



Presented by
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Willow House CARES Grief and COVID Seminar Series

Healthcare Professionals



The Current State

- Yesterday, December 16, 2020 the United States had the highest recorded single day death rate – 3,656 deaths
- Total cases in the United States are over 17 million
- Total deaths in the United States to date are over 300,000
- Total cases worldwide are over 74 million
- Total deaths reported worldwide are over 1.6 million



Impact on Healthcare Professionals

Mental Health America Survey

- Funded by Johnson and Johnson Foundation
- Data collected between June and September 2020
- 1,119 Healthcare Workers Participated



Survey Results – Stress & Anxiety

- 93% of health care workers were experiencing stress
- 86% reported experiencing anxiety



Survey Results – Exhaustion

- 82% reported emotional exhaustion with 68% reporting physical exhaustion
- 70% reported difficulty sleeping and 63% reporting work-related dread
- 52% reported compassion fatigue





Survey Results – Worries and Concerns

- 76% of healthcare workers with children reported that they are worried about exposing their child to COVID-19
- Nearly half were worried about exposing their spouse or partner
- 47% were worried that they would expose their older adult family members

The Science of Stress

Positive Stress

Tolerable Stress

Toxic Stress



Anxiety, when experienced above normal levels and duration, lowers the immune system.

Effects of Chronic Stress on the Body

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Digestive problems
- Headaches
- Heart disease
- Sleep problems
- Weight gain
- Memory and concentration impairment





Compassion Fatigue

- *The Toll or Cost of Caring for Others*
 - Can cause emotional and physical exhaustion
 - May lead to feeling irritable, overwhelmed or anxious
 - Can lead to burnout
- Book: *Compassion Fatigue*
 - Author: Charles Figley, PhD



Burnout

- State of mental, emotional, or physical exhaustion that can be caused by *excessive and prolonged stress*
- Burnout happens when you feel overwhelmed by the demands of your life
- After awhile, you might begin to lose motivation to take care of the things around you that you need to take care of
- Preventing or staving off burnout

DISCUSSION





Impact on the Public

Mental & Emotional Health

- Studies show that COVID-19 has had a significant impact on our mental and emotional health
- A systemic review of articles and research found overwhelmingly that people across diverse races, economic level, and locations have been impacted
- The main issues that impact people are:
 - **STRESS**
 - **ANXIETY & FEAR**
 - **ANGER**
 - **GRIEF & DEPRESSION**





Stress and High-Charged Emotions

Higher levels of Stress and Anxiety was reported in:

- High risk populations
- Age group of 21 to 40 years old
- Women more often than men
- Children and teens
- People caring for family members or loved ones
- People with pre-existing mental health conditions
- People who abuse substances
- People who have developmental disabilities
- People who are socially isolated from others or live alone
- Racial and minority groups

Impact on Individuals and Families

- COVID-19 and a worldwide pandemic
- Health and safety concerns for self and family/friends
- Social unrest and social concerns
- The political divide
- Financial worries, businesses closed
- The way people have been treating each other





Profound Psychological and Social Effects

- Strained social relationships
- Decreased ability to manage normal daily activities and stress
- Increases in abusive behavior
- Irritability and moodiness
- General sense of unrest
- Changes in sleeping and eating habits

Other Critical Considerations



Substance Use during the COVID- 19 Pandemic

- Increased substance use and addiction
- Less access to resources
- Increase in overdose deaths



Suicide

- The NAMI helpline has seen a 65% increase in calls between March and July of 2020
- Suicidal ideation and reported depression is on the rise
- How the pandemic will affect suicide rates is still unknown

