

Using Evidence-Based Practices to Support Bereaved Children and Adults

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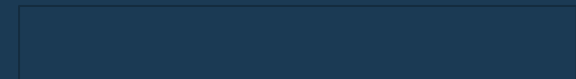
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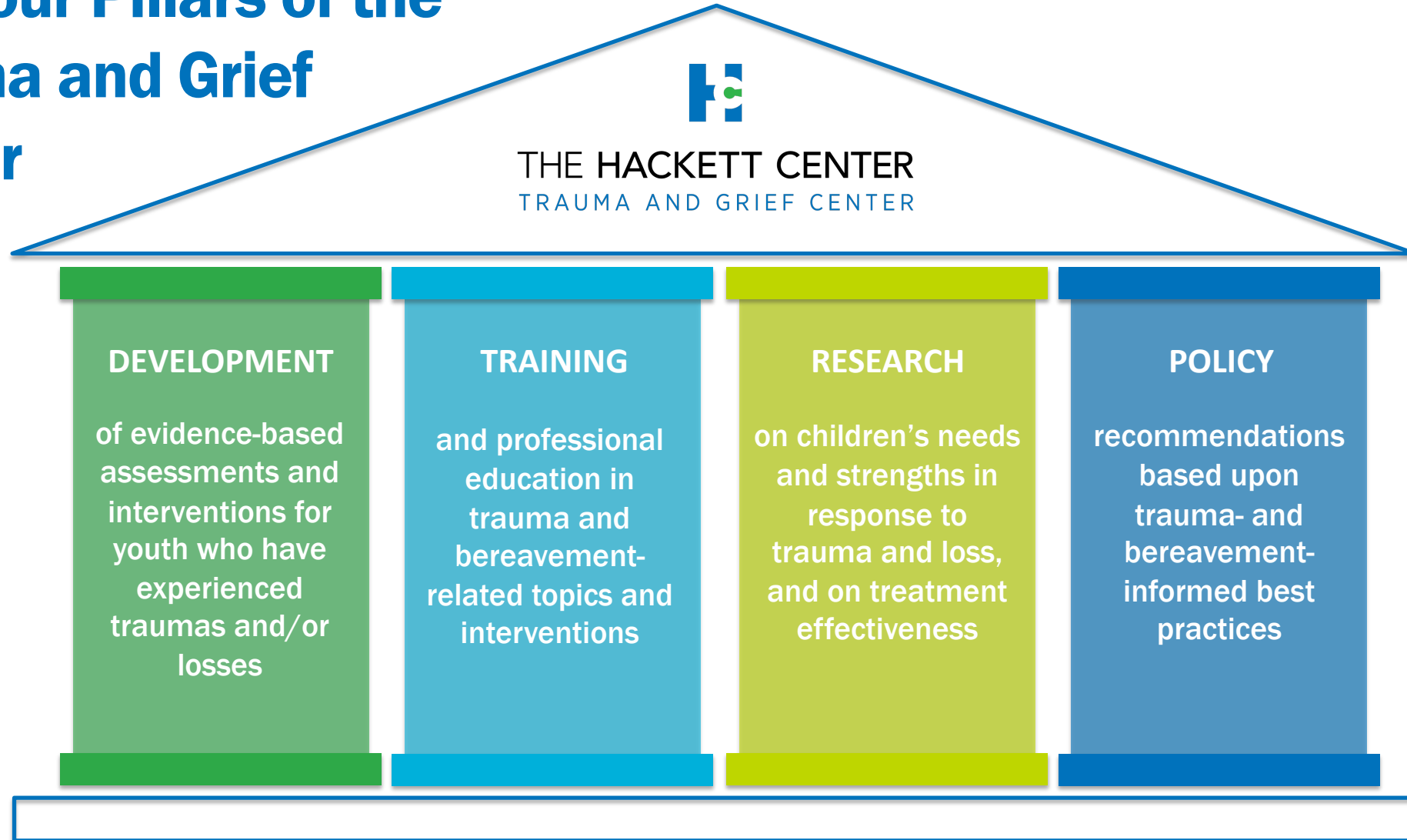
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The Four Pillars of the Trauma and Grief Center





Bereavement

experience of deprivation or loss by death

Grief

psychological or behavioral **response** arising from bereavement

Why Focus on Bereavement?



