



## Processing Grief as a Team

Health care practitioners may have an opportunity to work with their teams as they process grief. This video addresses supporting the team in response to the loss of a patient or team member, an unexpected death, or difficult family meeting. You will find out how to integrate a process to acknowledge and support each team member through their work and create a safe space to accommodate vulnerability and sharing.

### MAIN POINTS

- Team strategies include: 1) Integrating the grief process into team culture 2) Identifying the roles of leader, creator, participant and setting ground rules 3) Focusing on the emotional response not the event 4) Selecting the appropriate framework or process, and 5) Improving well-being through education on grief, integration of self-care strategies, and providing resources as needed.<sup>1,2,3</sup>
- Create a remembrance tool to acknowledge deaths of recent patients, reflect the on impact of patient care on the team, discuss bereavement risk for the bereaved, and model self-care strategies.<sup>1</sup>
- Consider a simple process that includes: keeping bereavement lists, sending cards to families from staff, and creating a space or notebook for poems, readings, obituaries, and thank you's.
- Create rituals to foster connectiveness with team members using quotes, poems, music, or other meaningful symbols.<sup>4</sup>

### RESOURCES

Halifax, J. The Precious Necessity of Compassion (2011) *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management* 41 (1), 146-153. [https://www.jpmsjournal.com/article/S0885-3924\(10\)00657-3/fulltext](https://www.jpmsjournal.com/article/S0885-3924(10)00657-3/fulltext). Accessed 5/25/2021.

Kamens, S., & Riemer, J. A Litany of Remembrance-We Remember them. <https://wexnermedical.osu.edu/-/media/files/wexnermedical/patient-care/patient-and-visitor-guide/patient-support-services/spiritual-and-pastoral-care/grief-and-loss/a-litany-of-remembrance-we-remember-them.pdf?la=en&hash=B1499843F9E817A9959EDDB8BC4073F2C8B84E3A>. Accessed 5/25/2021.

Kessler, David. Grief.com Because Love Never Dies. <https://grief.com/>.

Kessler, David. Essentials of Self Care. <https://www.davidkesslertraining.com/self-care?cid=d15a43aa-2387-4390-8929-6c0214433b81>. Accessed 5/22/21.

Leff, V. Center to Advance Palliative Care. Well-being Debriefings for Health Care Workers.

[https://media.capc.org/recorded-webinars/slides/0303\\_Debriefing\\_Pt\\_1\\_F\\_y3Bdd4b.pdf](https://media.capc.org/recorded-webinars/slides/0303_Debriefing_Pt_1_F_y3Bdd4b.pdf). Accessed 5/23/21.

University of Buffalo School of Social Work. Developing your Self-Care Plan. <http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/self-care-starter-kit/developing-your-self-care-plan.html>. Accessed 5/25.2021.

### REFERENCES

1. Morris, S., Kearns, J., Moment, A, Lee, K., & Thomas, J. (2019) Remembrance: A Self-Care Tool for Clinicians. *J Palliat Med* 22 (3); 316-318. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30556757/>. Accessed 5/21/21.
2. Fallek, R., Tattelman, E., Browne, T., Kaplan, R. & Selwyn, P. (2019) Helping Health Care Providers and Staff Process Grief Through a Hospital-Based Program. *Am J Nurs* 119 (7) 24-33. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31180912/>. Accessed 5/21/21.
3. Papadatou, D. (2000) A Proposed Model of Health Professionals Grieving Process. *Omega: Journal of Death and Dying* 41 (1) 59-77. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.2190/TV6M-8YNA-5DYW-3C1E>. Accessed 5/21/21.
4. Feldman, D. The Power of Rituals to Heal Grief: Four questions can help develop a ritual for honoring loss and healing grief. Published 9/28/2019. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/supersurvivors/201909/the-power-rituals-heal-grief#:~:text=Rituals%20are%20actions%20that%20symbolically,the%20person%20they've%20lost>. Accessed 5/21/21.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION



<https://advancingexpertcare.org/>



<https://www.professionalchaplains.org/>



<https://www.swhpn.org/>



<https://www.ons.org/>

Click [here](#) to learn more about POLARIS and Dealing with Grief: A Series of 5 Short, Powerful Videos

Made possible by a grant from the American Nurses Foundation.