This helps supporting individuals honor that grief and give needed comfort, help, and assistance



Myths and Facts about Grief

Myth: The pain from experiencing loss will go away more quickly if I ignore it.

Fact: Ignoring the pain will not make it go away, facing your grief actively will help promote true healing.

Myth: If you don't express your grief through expressions of sorrow and tears it means you are not feeling sorry about your loss.

Fact: Crying is a normal response to grief, but there are other normal grief responses as well. Each grieving person needs to have support even though they will all express their grief in their own unique ways.

Myth: It is important to be strong and hold back emotions when confronted with grief to show others you are not weak.

Fact: Strong feelings such as sadness, fear, or loneliness are normal reactions to grief. Expressing these feelings does not mean that you are weak. You don't need to "protect" your family by hiding your grief. Showing your feelings will help you and your family.

Myth: Your grief journey should last about a year.

Fact: There is no time frame for grief. The amount of time it takes to have feelings of grief subside can vary with each individual.

Myth: Moving on with your life indicates that you have forgotten about your loved one.

Fact: When you move forward in your life it indicates that you have accepted the loss of your loved one which is a positive step in healing. Making life adjustments is not the same as forgetting . . . the memories you have of your loved one will remain a part of you.

Myth: Grief work is done in advance when a death is anticipated.

Fact: Although some grieving may be done before the person dies, the actual death may still cause intense grief reactions.

Myth: It is helpful for the griever if friends don't bring up the subject of the loss.

Fact: Those who have experienced loss are usually desiring to talk about their loved one and their grief experiences. Talking helps to process the grief.

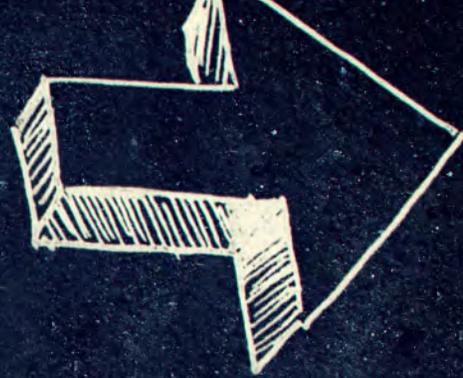
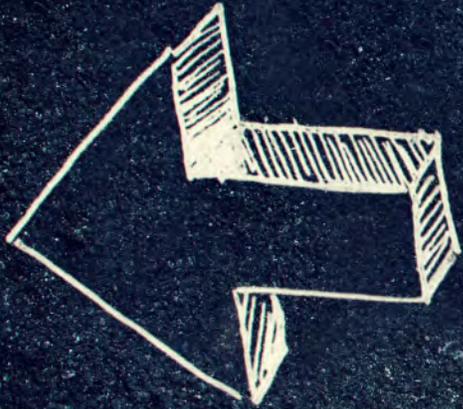
Myth: Saying "I know how you feel" is a helpful way to help someone who is grieving.

Fact: We all experience grief in unique ways and it is probably not possible to truly know how someone else feels.

(Adapted from: Self-Care Handbook: Working through Grief, published by Channing Bete Company, 2005)

FACTS

MYTHS



Think about your beliefs...

Write down any myths or beliefs about grief that have played a role in your life.

What are your beliefs about grief now?

The Four Tasks of Mourning

Task #1: Accept the reality of the loss

After a loved one dies, grieving individuals will often experience shock and disbelief that the death occurred. These sorts of feelings are normal and help to protect the person from the overwhelming pain of the loss. When the griever accepts the reality of the loss they acknowledge that the person is dead and will not return. This acceptance needs to occur both intellectually and emotionally.

Attending the funeral and talking to others about your loss can help the grieving individual begin to accept the loss.

Task #2: Experience the pain of grief

Although pain is not a desirable experience, it is important for healing to acknowledge and work through the pain of grief. If this acknowledgment does not occur, it will become manifest through physical symptoms and/or abnormal behaviors. Letting yourself feel the strong emotions of the grieving process can be exhausting and make it difficult for the individual to function. Be compassionate with yourself as grieving is occurring and realize that one day you will function normally again.

Task #3: Adjust to a world without the loved one

There are three types of adjustments that need to be made after losing a loved one: external, internal, and spiritual. External adjustments may require learning new skills and taking on roles that the deceased performed. Internal adjustments are required to form a new sense of self without the person who died. Spiritual adjustments are needed because death can alter or damage a person's fundamental beliefs and they lose a sense of control in their lives.

Task #4: Find an enduring connection with the deceased while reinvesting energy into living life

Completing this task involves finding an ongoing, appropriate connection in our lives emotionally with the person who has died, while also reserving the energy needed to continue living.

