



## CHAPLAINCY SERVICES

Director Sam Stacy

***ARH Chaplaincy Services-  
Connecting Patients and Staff  
with the God of Grace, Mercy  
and Peace***

# Dealing with Grief

“WE HAVE TO MOVE  
AWAY FROM  
THE WRONG IDEA  
THAT IT IS UNSAFE TO  
TELL THE TRUTH.”



The Grief Recovery Method®

# Dealing with Grief

**How can we as Chaplains help people deal with grief?**

**First we have to know what it is- Grief is the normal and natural reaction to significant emotional loss of any kind.**

**Grief is the conflicting feelings caused by the end of, or change in, a familiar pattern of behavior.**

**Grief is the feeling of reaching out for someone who has always been there, only to find when you need them again, they are no longer there.**



# Dealing with Grief

Typical responses to grief include but are not limited to:

**A Sense of Numbness**

**Reduced Concentration**

**Sleeplessness**

**Change of Eating Habits**

**Rollercoaster of Emotions**

# Dealing with Grief

Causes may include:

**Death**

**Divorce**

**Retirement**

**Financial Loss**

**Empty Nest Syndrome**

**Health Issues**

# Dealing with Grief

## The stages of grief can't be neatly categorized

There are no absolutes in Grief, we all respond differently, but we all deal with grief in some form or fashion.

It is normal and it is natural to grieve.

Healthcare often looks to meds for relief of grief, which may stall the natural process of grieving.

Thus not allowing the griever an option to deal with the grief and move forward in the process.

Yet admittedly there are times when medications are required for various reasons.

# Dealing with Grief

## How do you know if someone is losing the battle with grief?

If they are unwilling to talk about it, unwilling to express their grief or they try to push it aside or internalize not verbalize.

If their memories become painful, they may be dealing with unresolved grief.

If they do not want to fully deal with the grief.



# Dealing with Grief

## Impacts of unresolved Grief

A study of 95,647 people who lost a spouse found that the overall death rate for the surviving spouse **doubled** in the first week following the loss.

In the same study the heart attack rates more than **doubled for male** survivors and more than **tripled for woman**.

# Dealing with Grief

The surviving spouse was **93%** more likely to get into a fatal auto accident. The suicide rate also went up **242%** for the surviving spouse.

We find that many people alter their life choices after a series of unresolved losses. This is done to protect themselves from further heartbreak.

Usually this just translates to living a guarded life and a reluctance to participate fully in relationships or new endeavors.

# Dealing with Grief

## Misinformation About Grief:

***Time Heals:*** Time does not heal, action within time does.

***Grieve Alone:*** Often this advice is subtly implied, “Give your mom her space” As children, we learn that this means that sad feelings should be hidden or experienced alone.

# Dealing with Grief

## Things Not to Say:

**Be strong.** Usually the Griever is asked to be strong for others. “You have to be strong for your [wife/husband]” or “Be strong for your children.”

**You’ll be fine in time.**

**I know how you feel.**

**You shouldn’t still be feeling that way.**

**Look on the bright side they are in a better place.**

# Dealing with Grief

## Things not to say:

Don't feel bad, his suffering is over now.

Don't be angry with God.

You're young and you can still have other children.

It was just a dog, cat, bird etc.

There's plenty of fish in the sea.



# Dealing with Grief

## Things to say:

“I can’t imagine how you feel.” or “I can’t imagine how painful, devastating or heartbreaking that must have been for you.”

Every relationship is unique, therefore, every Griever is unique.

# Dealing with Grief

“I can’t imagine how you feel; I know that when I lost my mother I felt .....

Do listen with your heart, not your head.

Don’t try to fix the situation.

Allow all emotions to be expressed, without judgment, criticism, or analysis.

# Dealing with Grief

You might consider simply asking what happened?

Let them talk about it and verbalize what's going on with them. It is usually best to talk with them privately.

If it is about divorce you may just ask if they want to talk about it? Be that attentive ear for that person.

Often people want to run away from the problem rather than address it, even we as Chaplains may feel and react the same way as the person who is grieving.

# Dealing with Grief

Most often we find that Grievors feel isolated because most people will tend to avoid them as if nothing happened.

This situation can be very isolating for someone who's grieving.

# Dealing with Grief

**Listen- Listen- Listen** - don't be thinking about your response, listen to what they are telling you. If they sense you are not listening, they will think that you really don't care.

Be empathetic and grieve with them. Be real and if you tear up, you tear up. Don't fake it!!



# Dealing with Grief

Tell them that you are certainly praying for them as they go through this difficult time.

Share scripture with them, encourage them to read the Psalms, where the Psalmist was often dealing with grief.

Encourage them to look to God for help.  
**Psalms 46:1 God is our refuge and strength – a very present help in trouble.**

# Dealing with Grief

Recovering from a significant emotional loss is not an easy task.

Taking the actions that lead to recovery will require your attention, willingness, and courage.

Understand that it is perfectly natural to feel sad from time to time and to talk about those feelings.

# Dealing with Grief

Recovery means feeling better.

Recovery is finding new meaning for living, without the fear of being hurt again.

Recovery is being able to enjoy fond memories without having them turn into something painful.

# Dealing with Grief

The hidden gift in the process of grieving is being able to transition to that place where even though it still hurts, the memories also bring joy.

**Psalm 30:5 says, “Weeping may endure for a night, But joy comes in the morning.”**

# Dealing with Grief

## Resources Available

“Grief & Loss In Recovery” website.

“The Grief Recovery Method” website is loaded with good information and a free downloadable e-book.

“Grief Recovery Handbook”

The internet is loaded with information on dealing with grief, sometimes Google can be a very valuable resource.