



# Good Grief! *Can't You Just Get Over It?*

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# Good Grief!

## *Can't You Just Get Over It?*

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Participants will:

- ◆ Gain an understanding of the essentials of grief as a continuum from diagnosis through after death.
- ◆ Explore the three dimensions of grief.
- ◆ Identify best practices for supporting those who are grieving.

# What is Grief?

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love is...



kiw

7/19

*...a memory that still brings  
a lump to your throat.*

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# *Grief is.....*

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- The body's natural reaction to change and loss
- Cumulative
- Different for everyone
  - Different reactions and coping skills
  - Different time frames
  - Differences within a family
- Painful and lonely



## *Grief is.....* *(cont'd)*

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- NOT just when a loved one dies
- NOT on a timeframe or schedule
- NOT linear
- NOT the “5 Stages of Grief!”

# Grief throughout disease

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## The Process of a Patient's Illness

- Symptoms develop; changes may occur
- Tests, doctor appointments, specialists
- Diagnosis given
  - *May be expected outcome OR may come as a surprise*
- Adjustment to diagnosis and prognosis
- Continued progression of disease
  - *Continued losses*
- Nearing end of life
- Death of patient



# Dimensions of Grief

~ Dr. Alan Wolfelt, PhD

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**1) EVASION** from the New Reality

**2) ENCOUNTER** with the New Reality

**3) RECONCILIATION** with the New  
Reality





# *Dimensions of Grief:* **Evasion** from the New **Reality**

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## Mourning Characteristics

- ~ Shock
- ~ Denial
- ~ Numbness
- ~ Disbelief

## Primary Needs of Mourner

- ~ Self Protection
- ~ Psychological Shock Absorber

## Time Course

- ~ Weeks
- ~ Potentially Months
- (Variable)

## Primary Role of Helper

- ~ Supportive Presence
- ~ Assist with Practical Matters



## Dimensions of Grief:

# Encounter from the New Reality

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### Mourning Characteristics

- ~ Confusion
- ~ Anxiety
- ~ Physiological Changes
- ~ Explosive Emotions
- ~ Loss, Emptiness
- ~ Guilt
- ~ Sadness, Remorse

### Primary Needs of Mourner

- ~ To experience & express reality of the death
- ~ To tolerate emotional suffering

### Time Course

- ~ Many months
- (Variable)

### Primary Role of Helper

- ~ Encourage expression of thoughts & feelings
- ~ Stabilizing, comforting presence



# *Dimensions of Grief:* Reconciliation from the New Reality

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## Mourning Characteristics

- ~ Organize & plan toward future
- ~ New, healthy relationships
- ~ Openness to more change in one's life

## Primary Needs of Mourner


- ~ Convert relationship with deceased to one of memory
- ~ Develop new self-identity
- ~ Relate loss to context of meaning

## Time Course

- ~ 24-36 months
- (Variable)

## Primary Role of Helper

- ~ Supportive encouragement
- ~ Understanding, available presence



# How do we help those who are grieving?

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Best Practices

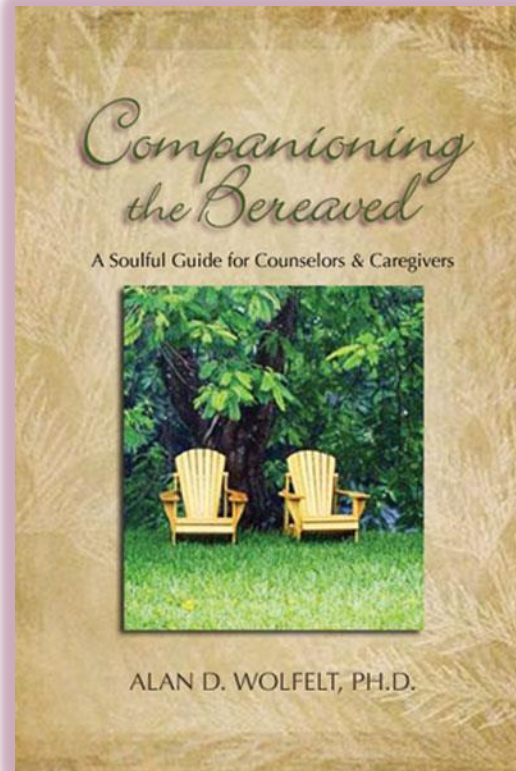


Bob turns a tragic loss into a lame attempt at helping others cope.

# Best Practices for working with the grieving

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## ❖ “Companioning”



# Best Practices for working with the grieving (cont'd)

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## ❖ Active Listening & Being Present





# Best Practices for working with the grieving (cont'd)

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## ❖ EDUCATION about grief— *"Normalizing"*

- Be cautious with this—  
don't dismiss feelings  
or misinterpret a  
serious situation





# Best Practices for working with the grieving

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## ❖ Not being judgmental

- Just because someone grieves differently than you do or think they should, does not mean they are grieving inappropriately

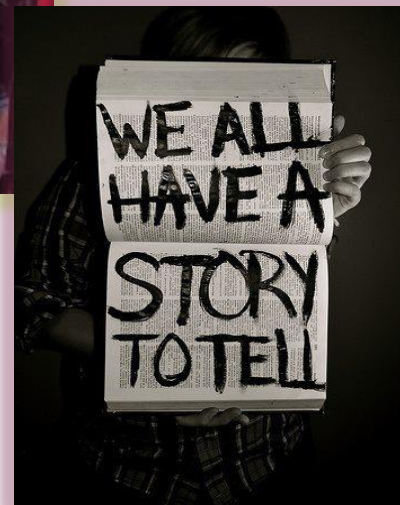
# Best Practices for working with the grieving (cont'd)

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## ❖ Stories

- Ask about their loved one and let them share



# Best Practices for working with the grieving (cont'd)

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## ❖ Roller Coaster of Grief

- Within oneself
- Family Dynamic



# Best Practices for working with the grieving (cont'd)

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## ❖ “Ocean” analogy

- Floating vs.  
resisting





# Best Practices for working with the grieving

(cont'd)

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- Embracing new reality
- Helping client acknowledge the person s/he was before, but is now forever changed through grief process
- Trying to get back to the way things were----but accepting that loved one is dead and client is a very different person now.
- Help them grieve cumulative losses
- Recognizing all that has changed has changed
- Education of these concepts and issues
- Baby steps toward building or identifying new skills

# Good Grief!

## Can't *You Just Get Over It?*

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NO, YOU CAN'T.....

BECAUSE IT IS A JOURNEY,  
NOT A DESTINATION.

BUT YOU CAN:

- *LEARN FROM GRIEF*
- *GROW FROM GRIEF*
- *LIVE WITH GRIEF IN A  
POSITIVE WAY*