

GLOBAL GRIEF NETWORK

Grief Practitioner Toolkit

Practical working tools for grief support

For GGN Certified Somatic Grief Support Practitioners
and participants in GGN Grief First Aid and Grief Accomplice

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Toolkit Guide and complete set of tools | Edition 1 | 2026

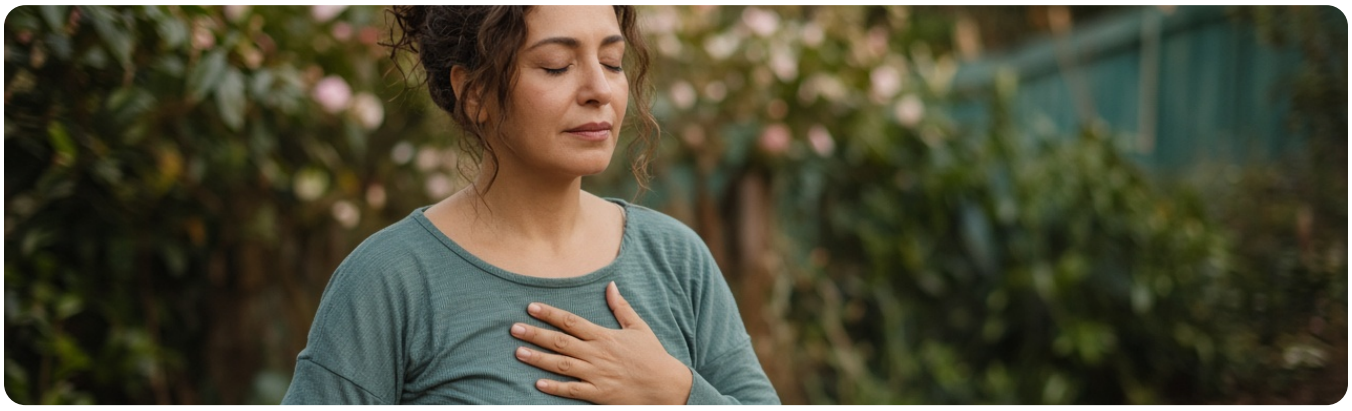
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GLOBAL GRIEF NETWORK | FOR CLIENTS AND FAMILIES

What Grief Can Feel Like in the Body

Client Handout

About this page: Grief is not only something we feel in our hearts and minds. Many people feel it in their bodies too. If you are noticing changes, you are not alone, and you are not grieving the wrong way.



Things people often notice

Energy and sleep

Feeling worn out, even after rest. Trouble falling asleep, waking early, or wanting to sleep much more than usual.

Chest, throat, and stomach

Heaviness or tightness in the chest. A lump in the throat. A hollow or empty feeling. Less or more appetite, or an upset stomach.

Muscles and movement

Tight shoulders, neck, or jaw. Aches that come and go. Feeling restless and unable to sit still, or slowed down and heavy.

Mind and senses

Foggy thinking, forgetting things, or losing your train of thought. Feeling far away or numb. Sensing your person near you.

Waves

Strong feelings that arrive suddenly, set off by a song, a smell, a place, or a date. They often rise and then ease.

Feeling unlike yourself

Crying more or less than you expected. Getting sick more easily. Not having words for what you feel.

Kind ways to care for your body

- **Rest when you can.** Short rests count. Lying down without sleeping still helps.
- **Keep the basics going.** Drink water. Eat small, simple meals, even if you are not hungry.
- **Move gently.** A short walk, stretching, or stepping outside for fresh air.
- **Name it.** Saying "my chest feels heavy right now" can make a feeling easier to hold.
- **Let someone know.** Tell a friend or your practitioner what your body is going through.

When to check with a doctor

Grief can affect your health. See a doctor if physical symptoms are new, strong, or not getting better, or if you are worried. **Chest pain, trouble breathing, fainting, or sudden weakness are emergencies: call 911.**

What I notice in my body, and what helps

In immediate danger: call 911. 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: call or text **988** (US). Elsewhere, use your local emergency number and crisis line.

