



MONDAYS WITH
DR MARK & DR MICHAEL

Monday, December 16, 2024 | 1:00 – 1:45PM

TOPIC #35
Processing Grief and Loss During the Holidays



Guest speaker:



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Spring Health



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Processing Grief and Loss During the Holidays



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SPRING HEALTH



Today we will explore:

- 1 What is grief & loss?
- 2 Different forms of grief
- 3 Why grief is so hard around the holidays
- 4 Growing around grief
- 5 Tools to move through the grief around the holidays
- 6 Providing support to kids navigating grief

How equipped to you feel to talk about grief and loss in the workplace?

1

Not at all equipped:
I feel unprepared and lack knowledge.

2

Somewhat Unequipped:
I have minimal understanding or experience.

3

Moderately equipped:
I have some understanding and feel somewhat comfortable.

4

Well-equipped:
I have a good understanding and feel confident discussing at work.

5

Very Well - equipped: I feel highly confident, experienced, and prepared.

Grief & loss

What does it mean?

- Grief is a natural emotional response to the loss of someone or something important.



What Grief IS and what it is NOT



WHAT IT IS

- A normal human reaction to loss
- Healthy
- A reflection of our capacity to love and hope
- A process of mourning and memorializing
- Shifts shape and intensity over time
- Doesn't go away completely



WHAT IT IS NOT

- A sign that something is wrong
- Something to get over or heal
- On a time frame
- A one size fits all journey
- Just an emotional experience

How does grief & loss affect you around the holidays?

1

Grief does not affect me

2

I power through it and don't give it much thought

3

I tend to feel more sad or down around the holidays

4

I become so upset that I cannot even enjoy the holidays

5

Other (please type it into the chat)

Loss in many forms

- Loss of a loved one
- Loss of a tradition
- Loss of a job or career
- Loss of a relationship or family structure
- Loss of a home
- Loss of a pet
- Loss of your or a loved one's health; being diagnosed with an illness
- Loss of a dream or expectation
- Loss of ability

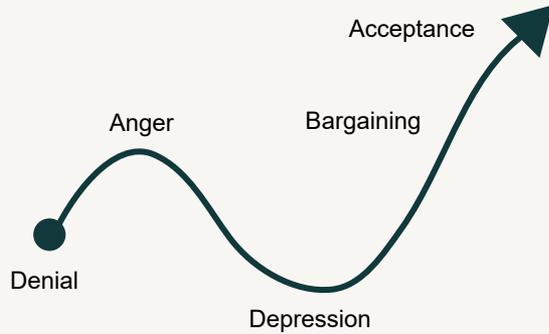
Why is it so hard around the holidays?

- Feelings can be overwhelming and relentless
- Waves of grief are out of our control
- Vulnerabilities arise unexpectedly and we can be triggered when we're not ready
- We're wired to search for ways to get rid of it
- There are often unresolved layers of emotions and circumstance
- Celebrating may feel like a betrayal of the person who died

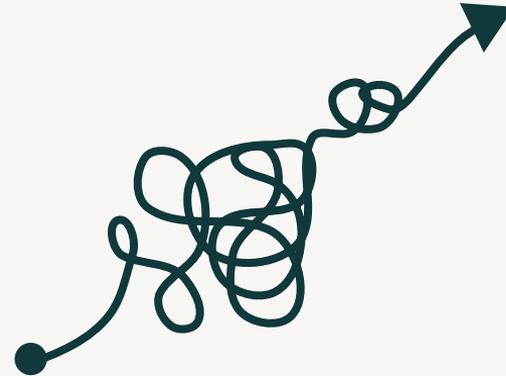


Stages of grief

THE ROADMAP YOU EXPECTED



THE ROAD YOU GOT



Mourner's Bill of Rights



You have the right to experience your own unique grief



You have the right to talk about your grief



You have the right to feel a multitude of emotions



You have the right to be tolerant of your physical and emotional limits



You have the right to experience "grief bursts."



You have the right to make use of ritual



You have the right to embrace your spirituality.



You have the right to search for meaning



You have the right to treasure your memories



You have the right to move toward your grief and heal

Ways to provide support



**Make yourself
available**



**Offer practical
or emotional
support**



**Don't minimize
someone's loss**

Supportive conversations

Tips and strategies

- Remain calm
- Show empathy
- Actively Listen
- Be non-judgemental
- Be open and honest
- Allow time to process
- Continue to be present/available
- Follow-up



Family tips to navigate grief & loss

- Share your feelings and thoughts (use age appropriate language)
- Be ready to answer questions; align with your partner or family
- Know there's not one right way to respond; kids process in small bites of information over the course of time
- Know you don't have to have all the answers
- Remind kids it's normal to feel sad or upset around the holidays
- Model self care and engage in coping strategies together

How does grief & loss affect the kids in your life around the holidays?

