



## Flexing Your Core: the Palliative Workout ECHO

### *Domain 5: Care Planning & Collaborative Practice*

**Nov 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

AGENDA ITEM	NOTES
<b>Introductions, Objectives</b>	<p>Session Facilitator: Leanne Drumheller, MSW</p> <p><b>Learning objectives:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify that people experience grief differently.</li> <li>2. Identify key ways to support grief and loss.</li> </ol>
<b>Session Key Points and discussion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The session delved into the complex multi-layered nature of grief, emphasizing how grief manifests across different areas of our lives and relationship and a focus on the various responses to grief and loss.</li> <li>• The participants discussed the stages of grief, including denial, anger, bargaining, sadness and acceptance.</li> <li>• They also explored how grief can manifest physically, such as through changes in appetite and sleep patterns, and cognitively leading to memory loss and difficulty focusing.</li> <li>• Additionally, they highlight the cognitive and physical impacts of grief, emphasizing the increased risk of accidents due to reduced attentiveness and awareness during the grieving process.</li> <li>• <b>Interpersonal Grief:</b> people may disengage from friends, family nor partners; feel alone due to grief fatigue; exhibit less patience or blame others; relationships may suffer.</li> <li>• <b>Spiritual Grief:</b> people might feel abandoned, question beliefs or feel "forsaken"; some find comfort and deepen their faith while others may feel a strong sense of loss or disconnection.</li> <li>• <b>Types of Grief responses:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Anticipatory Grief:</b> grieving a person before their death, often seen with life-limiting illnesses.</li> <li>○ <b>Disenfranchised Grief:</b> grief that isn't recognized by others, e.g. losing a pet or grieving as a healthcare provider for patients.</li> <li>○ <b>Prolonged Grief Disorder:</b> grief that persists and feels unending, sometimes similar to depression; often seen with multiple cumulative losses.</li> <li>○ <b>Delayed Grief:</b> grief postponed due to other responsibilities, surfacing later and surprising others.</li> <li>○ <b>Cumulative Grief:</b> accumulated grief from multiple losses, often triggered by a current event that intensifies past grief.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



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- **Inhibited Grief:** grief that people suppress due to cultural expectations or fear of vulnerability which is common in healthcare staff.
- **Collective Grief:** shared grief within a community or globally often in response to large-scale events or disasters.
- **Cultural perspective on grief:** many societies encourage moving past grief quickly, but a healthier approach involves allowing grief to “sit at the table” and processing it gradually.
- The presenter discussed various resources and approaches for dealing with grief, including individual peer counselling, group work, memorial events, physician visits, religious leader support and grief retreats.
  - **Peer counselling:** this could be provided by volunteer organizations like the Hospice society or Victoria Citizens counselling.
  - **Group work:** Hospice could offer group session for grieving individuals
  - **Memorial events:** the role of a physician in these events is significant, especially for those without regular medical access.
  - **Religious leaders:** connecting with faith leaders can provide comfort and support during grief.
  - **Grief retreats:** these retreats are often focused on specific demographics like widows or children and are becoming increasingly popular.
  - **Grief cafes:** these informal spaces are popping up to offer support and community for people experiencing grief.
- The presenter also explored the core concepts of grief theory and how it applies to individual and professional experiences of grief focusing on loss-oriented and restoration-oriented approaches.
  - **Loss-oriented Approach:** this approach focuses on acknowledging and processing the pain and disruption caused by grief.
  - **Restoration-Oriented Approach:** this approach encourages individuals to adapt to life changes, define new priorities and move forward.
- **The bridge between Loss and Restoration:** the presenter highlighted the importance of recognizing that grief is an ongoing process with periods of intense loss alternating with moments of restoration. Emphasis was made on the importance of attending to life changes and finding a balance between acknowledging loss and embracing restoration.
- The discussion highlighted the challenges of coping with grief, including the intrusive nature of grief, the disruption of daily life, and resistance to moving on.
- A recurring theme is the importance of empathy over sympathy. **Empathy in Grief support:** emphasize empathy, not sympathy to connect with the shared feeling of loss. Offer a safe space and listen without trying to fix things.
- **Normalizing Grief:** validate grief experiences recognizing them as normal and inform about community resources for additional support.

- **Support for those facing loss:** encourage staying present in the current moment focusing on the now instead of anticipatory loss or past regrets.
- **Empowering questions:** ask how you can support and nourish the person allowing them to express their needs and show curiosity without judgment.
- **Validating complex emotions:** acknowledge that grief is multifaceted and natural, helping people understand that their intense emotions are not abnormal.

### Case Study discussion

#### **How would you support these people?**

**Sam** and his wife were married for 55 years. His wife died 6 months ago from multiple myeloma at the age of 84. Recently Sam asks his health practitioner about somatic issues he is dealing with “I have been getting headaches and can’t sleep. I don’t know why”.

**Sophie** is your colleague at work. She comes up to you and says that ever since her patient Natasha died, she hasn’t felt the same. She comments that sometimes she even has dreams of her.

- For people like Sam, explore his grief journey, assess for social support and consider offering practical and bereavement program referrals.
- When colleagues like Sophie express lingering grief, actively listen, empathize and normalize her experience. Invite her to share memories, creating space for connection and potential closure.
- **Role of rituals in grieving:** recognize the importance of personal or cultural ritual to acknowledge and honor loss which may provide comfort and closure.
- **Mindfulness and self-care:** participants were encouraged to be gentle with themselves as grief discussion may evoke personal memories or emotions and seek support if needed.

Grief is deeply personal and nonlinear, providing a safe, empathetic space to process it is invaluable for healing.

#### **Resources:**

1. Canadian Virtual Hospice
  - Grief literacy modules and resources
  - Mygrief.ca and Kidsgrief.ca
  - <https://www.virtualhospice.ca/learninghub/>



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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. BC Bereavement Helpline - 604-738-9950 or <a href="http://www.bcbh.ca">www.bcbh.ca</a><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Provides free compassionate listening Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm.</li><li>- They can connect people with any appropriate support services available in their area.</li></ul></li><li>3. Lumara Grief &amp; Bereavement Care Society - <a href="http://Lumarasociety.org">Lumarasociety.org</a><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Provides education, support, and counselling services to individuals, families and groups who are grieving a death or coping with a life-threatening illness.</li><li>- Home of Camp Kerry</li></ul></li><li>4. Victoria Hospice<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Information on grief in adults and children <a href="https://victoriahospice.org/resources/helpful-resources/">https://victoriahospice.org/resources/helpful-resources/</a></li></ul></li><li>5. Grief Dreams<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Information on sleep and dreams after loss. <a href="https://www.griefdreams.ca/commonly-asked-questions">https://www.griefdreams.ca/commonly-asked-questions</a></li></ul></li><li>6. Brene Brown's video on Empathy: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw</a></li></ol>
<b>Next session info</b>	Next Flexing Your Core ECHO Session: <b>Domain 7: Ethical Practice</b> Nov 19 <sup>th</sup> 9am-10am PDT. Register <a href="#">here!</a>  Other upcoming ECHO sessions listed <a href="#">here</a>