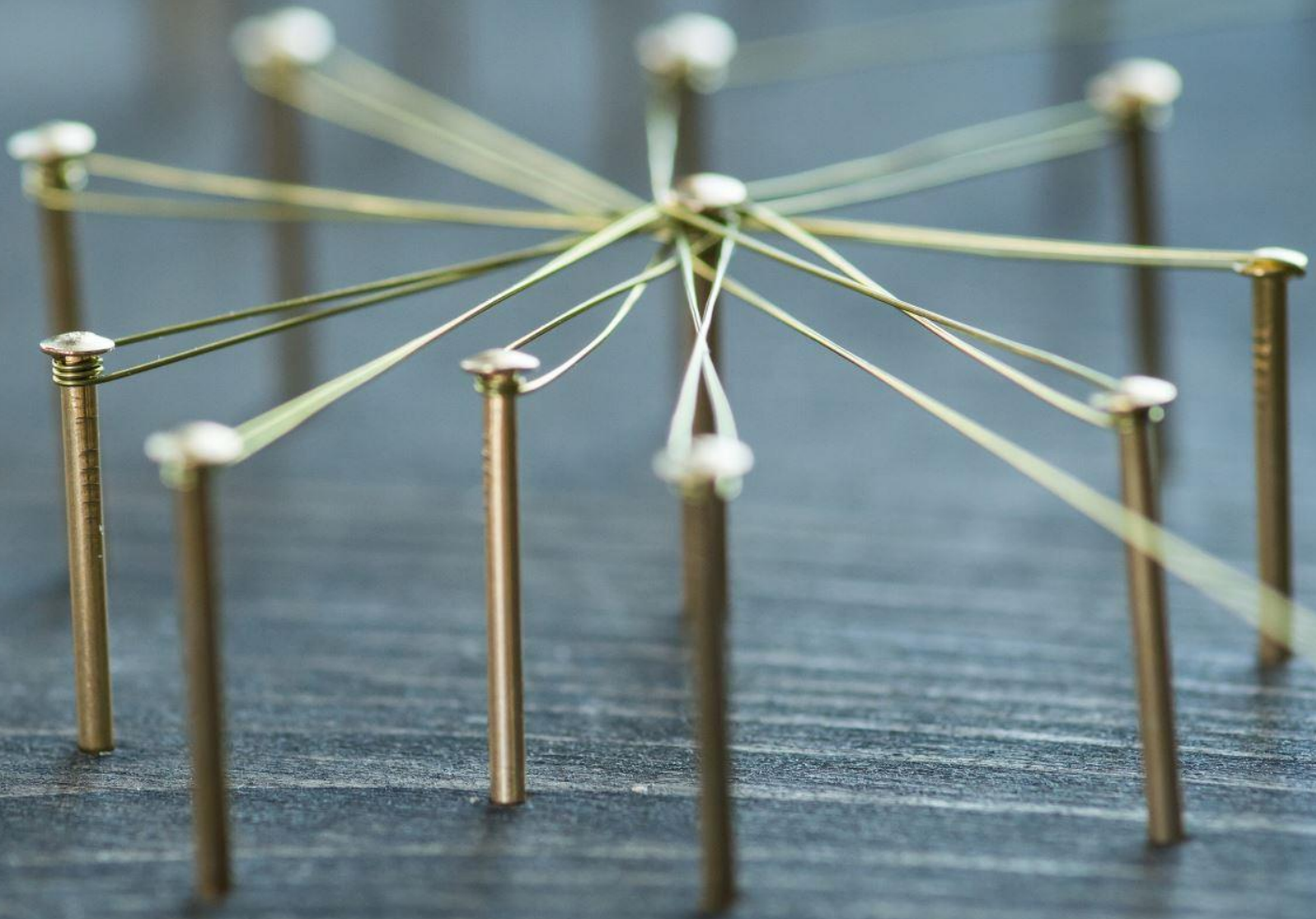




Illness During this Time

- During COVID-19, family members have not been able to go to the hospital with their loved ones
- Loved ones have died in the hospital without anyone around them
- Might not be able to have a funeral or memorial service due to social distancing

DISCUSSION



Grief and COVID-19





Grief is a natural
response to
change and loss.

A dramatic landscape photograph showing a dark, stormy sky with heavy, dark grey clouds. A bright light source, likely the sun, is visible on the horizon, creating a golden glow. Below the horizon, there is a green field, possibly corn, and a road in the foreground. The image is split vertically by a white curved line, with the text on the right side.

