

Effective Compassion: Working with Grievors



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Overview

- What is Grief
- Overarching Principles
- Don'ts/Dos
- Practice
- Working with Grievors
- Resources
- Q&A

What is Grief?

- Grief is a normal reaction to loss
- Grief is the process of moving from "What Was" to "What Is."
- Grief is often the most intense, and longest emotional process in life.
- Grief involves the heart, the mind and the body.

Losses that can Trigger Grief

- Death
- Divorce
- Retirement/Change in Employment
- Any big life change

Money is in motion for many grief-causing events. Learning about how to be compassionately effective with grievors will benefit you professionally as well as personally.

Overarching Principle 1

It's Not Your Job to Make a Griever Feel Better.

Overarching Principle 2

**Do Not Judge.
You are not the Grief Police**

Overarching Principle 3



You may be Uncomfortable...
BIG DEAL!!

Overarching Principle 4



Forgive Yourself.

Do



Listen

Skill: Stripped Down Listening



Less is more: things we do to show we are listening:

- Nod
- Uh-huh
- Emote

The Challenge: Dial these “shows” back. Just listen. Your face will show you are listening.

When Listening



- Fight panic with open postures: Feet Flat. Palms Up.
- Breathe Deeply. Take in the story.

“Big Hearts with Ears”

Exercise: Stripped Down Listening



- Split into A's and B's
- For Two minutes, A's will tell a fictional story, B's will practice Stripped down Listening.
- We will take a 30 second break for jotting down notes
- Then B's will tell a story, and A's will listen.

Stripped Down Listening Take-Aways



- Not thinking of what you are going to say helps you to listen.
- Not “showing” that you are listening can help you listen.
- Wow! Awkward/Painful didn’t actually kill you!

Don'ts: What Not to Say...



Avoid Exclamation Point Sentences:

- I Know how you Feel!
- You Have to Stay Positive!
- ITEPs

Do...



“Invite the Story.”

Amy Florian, Coregenius

What Not to Say...



Avoid “Don't” Sentences:

- Don't feel bad...
- Don't say that...
- Don't talk that way...
- Don't give up...

Do...



Instead: Meet them where they are.

“It sounds like you feel pretty hopeless...is that where you are right now?”

Resist the Temptation...



- To give awards
- To give advice
- To change the subject
- To make religious presumptions
- To talk about others' experiences
- To answer unanswerable questions

Do...



Normalize

Normalization



A: I don't know what's wrong with me, my grandma lived a full life and she died in her sleep but I'm still so sad.

B: Really? That sounds pretty normal to me...

Exercise 2: Normalization



- A's: tell abridged version of your fictional story. Highlight how crazy you feel about it.
- B's: Practice Listening skillfully. Then, normalize what you have heard.

For this round we will talk for 1 minute, take a 30 second break, then switch roles.

Keep in Mind...



All of us love to be normalized, even when we know what the person is doing!

Normalization can also be quite effective for parenting, particularly with Tweens and Teens.

Do...



- Forget about your personal comfort
- Be there
- Address Basics: Food, Clothing, Shelter
- Beyond Basics: Provide resources: Books, Counselors, Therapists, Massage Therapists, Yoga Instructors

What About?



- Crying?
- Hugging?

Professional Application



Understand the Symptoms of Grief

- The Lead Suit
- Scattering and Shattering to Linear Thought
- Sensory Distortion

Meeting with Grievors



- Prepare Yourself
 - "Examine, and put away for later"
- Prepare Your Office
 - Remove clutter
 - Provide tissues and easy disposal
 - Look at environment
 - Temperature Check

Getting Work done with a Griever



- Go To Your Client
- Prioritize
- Streamline your Process
- Emphasize "Small Steps"
- Keep it Short; Keep it Simple
- Provide Written Notes
- Use Highlighting
- Re-supply Notes

Getting Work Done with a Griever



**Be Compassionate, and Manage
your Own Expectations.**

Gee, thanks Libby, Now I'm all Depressed!



Self Care Basics

- Exercise Burst: Walk, Pushups, Jumping Jacks.
- Wash your Hands (and Face)
- Breathe.
- Consider your own reactions. What activated you? Is there work around this topic that you need to do for yourself???

Final Golden Rule...



**Forget Judgment: Be Gentle with your
Clients, Be Gentle with Yourself.**

Resources



- <http://www.corgenius.com/>
- www.grief.net
- www.degriefing.com
- www.hospicenet.org

- The Grief Recovery Handbook, John James and Russell Friedman
- When Children Grieve, James, Friedman
- The Courage to Grieve, Judy Tattlebaum
- Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy, William Worden
- Waking the Tiger, Healing Trauma, Peter Levine
- The Year of Magical Thinking, Joan Didion

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In Conclusion



Grief is the single most transformative process in the human emotional lexicon.

If you learn to cope with grief, you will not only help your clients in their transformation, but you may also transform as well.

Questions and Answers



???

Remember:



“You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face.”

~Eleanor Roosevelt

Thank You!



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