1

They are not affected by grief

2

They may mention the loss a little, but they seem unphased

3

They become more tearful or act out more around the holidays

4

They become so upset that they cannot even enjoy the holidays

5

Other (please type it into the chat)

Signs of distress

What to look for

Physical Health

- Change in appetite/weight
- Change in sleep
- Somatic complaints
- Exhaustion

Social/ Emotional Health

- Self-doubt
- Mood swings/clinginess
- Increase anxiousness
- Sense of failure
- Fear of safety (the world is no longer safe)

Behaviors/Coping Skills

- Withdrawal/school refusal
- Concentration
- Concerned with details around death/loss
- Risk-taking
- Take on caregiving role

Language Matters

How to Support Kids Who Are Grieving Across Age Groups

Ages 3-5

“It’s okay to feel sad, it’s part of missing something or someone special.”

Ages 6-10

“It’s okay to talk about how you’re feeling, even if it’s hard to put into words.”

Ages 11-13

“We can honor what’s different this year, while also finding ways to enjoy what we have.”

Ages 14-18

“It’s okay if the holidays don’t feel the same this year. Sometimes things change, and it’s important to give yourself time to adjust.”

Traditions

Honor the loss while leaning into new possibilities

- Identify shared values and interests
- Establish regular family routines/ rituals
- Celebrate milestones and special occasions
- Start new traditions
- Document family memories
- Be flexible and open to change
- Prioritize connection and presence



How could some of your family traditions or rituals be modified following loss?

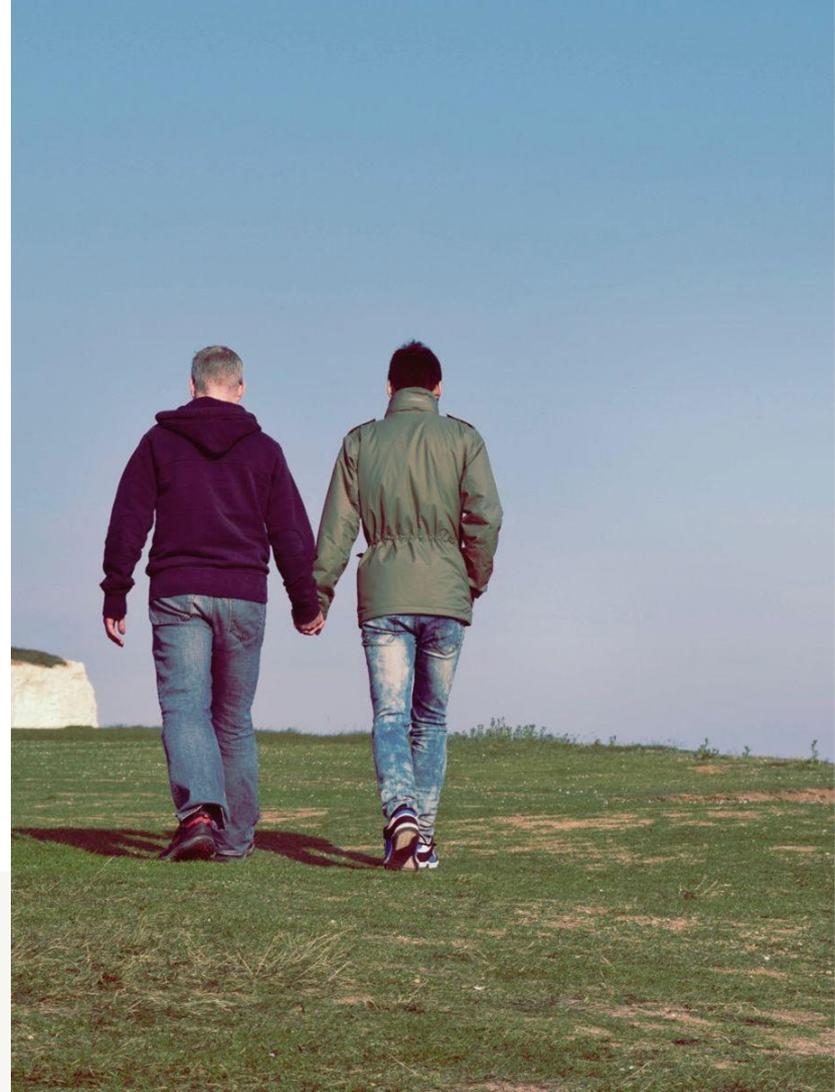


Additional rituals to practice around the holidays

- Memory ornaments
- Gratitude and grief journal
- Volunteering
- Memory box
- Special recipes
- Memory walk
- Photo slideshow
- Lighting a candle
- Travel
- Story-telling



What kind of rituals do you or your family practice around the holidays?



Cultivating joy amidst loss

In everyday moments

- Practice mindfulness
- Savor simple pleasures
- Celebrate milestones and achievements
- Find humor in everyday situations
- Practice gratitude
- Be present and engaged
- Capture moments (photos/journals)
- Connect with other caregivers
- Practice self-care





*Share one take away
from our discussion today.*



Thank you

Spring Health 

Questions

Upcoming NEBGH events:

- **December 13** – Mondays with Dr. Mark and Dr. Michael

2025 SAVE THE DATES!

- **March 27**– Women's Health Conference
- **June 5** – 14th Annual Health & Wellness Benefits Conference