Most frequently reported type of trauma in clinic-referred youth

(Pynoos et al., 2014)



Most common form of trauma worldwide

(UNICEF, 2017)



Most distressing form of trauma among adults and youth in the general population

(Breslau et al., 2004; Kaplow, Saunders, Angold, & Costello, 2010)



Strongest predictor of poor school outcomes above and beyond any other form of trauma

(Oosterhoff, Kaplow, & Layne, 2018)

**Children's grief reactions (not simply bereavement)
play an important role in future psychological functioning.**

Important Facts about Grief

| 7

Most bereaved children will go on to lead healthy, happy lives.

There is no “right” or “wrong” way to grieve.

There is no set timeline for grief.

Grief is not a “problem” to be fixed. It is a natural part of life and a reflection of the love we have for the person who died.

Not all children who experience a death need the same type of support.

Prolonged Grief Disorder (PGD)

- New diagnosis in DSM-5-TR
- To diagnose a child (under the age of 18), the death had to have occurred at least 6 months ago, symptoms have to be present for at least a month and be intense enough to cause impairment
- Approximately 10-20% of bereaved youth develop PGD, but most studies have focused on middle class, Caucasian youth only
- Informed by Multidimensional Grief Theory

Multidimensional Grief Theory

Layne, Kaplow, & Pynoos (2011)

Kaplow, Layne, Saltzman, Cozza, & Pynoos (2013)

| 9

The diagram consists of three stacked, horizontally-oriented ovals. The top oval is orange and labeled 'Separation Distress'. The middle oval is purple and labeled 'Existential / Identity Distress'. The bottom oval is blue and labeled 'Circumstance-Related Distress'. Below these ovals is a large horizontal arrow pointing from left to right. The left half of the arrow is yellow and labeled 'Adaptive/Helpful'. The right half of the arrow is orange and labeled 'Maladaptive/Unhelpful'.

Separation Distress

Existential / Identity Distress

Circumstance-Related Distress

Adaptive/Helpful

Maladaptive/Unhelpful

A multidimensional framework is important because... | 10

Distinct dimensions of grief:

- May be more prominent at different points across the lifespan
- May not be present in all bereaved populations
- Require **different treatment components** (i.e., different therapeutic activities to address different grief domains)

EVIDENCE-BASED INTERVENTIONS FOR GRIEVING YOUTH

Multidimensional Grief Therapy

- An assessment-driven intervention based on Multidimensional Grief Theory
- Designed to promote adaptive grief reactions and reduce unhelpful grief reactions
- First evidence-based, grief-focused intervention for children and adolescents that directly addresses the three primary domains of grief
- Provides a “continuum” of grief-informed care given its tiered approach
- Can be used individually or in groups

MULTIDIMENSIONAL ¹² GRIEF THERAPY

A Flexible Approach to Assessing and Supporting Bereaved Youth



Julie B. Kaplow, Christopher M. Layne,
Robert S. Pynoos & William Saltzman

Evidence-Based Practice Elements: Supporting Bereaved Youth

Review of studies examining effectiveness of interventions for bereaved youth
(Kaplow, Layne, & Pynoos, 2019)

Group-based treatments

Family Bereavement Program (Sandler et al., 2013)

Grief and Trauma Intervention (Salloum, 2008)

Trauma and Grief Component Therapy (Saltzman et al., 2017)

Individual treatments

Grief-Help (Boelen et al., 2006)

TF-CBT for Childhood Traumatic Grief (Cohen et al., 2017)

Multidimensional Grief Therapy (Hill et al., 2019; Kaplow et al., 2023)

Core Components of Grief Interventions

1. Grief Psychoeducation
2. Emotion Identification/Regulation
3. Cognitive Coping/Restructuring
4. Grief and/or Trauma Processing
5. Memorializing/Continuing Bonds
6. Meaning-Making/Legacy Building
7. Parental Grief Facilitation/Positive Parenting