Grieving individuals need to find ways to find satisfaction in their lives socially, emotionally, and practically. There is a recognition that life can be lived again and other people can be a part of your life.

(Adapted from: Worden, W. W. (2009). *Grief counseling and grief therapy: A handbook for the mental health practitioner* (4th ed.). New York, NY. Springer Publishing)

The Journey of Grief



Realistic Expectations During the Grief Process



- Grief will take longer than most people think.
- Grief takes more energy than we ever imagine.
- Grief shows itself in all spheres of our lives, in the emotional, social, physical, and spiritual.
- We feel grief not only for the actual person we lost, but also for our hopes, dreams, and unfulfilled expectations, and unmet needs.

- New losses bring up unresolved grief from our past, often forcing us to cope with an array of confusing feelings at once.
- Grief can temporarily affect our decision making and problem-solving abilities and cause difficulties in concentrating.
- Sometimes grief makes us feel we “are going crazy.”
- Society has unrealistic expectations about grief and the mourning process and people may respond inappropriately to you.
- Grief may cause a variety of physical symptoms, like sleeplessness, tightness in the chest, and decreased energy.
- Family members may not always provide the support we expect, and their grief may be very different from ours.

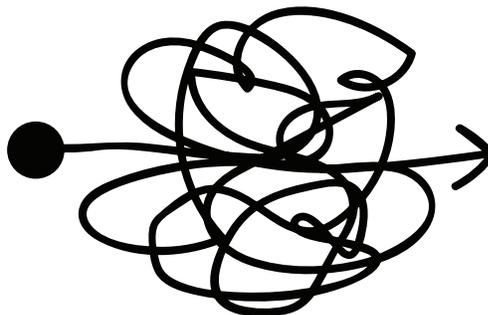
Sometimes people have the necessary social support to help them through loss. But more often, they need to reach out for support, let others know what they need, and actively build a network that facilitates personal growth and renewal.

Make a list of people you can reach out to for support.

How Grief Works



How we want
grief to work



How grief
actually works

"There are three needs of the griever: To find the words for the loss, to say the words aloud, and to know that the words have been heard."

-Victoria Alexander

Tell the story of your loss. What do you want others to know? What do you keep to yourself?

Normal Symptoms of Grief and Stress

Grief shows up in all spheres of our lives.

PHYSICAL

- appetite change
- tension headaches
- fatigue
- sleep changes
- weight changes
- digestive changes
- pounding heart
- accident prone
- teeth grinding
- restlessness
- increased alcohol, drug, tobacco use

MENTAL

- forgetfulness
- dull senses
- poor concentration
- low productivity
- negative attitude
- confusion
- spacing out
- lack of motivation
- sense of presence

SPIRITUAL

- emptiness
- loss of faith
- doubt
- loss of direction

EMOTIONAL

- anxiety
- frustration
- mood swings
- bad temper
- nightmares
- crying spells
- irritability
- “no one understands”
- depression
- worrying
- easily discouraged
- anger
- guilt
- little joy
- hopelessness

RELATIONAL

- sense of isolation
- intolerance
- loneliness
- lashing out
- clamming up
- hiding
- distrust
- fewer contacts
- lack of intimacy
- desire for others to reach out
- desire to be left alone
- feeling like a “fifth wheel”
- need to “prove self”
- fear of being alone



Everyone Grieves Differently

How we grieve depends on many factors

Some factors can contribute to a person's grief lasting longer or becoming complicated (having any of these factors doesn't mean your grief journey will not be normal. However, your grief journey may be lengthened, and the risk of complicated grief is higher with more factors):

PERSONAL FACTORS

- personality of the griever
- multiple losses
- little or no support
- secondary losses
- life experiences
- mental health

CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE LOSS

- sudden death
- violent death
- death of a child

RELATIONSHIP WITH LOVED ONE

- very close relationship
- conflicted relationship

We all grieve differently because of the unique factors in our relationships.

When to seek professional help?

Seeking professional help is not a sign of weakness, it is a sign that you are making steps to promote healing.

