

Grief Counseling in Utah – Trauma and Bereavement Treatment

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Grief Counseling

There are many emotions which are not only difficult to define but are even more challenging to understand. Among the most demanding and confusing to experience is grief. Grief can manifest itself in many ways, but generally is described as a deep sensation of sadness, especially after loss. ***Grief looks and feels differently for each person. Crying, screaming, yelling, withdrawing, isolating or creatively expressing one's grief are just some of the ways feelings are processed.*** Further still, some people are not sure of what they need. Their behavior may seem erratic and unpredictable. They may prefer the company of friends, or withdraw completely. No matter the expression of grief, it is important to know that help is always available. If you are experiencing symptoms of loss that are affecting your life, counseling might be a good fit to help find the answers.



Pathways Real Life Recovery of Utah believes in a tailored approach to bereavement meaning that we meet each client where they are, fitting our grief counseling to suit individual and personal needs. Sometimes an objective person has a unique perspective which can provide new insights into life's challenges. As a team, Pathways support clients in reaching their goals through customized strategies. Especially when it comes to grief, you never have to be alone.

Losses That Cause Grief

Grief is a normal response to loss. Many people think of grief as a response to losing a loved one, however, loss can take many shapes. Other events that may trigger grief are those less expected, for example, the loss of health, a job, or a beloved pet. Events like divorce, miscarriage, infertility, moving, or being deployed may also trigger grief. Although many people ascribe grief to sad events, typically joyful events, like the birth of a child, for example, may simultaneously cause a grieving over a loss of freedoms, adult conversation, or quality of life shared between couples.

Traumatic Grief

With the forms of grief that exists, there is an equal amount of differing types of grief. Although trauma is relative to the person experiencing a traumatic event, its effect on grief is very concrete. ***Intensely traumatic events such as a violent death, homicide or suicide can trigger a strong form of grieving known as traumatic grief.*** The reaction to these events is further intensified depending on the closeness of a person to the event; for example, if they personally witnessed or were affected by a traumatic event.

Reactions to traumatic grief may include persistent, distressing preoccupation or fixation on the event that led to the loss. This preoccupation can be triggered at any moment, by anything and can be unpredictable, causing a person to focus on the traumatic aspects like the nature of the death, intense focus on the last moments of the deceased, amount of suffering endured, fixation on the severity of a mutilating injury, or obsession with the malicious or intentional nature of the death.

Grief Counseling Techniques

Since there are many forms of grief, there are also many individualized treatments available. If your bereavement feels overwhelming or interferes with your ability to function normally, treatment may help you process your loss and begin to live a happy, healthy life once again. Some treatments for grief include the following:

Medications – *Symptoms such as sleep disturbance and anxiety, for example, can distract a grieving individual from processing an event. Medications are used to alleviate problematic symptoms in order to allow a person to begin to work at the root of the problem. Common medications prescribed during grief counseling may include antidepressants or mood stabilizers.*

Supportive Therapy – *Supportive therapy is a skilled method of empathetically supporting a client by being an attentive outlet for emotions.*

Client-Centered Therapy – *During this practice, the therapist takes on a supportive, non-directive role while the client becomes responsible for actively engaging in steps toward healing.*

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) – *CBT is a skills-based method where the therapist supports the client in learning about individual triggers; then works with the client to create skills-based strategy to address symptoms as they occur.*

Dialectic Behavior Therapy (DBT) – Similar to CBT, Dialectical Behavior Therapy is a holistic approach which allows a client to observe negative behavioral and thought patterns and integrate skills like meditation to alleviate symptoms

Art, Music or Writing Therapy – For some people, creativity provides an outlet for emotions unachievable through words alone.

Family Therapy – Family members work together to improve communication and solve problems in a supportive manner.



When to See a Professional for Grief, Trauma, or Bereavement Counseling

The grieving process takes many forms and has many effects on quality of life. ***Severe changes in behavior, intense physical reactions such as sleep and appetite disturbances, or a preoccupation with death and contemplation of suicide may mean it's time to seek out a professional grief counselor in the greater Salt Lake area who can help manage symptoms or make appropriate referrals.*** If symptoms of grief are not addressed they may become debilitating, becoming complicated, unresolved, protracted, traumatic, or complicated grief. Complicated grief has features of both post-traumatic stress disorder and depression.

Other indicators of problematic grief and loss may include:

- Constant yearning or ***preoccupation for the individual or situation lost***, including distressing memories, feelings of meaninglessness or the desire for death in order to be with the lost loved one
- ***Frequent crying outbursts*** or other displays of extreme emotions like anger or depression
- Self-blame for the loss, though the individual could not have prevented it
- Excessive avoidance of reminders of the person or situation
- Trouble trusting or a sense of detachment from others
- ***Decreased self-esteem***, difficulty in identifying one's role in life

- Difficulty planning for the future
- ***Extremely distressing anxiety or depression***
- Symptoms lasting longer than 12 months

Grief and trauma counseling gives people an immediate outlet for their mourning, allowing them a safe place, free from the outside pressures where they can focus solely on their needs and mourn freely. In most cases, insurance will cover counseling, however, you will want to check with your insurance carrier for plan specifics. ***For more information on grief and trauma counseling, call us at 801-895-3006 or fill out our contact form to speak to a caring representative today.***

Pathways Real Life Recovery in Utah is a Grief Counseling Center

Everybody deals with death a little differently, whether internally, externally, or a combination of the two. When death strikes, some people simply cannot handle the overwhelming grief on their own and require assistance. This is where grief and trauma counseling can help. Feeling misunderstood and not wanting to be burdensome, grieving individuals commonly experience feelings of frustration and helplessness. ***Professional support with a Utah grief counselor or group can ease the disruptive and complex emotions surrounding grief.*** Seeking help is particularly important for addressing accompanied symptoms of depression.

It is never too early or too late to get help dealing with grief.

Contact us for a free assessment opportunity – we are available 24/7