

Social and emotional supports are needed for healthy grief.

There is no responsibility to fix, only to be present.

Self harm and abuse of substances requires professional help.

COMMON FEELINGS AND BEHAVIORS FROM GRIEF:

- Distracted, confused, foggy brain
- Changes in eating and sleeping patterns
- Sadness, anger, guilt, anxiety, relief
- Irritability, frustration, short-tempered



Melissa McCreery Douaire, M.Div., M.Ed., GC-C has years of experience walking beside the grieving. Since the death of her mother in 2005 she has been passionate about helping those who grieve and supporting them through their journey.

In 2009 Melissa became a Stephens Ministry Leader through her work at her United Church of Christ (UCC) church. She trained those who worked with others and supported many within her UCC church family during their most challenging days. Melissa is known and recognized for her gifts as a compassionate listener, faithful optimist, and knowledgeable confidante.

Melissa earned her Masters in Divinity from Chicago Theological Seminary and is an ordained UCC minister and certified grief counselor. Earlier in her career, after earning a Masters in Education from the University of Virginia and a B.A. in Education from DePauw University, Melissa taught at the elementary level working with diverse populations and has also taught English Language Acquisition (ELA) at the college level.

Melissa teaches through webinars, facilitating retreats, and speaking engagements. Her passion is to acknowledge and address the grief we will all eventually experience, understand the impacts of loss, and treat each other kindly and gently while walking through dark days back into the light of hope.

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HOW TO HELP THOSE GRIEVING WITH THEIR EARLY NEEDS

“Grief is universal, but grieving is unique to every individual.”

WHOLE PERSON
CONVERSATIONS

Out of darkness comes the light



SPIRITUAL NEEDS

- Plan and attend memorials
 - Listen to music
- Write to the deceased
 - Artistic expressions
 - Journal
 - Create Rituals
- Honor customary rituals
 - Pray together
 - Plant a tree
 - Gather pictures
 - Share stories



PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS

- Talk about the deceased
 - Say “dead, death, died”
 - Avoid platitudes
- Reassure needs will be met
 - BE PRESENT
 - Anticipate needs
 - Encourage memories
- Validate range of emotions
 - Be inclusive
 - LISTEN



PHYSICAL NEEDS

- Prepare food
- Keep hydrated
- Monitor sleep
- Stay with them
- Drive to appointments
 - Field inquiries
- Do household tasks
 - Take walks
- Encourage hygiene
- Touch - if welcomed