



# Navigating Grief

Providing Informed and Compassionate  
Care to Those Grieving

Janae Kachikis, LPC

**What is grief?**

Grief is an emotion a person experiences at a loss of a loved one, a thing, an identity, a status, or an ability that impacts their psychological, mental, spiritual, and emotional health

“bereaved”

forgotten

numb

confused

cold

hatred

blame

hopeless

void

angry

empty

# emotions in grief

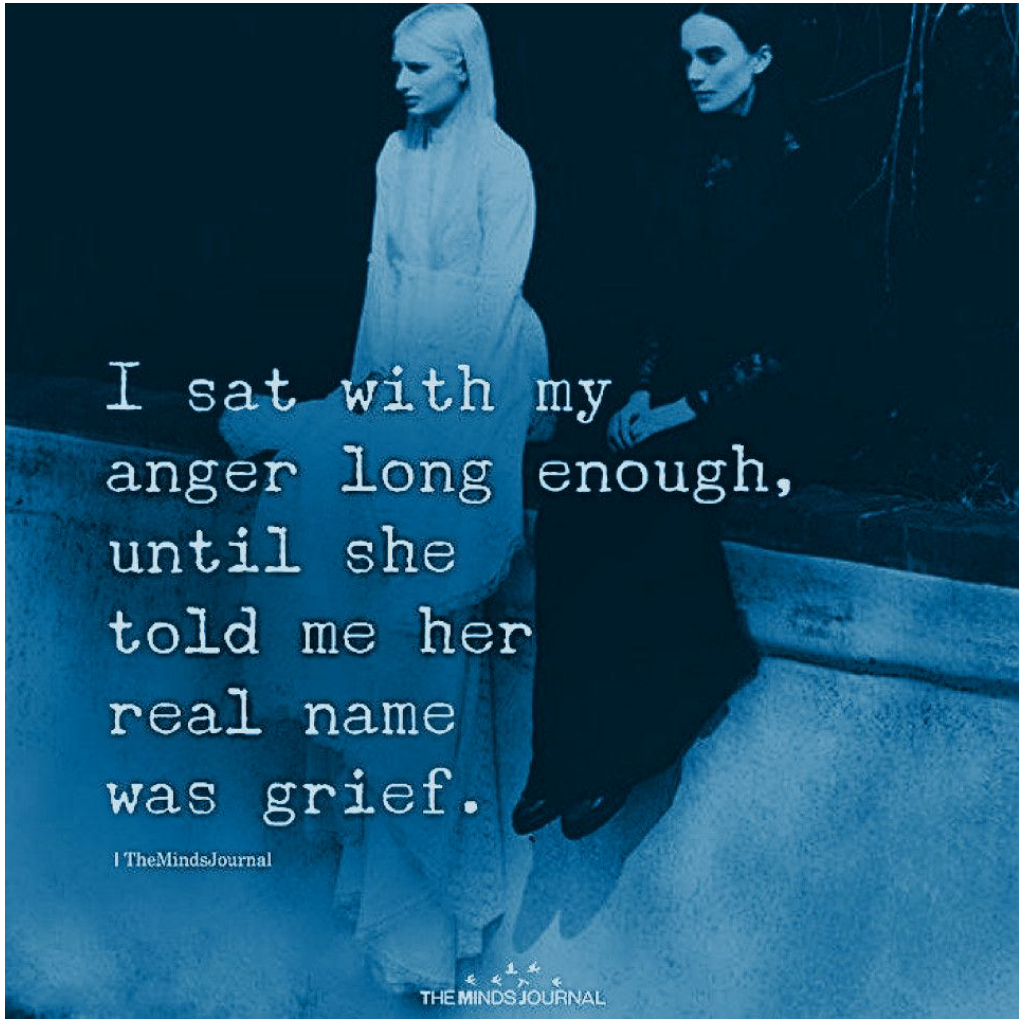
rage

alone

vulnerable

tired

disillusioned



I sat with my  
anger long enough,  
until she  
told me her  
real name  
was grief.

| TheMindsJournal

THE MINDS JOURNAL

C.S. LEWIS

# What grief is NOT...

- Something to “move on” from
- Something to “get over”
- Something to get through to go “back to normal”
- An illness
- Uncommon

A blue-tinted photograph of a field of flowers, possibly daisies, with a dark blue horizontal bar across the middle containing white text. The background is a soft-focus field of flowers under a pale sky. The text is centered within the dark bar.