- You have signs of depression
- You use or feel an urge to use alcohol or drugs to cope with pain
- Your grief is causing problems with your work and relationships
- The grief you feel seems too heavy to bear

Signs of Depression

- Grief tends to subside, but depression keeps going on
- Your sadness seems to be unconnected to your loss
- Depression harms a person's self-esteem while grief usually does not
- You have a lack of interest in things that were enjoyable for you in the past
- You feel guilty, without hope or self-worth
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Having trouble remembering, thinking or making decisions
- Not being able to perform daily activities
- Thoughts of suicide

If you have thoughts of suicide contact the following resources:

- 9-1-1
- Suicide Hotline:
1-800-273-8255
- Crisis text line: text
"START" to 741-741
- American Foundation
for Suicide Prevention:
www.afsp.org
- Center for Suicide
Prevention:
www.suicideinfo.ca



Grieving Styles

The Intuitive Griever

A person who is an Intuitive Griever feels the experience of grief with great intensity. He or she may be helped by expressing his or her grief emotionally, often by crying. One of the best ways for the Intuitive Griever to cope with his or her grief is to express his or her emotions about the grief freely and openly.

Common Characteristics of Intuitive Grievers include:

- Expresses his or her feelings openly.
- Anguish is expressed with sorrow and tears.
- An Intuitive Griever is not afraid to find support in other people.
- He or she allows the proper time to fully experience the inner pain.
- During the grief process, he or she may become physically exhausted or riddled with anxiety.
- During the grief process, he or she may experience long periods of confusion.
- The confusion may make way toward an inability to concentrate.
- Has the ability to openly discuss the grief.
- May benefit from support groups.

The Instrumental Griever

The Instrumental Griever feels grief, but less intensely and more physically. He or she may use thinking and problem-solving to cope with the grieving experience. The Instrumental Griever must have a tangible, physical way to express the grief. He or she may be reluctant to talk about feelings.

Common Characteristics of Instrumental Grievers Include:

- He or she may push aside feelings of grief in order to cope with the present situation.
- Chooses active ways of expressing grief.
- May be hesitant to discuss his or her feelings.
- May use humor to express his or her feelings as well as to manage anger.
- Feelings may only be expressed in private.
- Needs - and seeks - solitude to reflect upon the grief and adapt to the loss.
- He or she may not find a support group setting an ideal place to discuss his or her feelings.

Blended Grievers

There is a continuum between Intuitive and Instrumental Grief styles. Blended grievers are those who have characteristics of varying degrees of intuitive and instrumental grieving styles.

You or your loved ones can be at any point on this continuum. Recognizing your own grief style and those of others can help you to see the uniqueness of each person's grief experience.

(Resource: www.bandbacktogether.com/grief-resources/)





Mourners Bill of Rights

1. If any family member needs space to be alone and quiet, it will be given.
2. If any family member needs closeness, it will be given upon request or upon sensing that closeness is needed.
3. Nobody needs to hide their sorrow or cry alone in the pillow. When tears come, you are allowed to let them flow.
4. Periodically, we will get together as a family to assess how we are adjusting to the loss. We will never take it for granted that we are doing well just because we aren't talking about it.
5. On holidays and anniversaries, during the first year, we'll make it a point to talk about the person who is gone. Expect some sorrow on these days but plan something meaningful to do also.
6. Expect that there will be a gradual buildup of residual sorrow that may manifest itself in unpleasant ways that affect family harmony. We will try to understand what is behind these flare-ups.
7. Some of us in the family will adjust sooner than others and that is okay.
8. Understand that no one family member can meet all of one person's needs. It is all right if we turn to people outside of the family for help. We will not be afraid to lean on others during our intense grief.
9. If one of us is "touchy," we will try to remember that we have all been deeply injured by our loss. We are bruised and hurting. The pain lingers even though it may not be openly discussed.
10. Understand that the world soon forgets about our loss. They act as if nothing ever happened. Outside support is withdrawn too soon; therefore, the family will need to support one another over the long haul.
11. We will not expect any one person in this family to be the "strong" person who supports the rest of the family. Trying to be strong often postpones grief and adjustment. If any one of us feels like he or she is "falling apart," help from outside the family will be approved without any questions.

- 12. Disposing of personal items belonging to the one who is gone will be done slowly and with the feelings of all of the family taken into consideration.
- 13. We will not assume that any family member is too young or too old to grieve. The young and the old need to express their feelings about the loss. Children, most often, express their grief and fears in their play by acting out their feelings. Crying is not their primary means of communicating their grief.
- 14. We will not make any hasty decisions or moves during the first year of our grief.
- 15. We will not be surprised if a family member experiences a temporary loss of faith. Questioning is a normal part of trying to make sense out of what happened. We will listen to their questions without being judgmental.

Which of these do you want more of from your family?

Who in your family can you discuss this with?

What were some things that you did for your loved one that were especially helpful?