1. Grief Psychoeducation

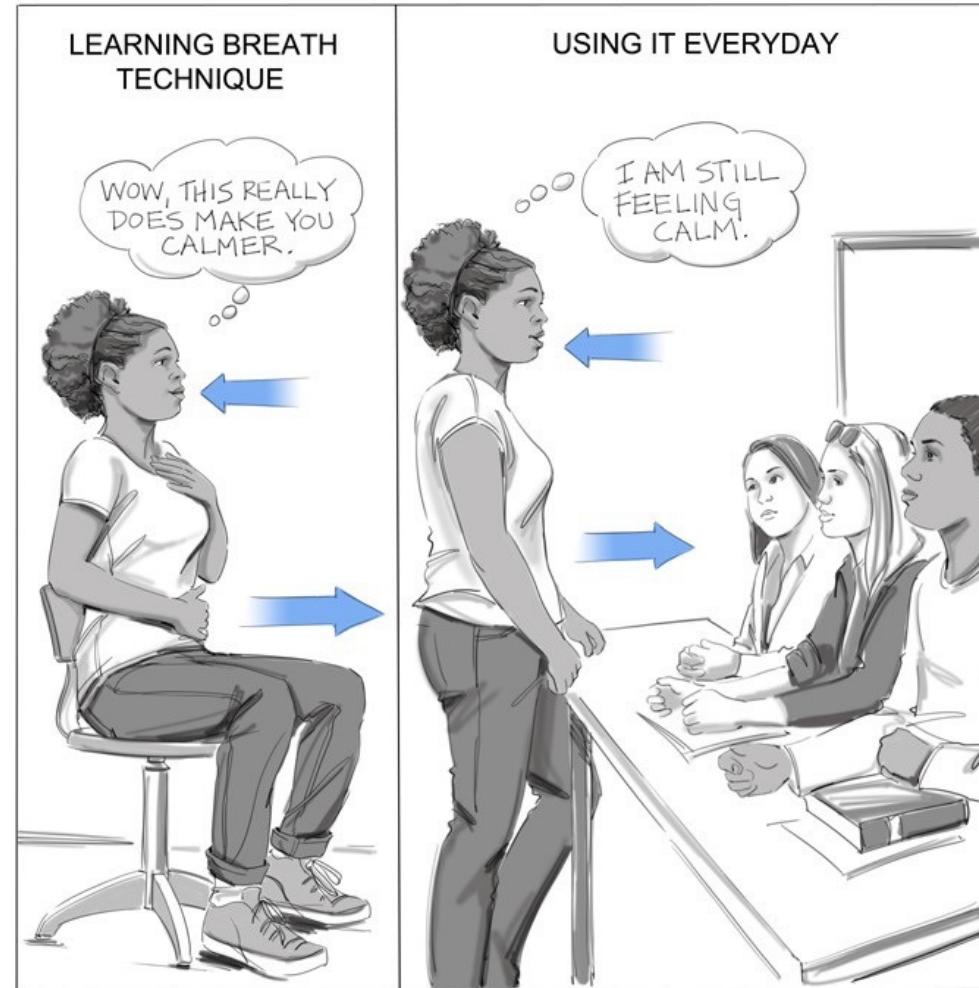
**Majorly Missing Them
Mindy**



**Creating Connections
Claire**

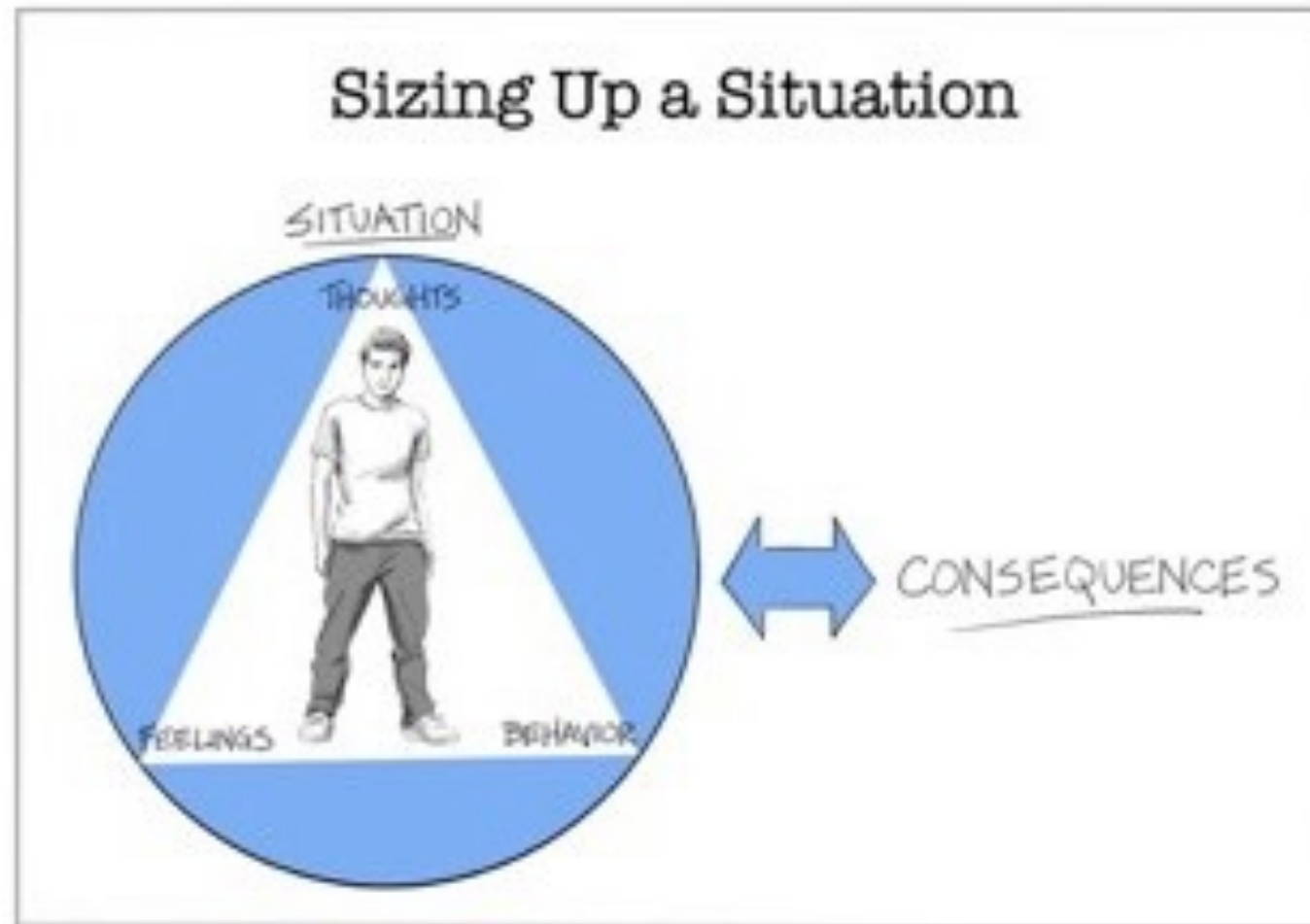


2. Emotion Identification/Regulation



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3. Cognitive Coping/Restructuring



© 2017 Saltzman, Layne, Pynoos, Olafson, Kaplow, & Boat

3. Cognitive Coping/Restructuring



4. Trauma Processing

Trauma processing focuses on the death event itself:

- Who
- What
- When
- Where
- Why

Designed to alleviate PTSS and some forms of circumstance-related distress

4. Grief Processing

My Grief Story

Kaplow, Layne, Pynoos & Saltzman (2023)

- Chapter 1: All About ____ (SD)
- Chapter 2: What I Miss the Most (SD)
- Chapter 3: How I Stay Connected (SD)
- Chapter 4: How ____ Died (CRD)
- Chapter 5: Where Are They Now? (SD, EX)
- Chapter 6: How Things Have Changed (EX)
- Chapter 7: Making Meaning of the Death (EX)
- Chapter 8: My Life Now and My Life in the Future (EX)

5. Memorializing/Continuing Bonds



6. Meaning Making/Legacy Building



7. Parental Grief Facilitation

”Positive parenting” (routines, positive reinforcement, active listening) associated with decreased distress in bereaved youth

(Ayers et al., 2014; Sandler et al., 2013)

Not so much about what you say, but what you do.

Specific caregiver behaviors associated with decreased maladaptive grief and depression in children (Shapiro et al., 2014):

- Physical affection, hugs
- Smiling
- Consistent eye contact
- Being ”present”

TRAUMA & GRIEF CENTER

Virtual Learning Library

The Trauma and Grief (TAG) Center's Virtual Learning Library offers free webinars and resources focusing on childhood trauma and grief to key audiences: parents and caregivers, mental health clinicians, educators, health care providers, law enforcement, and other professionals working with children and adolescents who have experienced trauma and loss.

A Special Thanks

The Virtual Learning Library was developed with philanthropic investment from our partner, the New York Life Foundation.