Grief Symptoms

- Emotional reactions like sadness, anger, irritability, and guilt
- Psychological symptoms like inability to concentrate or focus, and negative thoughts
- Physical symptoms like headaches, extreme fatigue, upset stomach, acid reflux, panic attacks
- Social withdrawal from friends, family, or loved ones
- General sense of numbness or that life lacks luster, apathy

Universal Realities of Grief

Grief is Personal

Grief is Transitional

Grief is both Seen and Unseen

Grief is a Shared Experience

Grief is Integral

Grief is Enduring

Helping Bereaved Children and Teens





Telling Grieving Children and Teens the Truth

Tell grieving children the truth with these considerations in mind:

- The age of the child
- The maturity level of the child.
- The circumstances surrounding the death
- Answer questions as honestly as you can

Children often Cope with Grief and Loss through Play

- Children grieve through play
- Typically, they cannot sustain prolonged grief
- Children use play as a way to cope with their grief and to take a break from the grief





They will always Miss the Person who Died

Things to Consider...

- People die, but love doesn't die
- Grieving children will miss the person who died for as long as they live

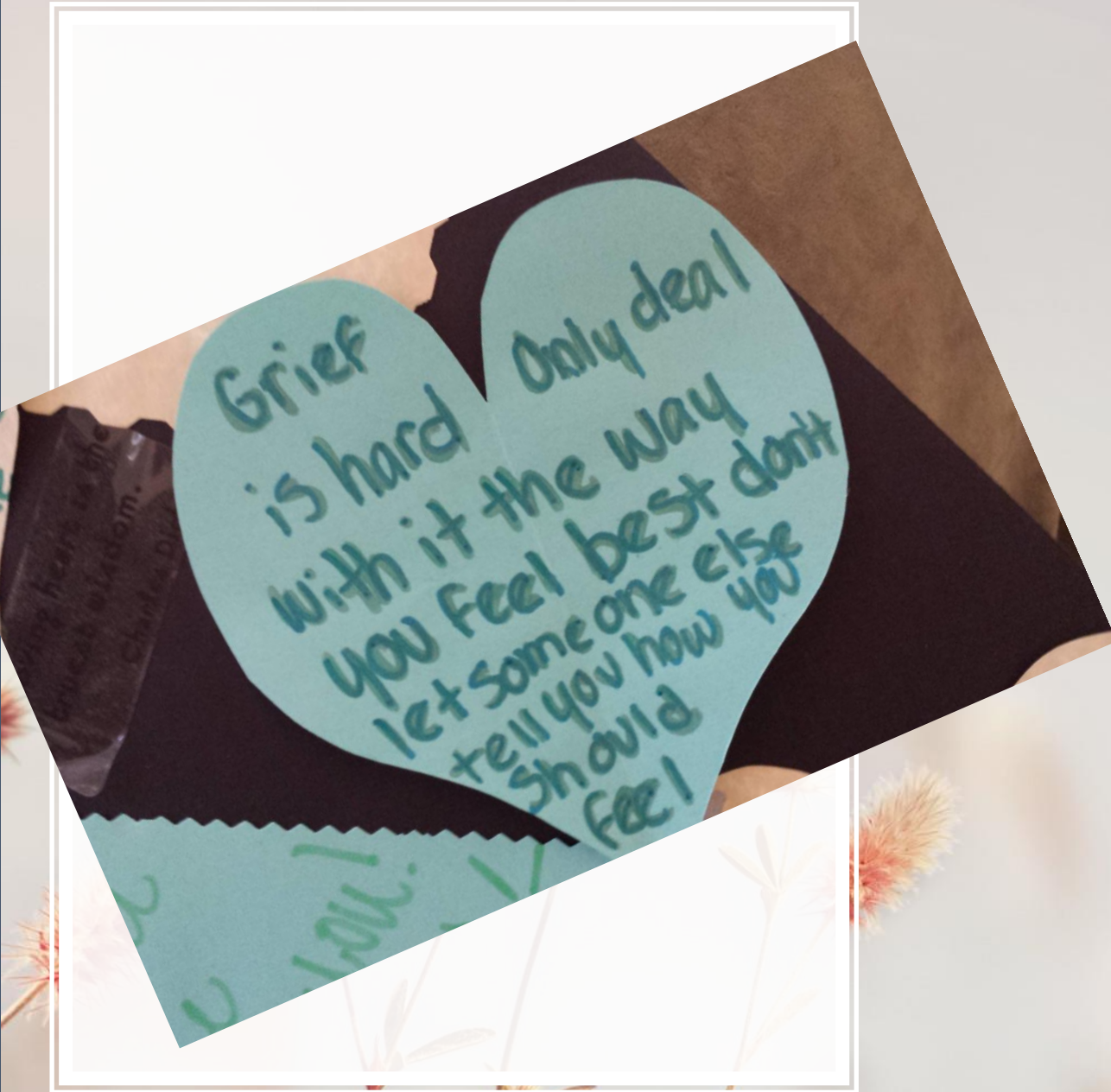
Every Child Grieves Differently

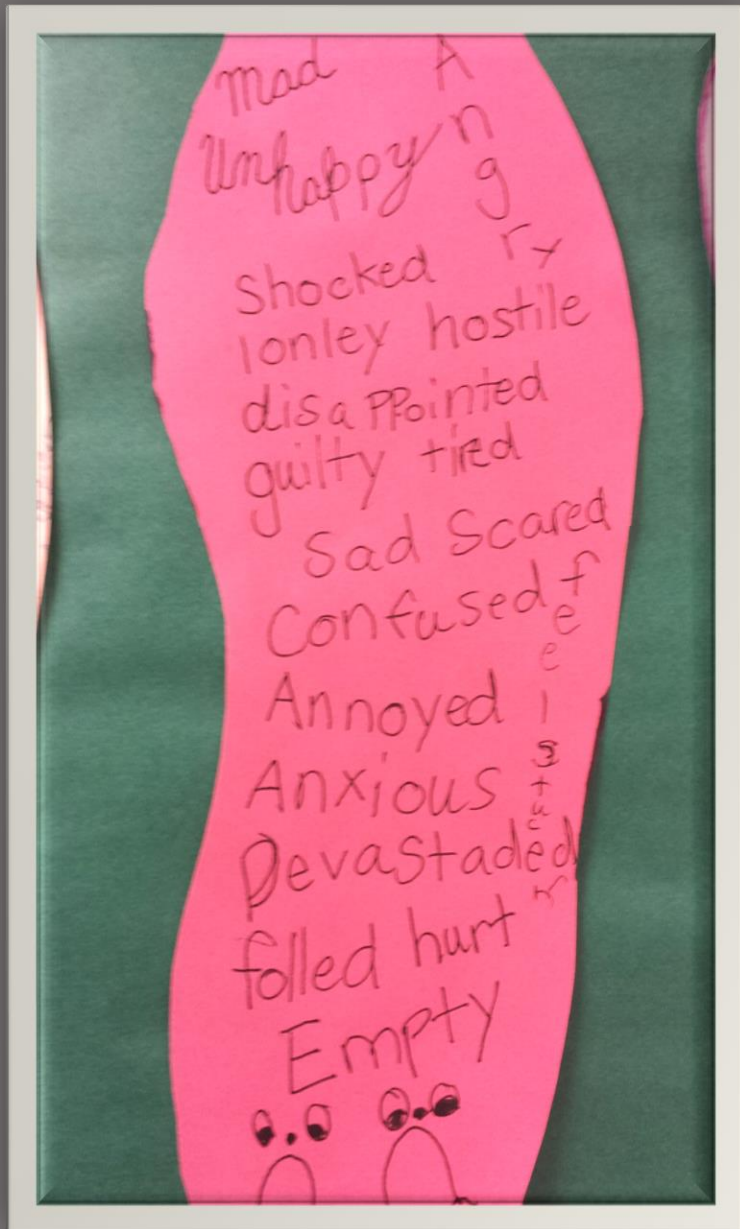
Every child has his or her own grief journey and own way of grieving