Social

- Talk to friends and supportive people
- It is OK not to talk if you don't feel like it
- You don't need to respond to e-mails or phone calls if you don't feel like doing so
- Prepare for awkward comments from others. Planning replies to common inquiries can help you feel more comfortable with these situations



Physical

- Get adequate sleep
- Do relaxing activities before bed to help you sleep such as reading a book, taking a bath, or listen to music
- Try to consistently go to bed and wake up at the same times each day
- Regular exercise will help you to feel better—start slowly if needed
- Do physical exercise with friends to help you stick to an exercise schedule and have some social interaction
- Eat a diet full of healthful foods including whole grains, fruits, and vegetables
- Don't rely on drugs or alcohol to help you cope with the pain from grief

Mental

- Set small and doable goals, such as getting up and getting dressed
- Let family members and friends help with practical matters to help relieve you of stress
- Plan time for quiet to calm your mind
- Consider lightening your responsibilities and work load—during times of grief you will not be able to function at your normal capacity
- Learn relaxation techniques such as mindfulness practices, yoga, and meditation
- Attending grief supporting groups or seeking help from a therapist is very helpful for your mental health while experiencing grief

Emotional

- It is OK to cry when you feel like it
- Journaling is a good way to get your thoughts and feelings out and promotes healing
- Interacting with others who have experienced loss can help you to see that there is hope and you will gradually have the pain soften and go forward in your life

Self-Care Goal Sheet

Set a Self-Care Goal

Write down how you would like to be feeling and how you will work towards that goal.

Create a 30 day Self-Care Plan

For the next 30 days, do one act of self-care each day that benefits your physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, or social health. You can use this grid like a calendar or a bingo board! Make sure reward yourself when you finish the 30 days.

Adapted from Blessing Manifesting



Additional Resources

Tips for Supporting Those who are Grieving

- Acknowledge the loss... It's okay to speak their name
- Realize the grief will go up and down and is unpredictable--expect the grieving individual to show signs of crying and sadness
- Be open, be personal, and timely in expressing sympathy
- Say you are sorry about what happened and for their pain
- Listening to the griever tell their story helps them to process the grief
- Talk about the special and endearing qualities of the person they have lost
- Respect privacy and quiet moments
- Offer specific assistance that is appropriate, such as meals and rides
- Include those who are grieving socially
- Remember that the griever will continue to need your caring and support after the first few weeks and months have passed
- Don't let your own feelings of discomfort or helplessness get in the way of reaching out to help
- Avoiding those who are grieving because you feel uncomfortable magnifies the pain the grieving individuals feel
- It is best not to say "I know how you feel" because no two loss experiences are exactly the same
- Grieving individuals are always thinking of their loved one, so don't be afraid to bring up the topic
- Avoid comments which are judgmental such as your opinions about their grief responses
- Don't try to find something positive or a moral lesson about their loss
- Many mourners feel feelings of guilt, do not add to this guilt by implying they were at fault for the death of their loved one

Grieving During the Holidays

The holidays can be very difficult when you are experiencing grief. Here are some ideas to help you navigate through the holiday season:

Thanksgiving, Christmas, Chanukah, New Year's Day

- Develop a Plan A and Plan B: Plan A can be the way you would like to celebrate the holiday; Plan B is a back-up plan in case you don't feel up to participating in your Plan A
- Choose which holiday traditions you would like to celebrate, feel free to start some new traditions (maybe a tradition that will include a memory of your deceased loved one)
- Allow time for feelings
- Manage your stress load and cut back on practices or tradition that may cause increased stress
- Allow others to help you with holiday preparations
- Pay attention to children during holidays—their grief is often overlooked

Valentine's Day

If you are grieving the loss of a spouse or romantic partner, Valentine's Day can be difficult. Here are some ideas to help:

- Write a love letter
- Smile a smile for your deceased romantic partner
- Tell someone about your loved one and why you cared so much for them

Supporting a Grieving Dad on Father's Day



Mother's Day and Father's Day

- Find ways to honor your mother/father
- If you lost a child, think of ways to honor your child
- Make a list of qualities or services that your mother/father did for you that you feel gratitude for
- Donate time or money for a cause that your mother/father felt strongly about
- Do something that you used to love to do together on that day

