

LEARN Idaho • October '26 Monthly Meeting

The Grief Recovery Program

Dr. JoEllen Watson
Gray into Gold Life Coaching

Thursday, October 8, 2026
Professional Education • 45 minutes • Online presentation

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Goals For Today's Talk

Define Grief and Normalize Feelings

The Myths about Grief

Understanding the Sources of Grief

Short-Term Energy Releasing Behaviors (STERBS) Coping?

Professional Care Giver and Family Care Giver Unique Grief

Building Resilience: The Importance of Self-Care

Questions, Comments, More about the Grief Recovery Program

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Understanding Grief

Every person's experience is individual and unique

There is no universal sequence of grief stages

Grief can coexist with depression, anxiety or PTSD

Persistent distress or impaired functioning merits assessment

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Grief Defined

Grief is the Normal and Natural Reaction to Change or Loss of Any Kind

Grief is the Response to a Change in, or End of, Any Familiar Pattern of Behavior

Grief is also about mixed emotions – Graduations, Moves, Births, Loss of Addictions, Death, and more

Grief By Any Other Name Is Still Grief: Stress, Burnout, PTSD, Depression, Anxiety

Clinical clarification: Grief, depression and PTSD are distinct experiences that may coexist.

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What Causes Grief?

We Go Through Life Picking Up Pebbles, Rocks, and Boulders

Accumulation Begins in Childhood

Not Taught How to Deal With Loss

Gather More As We Age

We Don't Take Time to Attend to the Backpack

Our Backpack Contains Many Items....

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Loss Takes Many Forms

Death, divorce, estrangement and separation

Illness, disability, infertility and changes in independence

Job loss, financial loss, relocation, ending addiction and disasters

Pet loss, childhood losses and changes in familiar routines

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Intangible Losses

Safety, security and trust

Identity, respect and faith

Hopes, dreams and expectations

A familiar way of life or an imagined future

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Grief In Professional And Caregiving Roles

Repeated exposure to other people's losses

Changes in a client's or family member's abilities

Doing everything possible and still facing a loss

Personal grief alongside responsibility for others

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What We Learn About Loss

Messages about grief begin early

Families and cultures shape what feels acceptable

“Get over it” or “keep it inside” can silence people

We can notice these messages and respond differently

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Grief Is Not Handled Well

Myths and Misinformation: What We Are Told, What We Tell Ourselves,
and What Our General Culture Tells Us

Don't feel bad

Replace the loss

Grieve alone

Be strong

Keep busy

Time Heals All

Get Over It

Don't Bother Others

Keep Feelings Inside, Don't Express

... and more....

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Unresolved Grief And Incomplete Loss

Avoiding thoughts or conversations about a loss

Fear or distress when memories arise

Remembering only the positive or only the negative

Difficulty making room for both pain and connection

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Short-Term Energy Relieving Behaviors

STERBs can offer temporary distraction or relief

Examples include overeating, alcohol or compulsive shopping

Overwork, scrolling or gambling can also become avoidance

Consider the function, frequency and consequences

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Helpful Ways To Relieve Grief

Validate and Acknowledge Grief/Trauma – Avoid the Myth Statements and Validate with “I Can’t Imagine...”

Identify and Name the Loss – Tangible and Intangible

Help Name the Feelings

When Listening to Others, Be a Big Heart With Ears

Identify Behaviors That May Be STERBs

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Responses That Can Miss The Mark

I Know How You Feel

You'll be Fine In Time (Time Heals All)

You Shouldn't Be Feeling Like This Still

They are in a Better Place

Their Suffering is Over

You are Young, and You Can Have Other Children

It Was Just a Cat, Dog, Horse, Bird, Fish

They had a Long Life. You Had the Person So Long

You'll Meet Someone New

The God Card

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Responses That Make Room For Grief

“I can’t imagine exactly how this feels for you.”

“Would you like to tell me what happened?”

“I’m here to listen.”

“What would be helpful today?”

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A Professional Response To Loss

Acknowledge the loss and the person's experience

Help name tangible and intangible losses

Allow feelings without rushing to solve them

Offer choices and discuss appropriate support

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Expressing Personal Grief

You choose how much to share

“It’s a tough time. Thank you for asking.”

“I’m doing well today.”

“I’m not sure. My feelings keep changing.”

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What Recovery Can Look Like

More capacity to participate in daily life

Room for meaningful memories and moments of joy

Permission to feel sadness and speak about it

Skills and support for responding to future losses

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Self-Care And Connection For Everyone

Support sleep, nourishment, hydration and movement

Make room for feelings and restorative activities

Connect with people who can listen

Use boundaries and familiar rituals. Make room for enjoyment.

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Key Points For Professional Practice

Loss can be visible, intangible, easy to overlook or misunderstand.

Each person's grief deserves an individual response

Listening and validation create room for emotional honesty

Match support to the person's needs and preferences

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The Grief Recovery Program

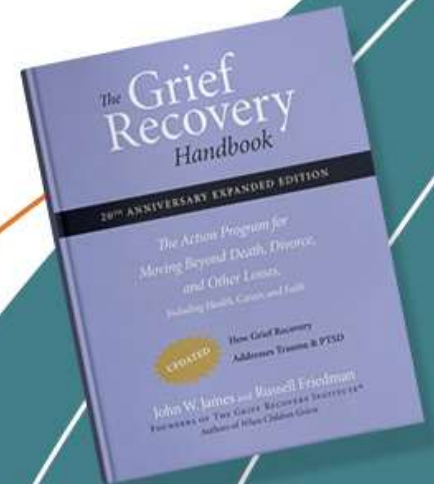
A fee-based structured educational program led by a certified specialist

Reading, reflection and guided actions between sessions

Attention to losses and unfinished emotional communication

Individual and group formats, with online options

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Program Options And Appropriate Support

Grief Recovery Method for individuals and groups

Pet loss and Helping Children with Loss programs

An educational approach with supporting research

Clinical assessment or treatment may also be needed

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Questions And Connection

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