THE HACKETT CENTER



The power of parenting during the Covid-19 pandemic: helping children cope with the impending death of a loved one



The Power of Parenting: How to Help Your Child After a Parent or Caregiver Dies

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

Parents are the best sources of safety, support, and healing for bereaved children. We understand that each family is unique, with its own special cultural and spiritual practices, and there is no right or wrong way to grieve. Below, you will find guidance from parents, foster families, grandparents, and other caregivers who have been through experiences of loss and grief and found ways to cope and manage that grief. There is no such thing as "perfect parenting," but some of these ideas may be useful to you on your journey. Remember that you are not alone.

Drawing from research and the experiences of parents, we have listed some challenges that bereaved families face and ways to address them. You will find thoughts on helping your children face new fears; taking care of yourself; helping your kids maintain healthy conventions; helping your children to embrace new belongings or traditions; and seeking support from others.

"We will all struggle and fail; we will know what it means to be both brave and brokenhearted."
—Diane Brown

1. Facing New Fears

We often tell parents and caregivers to "follow your child's lead" or "meet them where they are." After a death, this may be hard to do, as kids may have hidden fears or worries that they hesitate to talk about because, in part, they are concerned about upsetting you. Letting your kids know that you are interested in what they have to say and are willing to talk about and listen to whatever is on their mind, no matter how painful, can make it easier for them to open up. Here are examples of how parents have helped their children to share their fears and find ways to cope with those fears after a death:

A few months after her husband died, my daughter said something that stuck in my mind. She was really worried about me dying too. There was no reason to think I might die, and I often asked her if there was anything she wanted to talk about, so the fact she had been worrying so much really took my breath away. Now, when I
—Amanda L.

After her dad died, my son stopped going to his after-school club and stopped hanging out with his friends. One day he told me that she was scared of getting too close to other people because she didn't want to feel sad if it happened or if something happened to them. We talked about how much we would miss out on if we didn't allow ourselves to get close to other people...that's what she is all about.
—Amanda B.



The power of parenting during the covid-19 pandemic: mourning the death of a loved one



The Power of Parenting: How to Help Your Child After the Death of a Sibling From Substance Use or Overdose

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

We are sorry for the loss of your child. No parent should ever have to go through what they would often cope with their grief while attending to their surviving children's needs. Below you'll find information for all caregivers who are parenting children after the death of a sibling from substance use or overdose. Drawing from the wisdom of parents and children who have been through this experience, we've provided information on how to facilitate grieving in your family as you provide with the past, cope with the present, and look towards healing in the future. This tool is intended to support parents of children ages 7 and older.

"We were utterly devastated by our daughter's death. But our sorrowfully needed us too. We just weren't sure what would be helpful to him and what might only make it worse. It was a confusing, painful time for us. Gradually, with support, we started to heal."

1. Helping Your Child Cope with Stigma and Shame

One of the most difficult things that family members grapple with is the stigma associated with death connected to substance use or overdose. This happens when individuals who hear about the circumstances make negative comments or assumptions about the person who died that are wrong and/or hurtful. For children or adolescents, they may seem to isolate themselves out of shame, guilt, or remorse. This social isolation can lead to decreased support and may eventually put children at further risk. As a caregiver, you can be an important model for how to talk about the shame and stigma that your family may be grappling with. Also, it can be especially helpful to find grief support for children in such situations.

I knew it wasn't his, but I felt like an all had to have done something wrong for him to die young like that. And the way people looked at us? Like we were all addicts too, blaming it on family about addiction being a disease sent a long way in helping us heal. It gives us the language to talk about it with others.
—Diane W., 18-year-old

When I started at my high school, I didn't want anyone to know how my sister died. I was so embarrassed and ashamed at my old school, so I just stuffed my feelings down. I would tell people I was an only child. Eventually, I was ridiculed and got suspended for fighting. My stepmom and the one who found me (the girl I was going to go to) didn't want to go and I was so mad they sent me. I didn't talk for the whole first day there. When I returned I saw other kids who were going through the same thing, and later talked about my sister with them...it got better.
—Isabel S., 17-year-old

Every year since her death, our family participates in a local walk to raise awareness about addiction. We've met many other families who get it as it is only no one else does. We found community there among strangers.
—Rashida Z., mother

www.tagcenter.org

To learn about upcoming TAG Center trainings:



For more information:
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tagcenter.org