64 Tips for Coping with Grief at the Holidays

1. Acknowledge that the holidays will be different and they will be tough.
2. Decide which traditions you want to keep.
3. Decide which traditions you want to change.
4. Create a new tradition in memory of your loved one.
5. Decide where you want to spend the holidays – you may want to switch up the location, or it may be of comfort to keep it the same. Either way, make a conscious decision about location.
6. Plan ahead and communicate with the people you will spend the holiday with in advance, to make sure everyone is in agreement about traditions and plans.
7. Remember that not everyone will be grieving the same way you are grieving.
8. Remember that the way others will want to spend the holiday may not match how you want to spend the holiday.
9. Put out a ‘memory stocking’, ‘memory box’, or other special place where you and others can write down memories you treasure. Pick a time to read them together.
10. Light a candle in your home in memory of the person you’ve lost.
11. Include one of your loved one’s favorite dishes in your holiday meal.
12. Be honest. Tell people what you DO want to do for the holidays and what you DON’T want to do.
13. Make a donation to a charity that was important to your loved one in their name.
14. Buy a gift you would have given to your loved one and donate it to a local charity.
15. If you are feeling really ambitious, adopt a family in memory of your loved one. This can often be done through a church, salvation army, or good will.
16. See a counselor. Maybe you’ve been putting it off. The holidays are especially tough, so this may be the time to talk to someone.
17. Pick a few special items that belonged to your loved one and gift them to friends or family who will appreciate them.
18. Make a memorial ornament, wreath, or other decoration in honor of your loved one.
19. If you have been having a hard time parting with your loved one’s clothing, use the holidays as an opportunity to donate some items to a homeless shelter or other charity.
20. Send a holiday card to friends of your loved one who you may regret having lost touch with.
21. Visit your loved one’s grave site and leave a grave blanket, wreath, poinsettia, or other meaningful holiday item.

22. Play your loved one's favorite holiday music.
23. If your loved one hated holiday music, that's okay! Play whatever music they loved.
24. Journal when you are having an especially bad day.
25. Skip holiday events if you are in holiday overload.
26. Don't feel guilty about skipping events if you are in holiday overload!
27. Don't get trapped. When you go to holiday events, drive yourself so you can leave if it gets to be too much.
28. Pull out old photo albums and spend some time on the holiday looking at photos.
29. Talk to kids about the holidays - it can be confusing for kids that the holidays can be both happy and sad after a death. Let them know it is okay to enjoy the holiday, and it is okay to be sad.
30. Make a dish that your loved one used to make. Don't get discouraged if you try to make their dish and you fail. We've all been there (or, at least I've been there!).
31. Leave an empty seat at the holiday table in memory of your loved one.
32. If leaving an empty seat is too depressing, invite someone who doesn't have family to spend the holiday with.
33. Don't send holiday cards this year if it is too sad or overwhelming.
34. Don't feel guilty about not sending holiday cards!
35. Create a 'dear photograph', with a photo of a holiday past.
36. Skip or minimize gifts. After a death, material things can seem less meaningful and the mall can seem especially stressful. Talk as a family and decide whether you truly want to exchange gifts this year.
37. Put out a photo table with photos of your loved one at holiday celebrations in the past.
38. Go to a grief group. When everyone looks so gosh-darn filled with holiday cheer, sometimes it is helpful to talk with others who are struggling.
39. Skip (or minimize) the decorations if they are too much this year. Don't worry, you'll see plenty of decorations outside your house.
40. Don't feel guilty if you skip or minimize the decorations!
41. Remember that crying is okay. The holidays are everywhere and who knows what may trigger a cry-fest. We've all been there and it is okay to cry (even if you are in the sock aisle at Target).
42. Volunteer in your loved one's memory.
43. Let your perfectionism go. If you always have the perfect tree, perfectly wrapped gifts, and perfect table,
44. Ignore people who want to tell you what you "should" do for the holiday. Listen to yourself, trust yourself, communicate with your family, and do what works for you.
45. Seek gratitude. I am the queen of holiday funks, so I know this is tough. But try to find one daily gratitude throughout the holiday season. Write it down, photograph it, share it on Facebook. Whatever. Just look for the little things.

