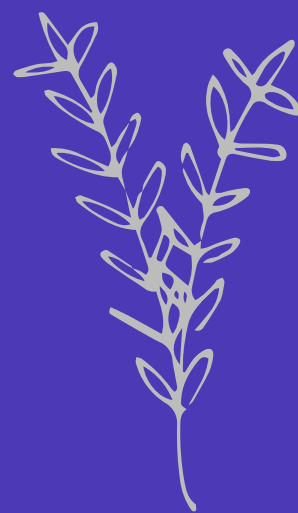


GRIEF OUTREACH INITIATIVE

Helpful Information for parents
and guardians of grieving children



WHAT IS THE GOI?



The GOI is a *grief mentorship* program and should not be considered *grief counseling*.

Mentorship can be considered a personal, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial relationship that focuses on assisting someone and offering support.

Counseling, on the other hand, would be a professional relationship that does not offer mutual benefits and is focused on mental health, wellness, and achievement of client goals.

men·tor·ship noun

Intentional, nurturing activity which fosters goal attainment through supporting and challenging

TYPES OF GRIEF

- **Delayed:** Emotional reactions after the death are inhibited or postponed due to lack of processing
 - A child may not understand the death of their sibling and experience an intense delayed grief reaction a year later
- **Disenfranchised:** The relationship between the griever and the grief is not recognized, can be invalidated by social norms
 - Can be experienced by a child after the loss of a family pet or a teen after their first breakup
- **Complicated:** Ability to function is impaired and the grieving process has significant longevity
 - Child or adolescent experiences persistent feelings of guilt, suicidal thoughts, violent outbursts, and lowered self-esteem
- **Masked:** Grief is manifested in the body and negatively impacts normal functioning
 - A child may complain of a stomachache or an adolescent may experience recurrent headaches after the loss of a family member

GRIEF & DEVELOPMENT

Young Child: 3-5 years of age

- Perceives death as temporary
- Switches between sadness and play
- Ask some about language regarding death

School Age Child: 6-10 years of age

- Grasps the permanence of death
- Experience guilt and tend to blame themselves
- Ask concrete questions about death

Pre-Adolescent Age: 11-13 years of age

- Ask a lot about the “how” of death, sometimes gory details
- Act out in ways such as aggressive behaviors or experience physical responses of grief
- Balance support systems between friends and family

Adolescent Age: 14-19 years of age

- Some individuals worry about death
- Tend to avoid the conversation of death
- Act out in ways such as aggressive behaviors, risky behaviors, or experience physical responses
- May experience self-consciousness about their individual grieving process



HOW GRIEF CAN LOOK DIFFERENT AMONG THE FAMILY

- Know that there is **differential grief** = family members deal with different issues at varied points in the grief process & with contrasting styles
- This means families with the same loss can grieve differently. Some might cry, have difficulty sleeping, experience anger outbursts, use humor, withdraw/avoid, feel numbness, depression, and more.
- There is no "right" way to grieve, and all family member's grief should be respected
- "In order to maintain the family as a functioning entity, family members must recognize the loss, reorganize after the loss, and reinvest in the family."

LOCAL RESOURCES FOR CONTINUED GRIEF SUPPORT

- Covenant Health Grief Support Group
 - Monthly support groups offered in Knoxville, Morristown, Oak Ridge, and Sevierville
- Katerpillar Kids Camp
 - Free grief support camp offered for children and teens
- Grief Share Recovery Support Groups
 - Local grief groups for death related losses; best suited for adults/parents