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Coping Practices for Hard Days

Client Handout

About this page: Some days are heavier than others. On a hard day, smaller is better. Pick one thing from this page and try it. Nothing here is a test, and you do not have to do it perfectly.



Ideas to try

Slow your breath out

Breathe in normally, then let the breath out a little slower, like a quiet sigh. Repeat a few times.

Look around

Name five things you can see. Then four you can touch. Notice the room you are in.

Step outside

Stand at a door or window, or walk to the end of the street. Notice the air and the sky.

Hold something comforting

A warm mug, a soft blanket, a smooth stone, or something that belonged to your person.

Do one small task

Make the bed, wash one dish, or answer one message. Small actions can steady a heavy day.

Reach out

Send a short text: "Hard day today. No need to fix anything. I just wanted you to know."

Write it down

Put your thoughts on paper for five minutes. No one else needs to read it.

Make room for remembering

Light a candle, look at a photo, say their name out loud, or play a song you shared.

Move a little

Stretch your arms, roll your shoulders, or walk slowly. Gentle is enough.

Rest without guilt

Resting is not giving up. Grief takes energy, and rest is part of caring for yourself.

Let the wave pass

Strong feelings often come in waves. When one arrives, you might tell yourself: "This is a wave. It will rise, and it will ease." Stay with something steady, like your feet on the floor or a warm drink in your hands, until it softens.

My hard days list

Three things that help me

People I can reach

Places that feel calming

Things to go easy on (for example news, alcohol, late nights)

Help is available, any time

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 911 (or your local emergency number).

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: call or text **988**, or chat at 988lifeline.org (United States). Free, confidential, 24 hours a day.

Outside the United States, contact your local emergency number and crisis line.

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Talking With Children About Grief

Client Handout | For parents and caregivers

About this page: Children grieve too, though it can look different from adult grief. You do not need perfect words. Being honest, patient, and present is what helps most.



Use clear, simple words

- Say "died" and "death." Phrases like "went to sleep," "we lost her," or "passed away" can confuse or frighten children.
- Explain what death means: "When someone dies, their body stops working. They cannot breathe, eat, or feel pain anymore."
- Tell the truth at a level they can understand. If you do not know an answer, it is okay to say "I don't know."
- Expect the same questions again and again. Repeating is one way children make sense of a loss.

What you might see at different ages

Age	Common responses
Young children (under 5)	May not understand that death is permanent. May ask when the person is coming back. Changes in sleep, clinginess, or acting younger than their age. May play out death in games.
Early school age (about 6 to 9)	Begin to understand that death is permanent. May worry that others will die. May think they caused the death. Grief may show up as stomachaches, behavior changes, or questions about the body.
Older children (about 10 to 12)	Understand more fully. May hide feelings to protect adults. May ask "why" and want details. May worry about how life will change.

Age	Common responses
Teens	May turn to friends more than family. Mood swings, anger, or withdrawal. May take more risks. Often grieve in private and may not want to talk when you do.

Ways to help

Keep routines

Regular meals, bedtimes, and school help children feel safe when so much has changed.

Share your feelings

"I am sad because I miss Grandpa too." This shows that feelings are okay and can be shared.

Offer choices

Let them choose whether and how to take part in the funeral or memorial, with a trusted adult beside them.

Reassure them

Tell them who will take care of them. Remind them that nothing they thought or did caused the death.

Make memories visible

Make a memory box, draw pictures, plant something, or share stories at dinner.

Tell other adults

Let teachers, coaches, and caregivers know, so they can offer support and understanding.

Grief can return as children grow and reach milestones like birthdays, graduations, or holidays. This is normal. Each new stage can bring new questions.

When to seek extra help

Contact your child's doctor or a licensed child mental health professional if changes in sleep, eating, school, or behavior go on for a long time or get worse; if your child pulls away from everyone; or if they talk about wanting to die or to be with the person who died. If a child is in danger, call 911.

In immediate danger: call 911. 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: call or text **988** (US). Elsewhere, use your local emergency number and crisis line.

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