46. Watch the food. Food can make us feel better in the short term. Don't deprive yourself, but be careful that you don't let food become your holiday comfort.
47. Watch the booze. Alcohol can become a fast friend when we are grieving. If that holiday party is getting to be too much, head home instead of to the open bar.
48. If you are stressed about making the holiday dinner, ask someone else to cook or buy dinner this year.
49. If you are stressed about the crowds at the mall, cut back on gifts or do your shopping online.
50. Splurge on a gift for you. Grief can make us feel a little entitled and self-involved, and that is okay sometimes (within reason, of course). Splurge on a holiday gift for yourself this year, and make it a good one!
51. Say yes to help. There will be people who want to help and may offer their support. Take them up on their offers.
52. Ask for help. If people aren't offering, ask. This can be super-hard if it isn't your style, but it is important. Asking others to help with cooking, shopping, or decorating can be a big relief.
53. Have a moment of silence during your holiday prayer or toast in memory of your loved one.
54. Donate a holiday meal to a family in need through a local church, salvation army, or department of social services.
55. Identify the people who will be able to help and support you during the holidays and identify who may cause you more stress. Try to spend more time with the former group and less with the latter.
56. Make some quiet time for yourself. The holidays can be hectic, make quiet time for yourself to journal, meditate, listen to music, etc.
57. Practice self-care. I know, how cliché. But it is true - whatever it is that helps you recharge, do it. You can find some self-care tips here.
58. Support kids by doing a memorial grief activity together.
59. Donate altar flowers or other holiday decorations at your place of worship in memory of your loved one.
60. Prioritize and don't over commit. When the holidays are filled with so many parties, dinners, and events, save your energy for those that are most important. Look at everything you have to do and rank them in order of importance. Plan for the most important and skip the rest.
61. Make a list and check it twice. Grief makes it harder for us to concentrate and remember things. When you have a lot going on at the holidays, make a list even if you aren't usually a list-maker, and write things on the calendar.
62. Skip it. Really. If you just can't face the holiday it is okay to take a break this year. Before you get to this extreme, consider if you could just simplify your holiday. If you do skip, still make a plan. Decide if you will still see friends or family, go see a new movie, or make another plan.
63. Enjoy yourself! The holidays will be tough, but there will also be love and joy.
64. Remember, it is okay to be happy - this doesn't diminish how much you love and miss the person who isn't there this holiday. Don't feel guilty for the joy you do find this holiday season.

(Resource: <http://www.whatsyourgrief.com/64-tips-grief-at-the-holidays/>)

the tasks of grief

T = To accept the reality of
the loss

E = Experience the pain of the loss

A = Adjust to the new environment
without the lost person

R = Reinvest in the new
reality

Honoring a Loved One

Mind mapping activity

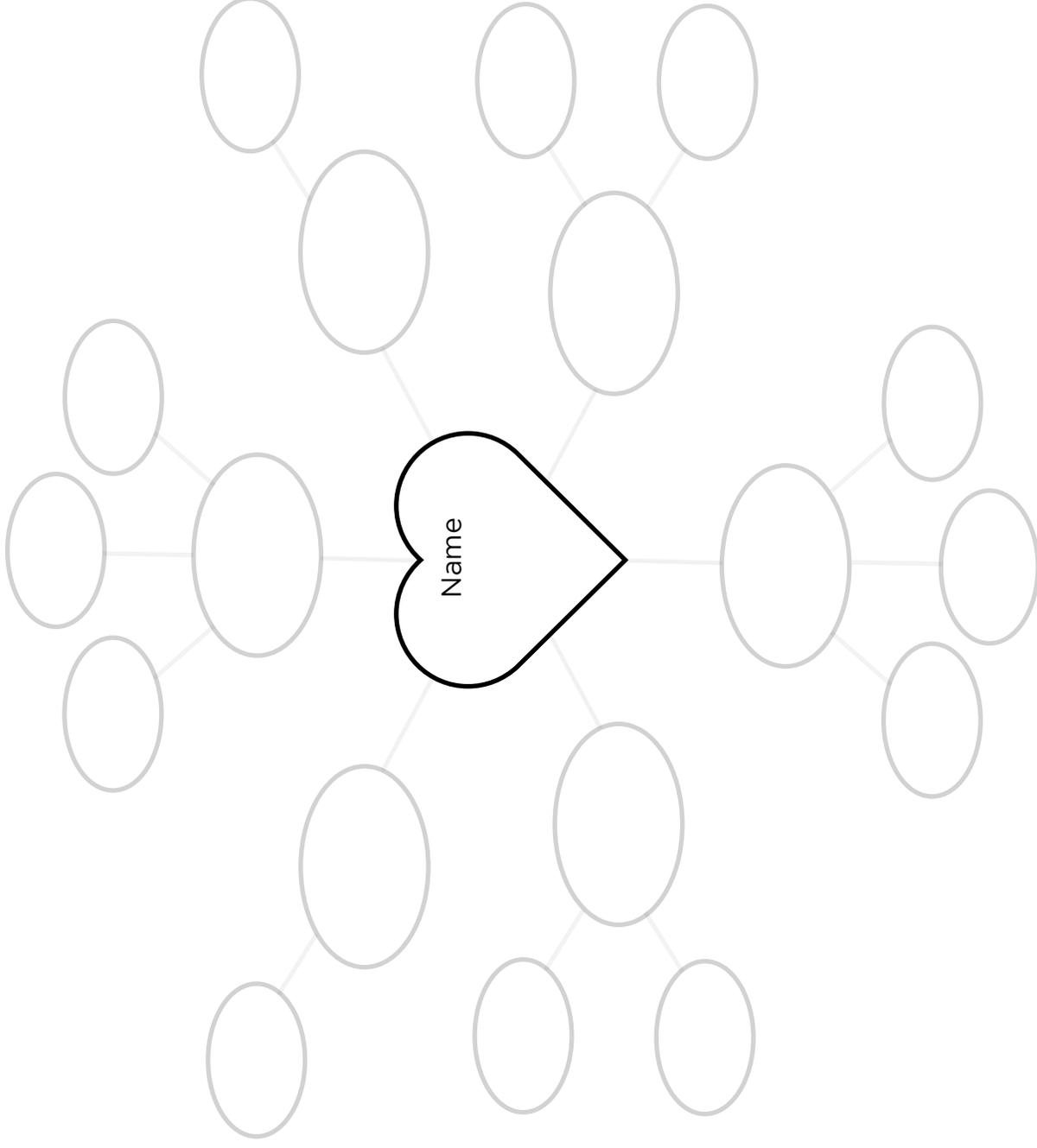
Mind mapping is a great way to quickly brainstorm information and find connections. It can be a helpful tool for involving multiple people in the ideation process, and spark the sharing of memories and stories.

