

Grief & Loss

Chain of Events

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PURPOSE OF GROUP: to process our grief

MATERIALS NEEDED: writing utensils for each group member
paper (construction paper is preferable)
scissors (optional- you can cut paper into strips before group)
stapler or glue or tape

1. Facilitator can open group with an **icebreaker**. Group members may be nervous because grief is a difficult topic to explore, so it may be helpful to ease them into group by starting with a fun icebreaker.

*The following are 2 options you can choose from (that might produce some laughs!):

- a. Option 1: Put group members into “mini-groups” and have them answer, “What is the longest word you know?” You can then see which mini-group came up with the longest word!
- b. Option 2: Ask a volunteer to complete the following sentence: “I went grocery shopping and I bought...” Then, the person next to them adds an item, and so on. However, before a group member adds their own item, they must first include what the group members before them said

2. After the icebreaker, you can turn the group’s attention towards today’s topic, **grief & loss**.

- Experiencing grief can be a whirlwind. We go through so many different emotions, but we don’t always have the time to stop and fully process them
- We end up burying our emotions (because they’re intense, and we don’t want to feel them)
- However, it’s important to discuss our grief so we can take a step towards healing

3. Group members will now participate in an activity that will help them process the feelings they've experienced while grieving.

*Give group members writing utensils & paper. They will need to cut the paper into strips (or you can do this for them before group)

*Ask group members to think about events surrounding the death of the person they lost. The events can be before OR after the death. **On the slips of paper, they will write down the events (in chronological order) and the emotions they experienced**

- a. Example: 1. My dad started missing work & didn't look well physically; emotion(s): concerned
2. My dad started going to doctor appointments. My parents said everything is okay, but they wouldn't give me details. They said they were just seeing specialists for "precautionary reasons". They wouldn't answer my questions; emotion(s): confused, anxious, irritated/frustrated
3. My dad told me he has been diagnosed with cancer & likely has just a few months to live; emotion(s): devastated, hopeless, scared, angry
- ...and so on

*When group members are done writing, give them a stapler/glue/tape so they can **put the strips together into rings (so they represent a "chain of events")**

*You can allow volunteers to share their rings with the rest of group

4. Facilitator can conclude group by asking group members to look at their chain of events and answer the following questions:

- Which part was the most difficult to navigate through?
- Think about your feelings throughout each event. Which did you try to avoid/push away?
- What were some of your fears throughout each event?
- How did you attempt to cope with your emotions at each stage?
- What kind of support did you have at each stage?
- How does it feel to discuss your grief?
- What have you learned about your grief (or grief in general)?
- Who could you relate to throughout this exercise?