

Grief Counseling/Therapy

Not everyone processes grief at the same rate. Some cope and adapt to a death sooner, while others, based on similar factors and variables, may take a longer period of time.

Counseling and therapy are opportunities for those who seek support to move from *only coping* to being transformed by the loss—to find a new "normal" in their lives and to know that after a loved one dies one does not remove that person from his or her life, but rather learns to develop a new relationship with the person now that he or she has died. In *A Time to Grieve: Meditations for Healing after the Death of a Loved One* (1994) the writer Carol Crandall states, "You don't heal from the loss of a loved one because time passes; you heal because of what you do with the time" (Staudacher 1994, p. 92).

Goals

There are diverse frameworks and approaches to goals and outcomes of the grief counseling and therapy process. Robert Neimeyer believes, "The grief counselor acts as a fellow traveler [with the bereaved] rather than consultant, sharing the uncertainties of the journey, and walking alongside, rather than leading the grieving individual along the unpredictable road toward a new adaptation" (Neimeyer 1998, p. 200). Janice Winchester Nadeau clearly reminds grief counselors and grief therapists that it is not only individuals who are grieving, but entire family systems. A person is not only grieving independently within the family system, but the interdependence within the family also affects one's actions and reactions. According to Worden there are three types of changes that help one to evaluate the results of grief therapy. These are changes in: (1) subjective experience, (2) behavior, and (3) symptom relief.

Treatment options include individual, couple, and family grief counseling or grief therapy, and/or group counseling. Grief support groups are generally not therapy groups, but supportive therapeutic environments for the bereaved.