This mind mapping activity is meant to help you generate and select ideas for how to honor your loved one. You can do this activity alone or with friends and family.

Instructions:

- 1) Print this page (or grab a blank sheet of paper) and a writing utensil
- 2) Set a timer for 5 minutes. Mind mapping should be fast, don't erase or edit your ideas as you work.
- 3) Write your loved one's name in the center of the page
- 4) Brainstorm themes that represent your loved one. These could be activities, experiences, hobbies, items, etc. Write these in larger circles surrounding their name. You can always add more or ignore circles.
Example: Baking
- 5) Break each of these themes into subthemes and write these in the smaller circles surrounding the theme.
Example: Christmas sugar cookies
- 6) Continue to brainstorm things that represent your loved one and filling in the mind map until the timer ends.
- 7) Take a minute to look at what you brainstormed. Think about which of your major themes reminds you of your loved one the most? What stands out to you the most? Where is there overlap between your themes and subthemes?

Circle 1-2 themes and 1-2 subthemes as use these as a basis for planning a way to honor your loved one.



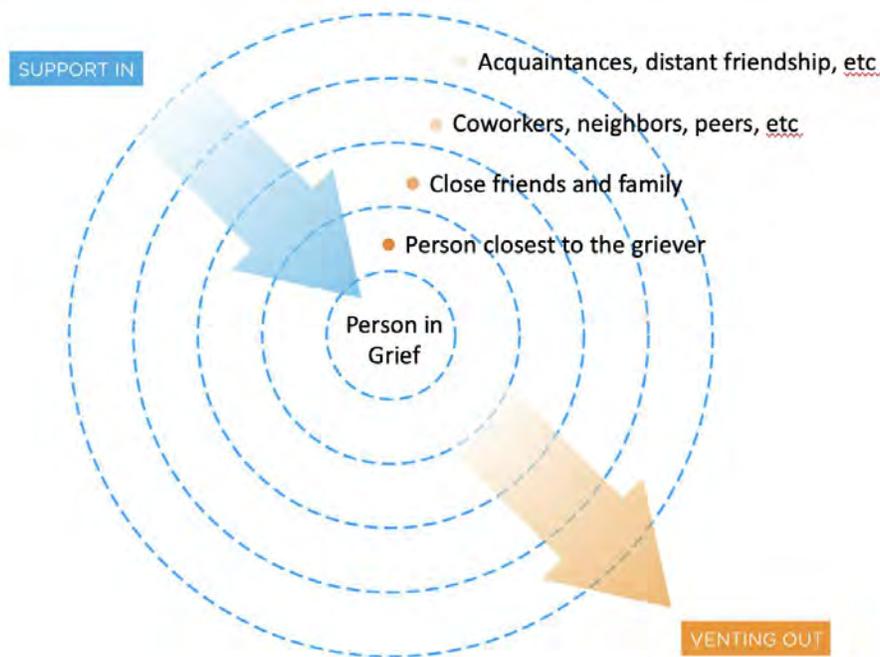
Who is in Your Circles Activity

This simple activity can help identify what to say and to whom when you are supporting someone in grief.

Susan Silk and Barry Goldman developed this activity as part of “Ring Theory” to help supporters evaluate the nature of their relationship with the griever. This activity can also be used by a griever to identify who is in their support network, or to help you prepare for an anticipated loss.