Grief is a way to digest life



A photograph of a beach with waves crashing onto the shore. In the foreground, a heart is drawn in the sand. The text "Grief is a form of love" is overlaid on the image in a dark purple box.

**Grief is a form of love**

**M. Katherine Shear**

# Psychological Impact of Grief

- Physiological and psychological regulation is disrupted - M. Katherine Shear
- Attachment Insecurity
- Disorientation
- Difficulty sleeping, no appetite, fatigue
- Clouded thinking and difficulty focusing
- Withdrawal from others
- Sense of shock and feeling numb
- Increased distress



# Administrative Side of Grief

- Funeral arrangements
- Going through items
- Financial implications
- Social Security
- Estate and Probate
- Increased family conflict
- Lack of social support



# Acute Grief

The period immediately following a loss, can be overwhelming, intense and overpowering. It can include recurring and intense thoughts and memories of the person who died, an experiences of intense yearning or longing. A person may experience emotions such as anxiety, anger, guilt, shame, regret.

Adapted from M. Katherine Shear's  
writing on grief at the Center for  
Complicated Grief at Columbia  
University, NYC

# Prolonged Grief Disorder (PGD)

A persistent and pervasive form of grief that interferes with long-term functioning. Intense grief is a normal response to grief, but a person must be able to adapt to the loss in time.

An estimated 10-15% of bereaved people in the general population experience problematic adapting to grief.

“Rates are higher when a death is sudden, unexpected, or violent or when a young person dies.”

Adapted from M. Katherine Shear's  
writing on grief at the Center for  
Complicated Grief

# Prolonged Grief Disorder (PGD)

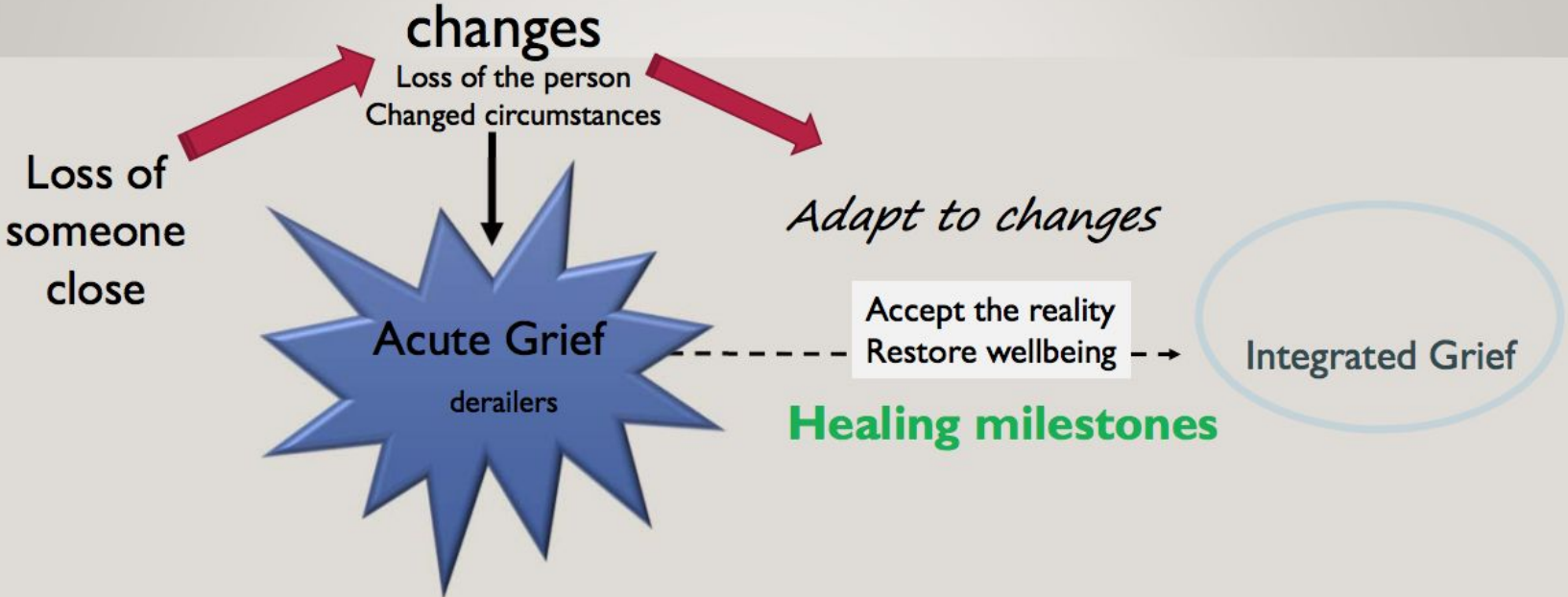
Risk factors: history of mood or anxiety disorders

