

# Permission to Grieve: An Interactive Workshop for Caregivers

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## Overview

1. Caregiving
2. How professionals grieve
3. The nuances of grief in the context of dementia
4. Importance of community
5. Community grief exercise in 4 parts

To Grieve Like Everyone Else...

## Disclosures



Co-founder

*"...[Caregiving] provides a place to encounter [life], engage its impulse towards fragmentation, and its inclinations for infinity."*

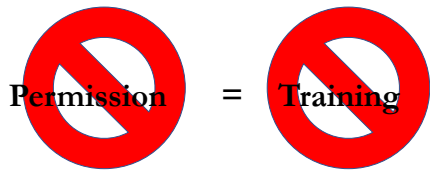
Jennifer Kaufman, MFA

To Grieve Like Everyone Else...

**stigma**  
unprofessional  
culture of cure **weakness**

Graneek et al J of Pal Med 2012

## To Grieve Like Everyone Else...



Graneck et al J of Pal Med 2012

## To Grieve Like Everyone Else...

“It keeps me awake at night”

“You just become somewhat accustomed to it...”

“It is a very bad thing to become emotionally attached to your patients because you’re going to suffer”

“I have to keep reminding myself to have a little bit of dissociation...”

Graneck et al Arch of Intern Med 2012

## Dementia Grief

Compounded Serial Losses  
Ambiguous and Fluctuating Losses  
Receding of the Known Self

Blandin K and R. Pepin Dementia (London) 2016

## Dementia Grief

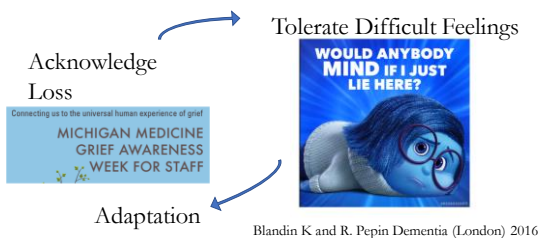


Disruptions in  
Communication &  
awareness

Loss of opportunities  
for resolution

Noyes et al Amer Jour of Alzheimer's Disease & Other Dementias. 2010  
Santulli RB, Blandin K. The Emotional Journey of the Alzheimer's Family 2015  
Blandin K and R Pepin Dementia (London) 2016

## Path to Healing



Blandin K and R. Pepin Dementia (London) 2016

## Power of Community

**Who Has the Right to Mourn?**  
**Relational Deference and the Ranking of Grief**

“How hideous, that there should be a pecking order in my grief”  
from ‘Wave’, by Sonali Deraniyagala (2013)

“Never cry louder than the widow”—Anon

“Relational by definition, grief is influenced  
by others’ witness, acknowledgement and validation”

Harvey Peskin

Psychoanalytic Dialogues, in press

## Power of Community



## Instructions: Part 1

Select **2 DIFFERENT** colored pieces of paper

## Instructions: Part 1

Breathe

## Instructions: Part 1

Write a letter  
*I hope that you are...*

## Ground Rules for Sharing

- 1) Whatever is shared in this room stays in this room.
- 2) Read without preface or preamble. Just read.
- 3) Listen without interruption or comment. Just listen.

**Pick a Partner and Begin**

## Instructions: Part 2

Write a reply  
*How would they respond to what you have written?*

## Ground Rules for Sharing

- 1) Whatever is shared in this room stays in this room.
- 2) Read without preface or preamble. Just read.
- 3) Listen without interruption or comment. Just listen.

## **Share with your same Partner**

## Instructions: Part 3

*Experience of grief in the context of community*

*Tear your partner's letters*

*Share...*

*what you notice*

*what you observe*

*what you feel*

## Instructions: Part 4

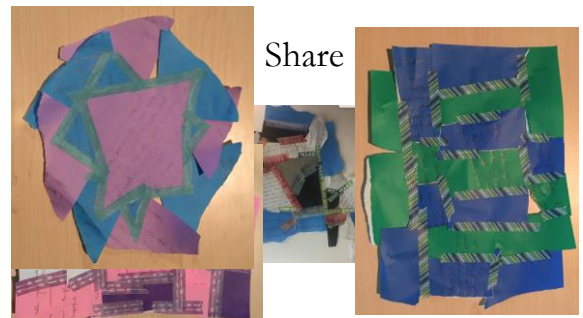
*Witnessing grief as a path to healing*

Create new connections

Layer

Interweave

Recreate



Thank YOU for sharing

“...the self is injured when one's right to grieve is withheld, overlooked or otherwise curtailed”

~Harvey Peskin

Questions? Comments

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