Instructions

Write the name of the person you are supporting in the center of the circle. Moving outwards, write the names of the people next closest to the griever. Continue doing this until you have captured the griever’s social network. This might look like...



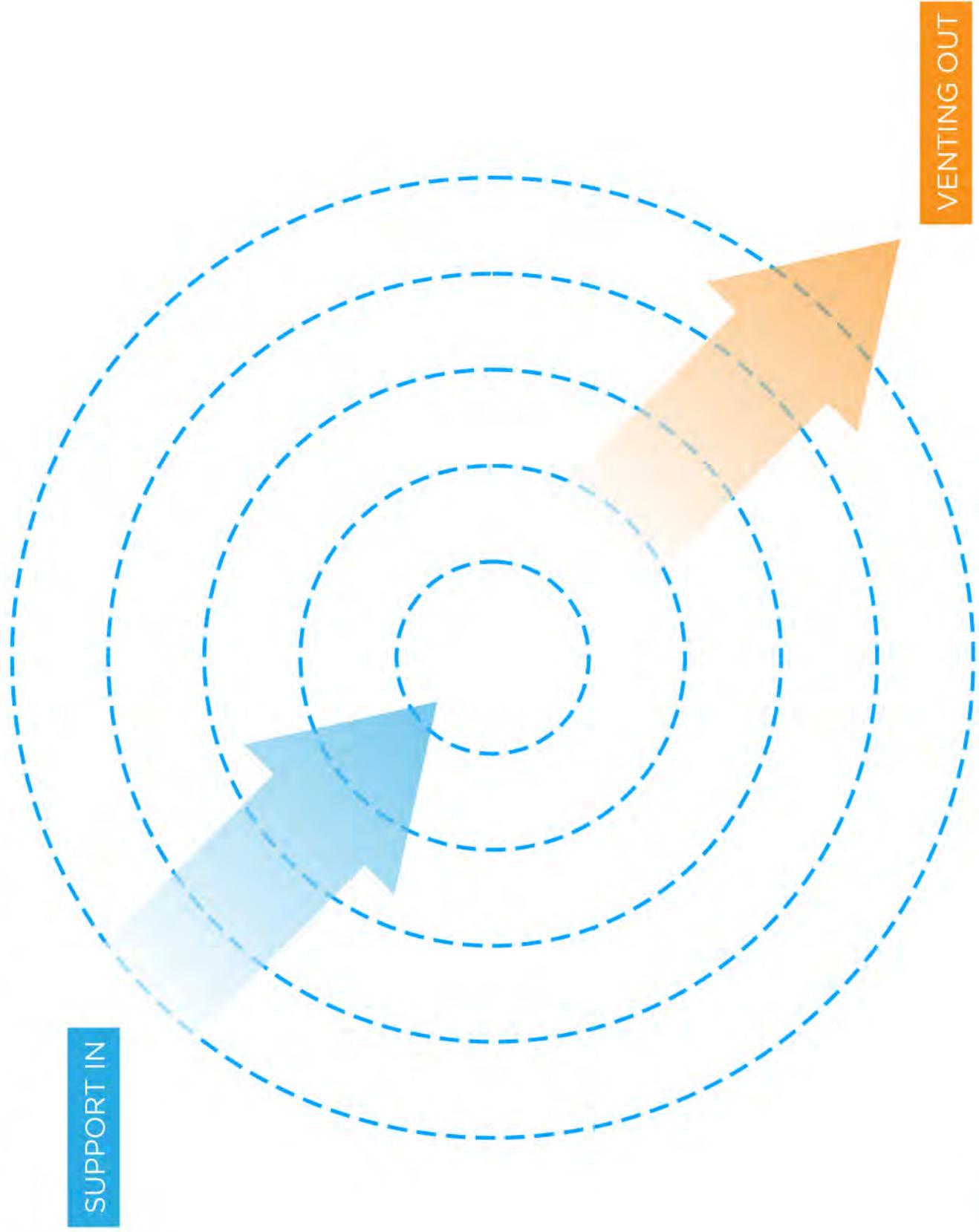
The Golden Rule

The griever (the person in the center) can vent to anyone you have written down. They can express frustration, have a tantrum, ask questions, etc to anyone written in the circles.

Supporters written in the circles can only vent to people outside of their circle. Only support should move towards the griever at the center, and venting should only move out of the circles.

Adapted from Speaking Grief

Who is in your circles?





**1:1 Peer
Counseling**



**Workshops &
Training**



**Community
Engagement**



GrieveWell provides resources and support to adults in grief, as well as those who surround them, in order to build a community that promotes healthy grieving and healing. We envision a community in which individuals grieve well so that they can lead a full life after loss.