Some children might be more expressive with their grief. Some children might keep it all in

Just because children come from the same family doesn't mean that their grief will be the same

It is important to honor each child's story, even if it is different than his or her sibling's story





Even though I might be acting out, What I'm really Feeling is intense Emotions of Grief

- Grieving children frequently feel sad, angry, confused, or scared
- Since they might not know how to express all of these emotions, they often express them by acting out instead

Their Grief is Long-Lasting

- Children will grieve the person who died for the rest of their life
- Grieving kids don't "just get over it"
- They will often be bewildered when other people in their life have seemed to move on
- Their grief changes over time as they grow and change over time



Often, Children want to Share their Story and Talk about the Person who Died



- Having an opportunity to tell his or her story is often beneficial to a child's healing process
- Sharing memories about the person who died is also very important
- Grieving children don't want to forget the person who died and they are also worried that others will forget their person

Protective Factors

Safe Space

Coping Skills

Positive Parent-Child
Relationship

Expression and
Validation of Grief





Adapting to Change

When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves. -Viktor E. Frankl

Meaning-Making

Robert Neimeyer

- ◆ Seeking meaning in loss and transition

Meaning Reconstruction and the Experience of Loss

- ◆ Helps with coping with the loss
- ◆ Helps with understanding the loss

Narrative Reconstruction

- ◆ Listening to Others: Facilitating their Narrative reconstruction
- ◆ How can you help others?
 - ◆ Allow them to tell their story
 - ◆ Gives them a chance to work through issues
 - ◆ Every time they tell their story, another part of them has the potential to heal



The background of the slide is a soft-focus photograph of various flowers, including clusters of small pink and white blossoms on thin green stems. A semi-transparent white rectangular box with a thin black border is centered on the slide, containing the title and authors' names.

Staying Connected and Continuing Bonds

Klass, Silverman, & Nickman



Hope

- **Determination**
 - Self-Determination and Ability to Choose
- **Reliance**
 - Self-Reliance and Reliance on Others
- **Efficacy (Advocacy)**
 - Self-Advocacy and Desire to Construct One's Own Life
- **Belief**
 - That Things are Okay, Can Be Okay or Can Improve
- **Knowledge**
 - Self-Knowledge and Understanding Personal Limitations

DISCUSSION



A person is shown in silhouette, performing a yoga pose (Tree Pose) on a rocky shore. The background is a warm sunset with a bright sun low on the horizon, casting a golden glow over the scene. The image is framed by large, semi-transparent geometric shapes: a large orange and yellow shape on the left, and a grey and white hexagonal shape on the right.

Factors that Support Good Mental Health

- Support System
- Access to Care
- Validation
- Self-Determination
- Narrative Reconstruction
- Exercise & Physical Activity
- Positive Outlook

Self-Care

What works for you?



Recharge

- Recharging your batteries
- Plug-in
and
- Unplug





Putting Self-Care into Action

- 1) When it comes to your personal health, what are you doing well, that you should keep doing?
- 2) When it comes to your personal health, what are you NOT doing, that you need to start doing?
- 3) When it comes to your personal health, what are you doing that you need to STOP doing?
- 4) When it comes to your answers to the questions above, what is it that is preventing you from implementing these items into your current life?



DISCUSSION

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Resources

Willow House

Website: <https://willowhouse.org/>

Phone number: 847-236-9300

Lake County Behavioral Health Services

Website:

<https://www.lakecountyil.gov/684/Behavioral-Health-Services>

Phone number: 847-377-8180

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

Website: <https://afsp.org>

Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

Website: <https://www.cdc.gov>

Association for Death Education and Counseling

Website: <https://www.adec.org>

Crisis Text Line

Website: <https://www.crisistextline.org>

Text HOME to 741741

National Alliance for Grieving Children

<https://childrengrieve.org>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Website: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

Phone number: 1-800-273-8255