Women are at higher risk than men.

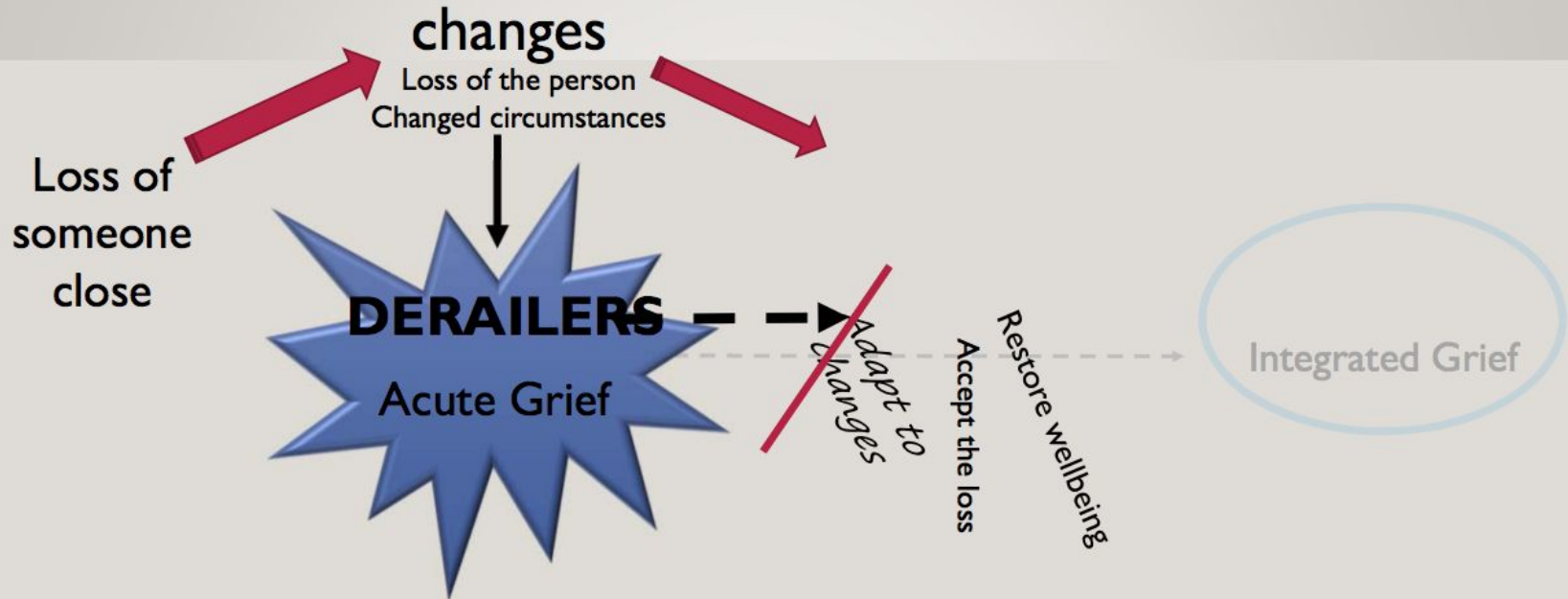
“An estimated 20% of people receiving mental health treatment have unrecognized PGD.”

Adapted from M. Katherine Shear's  
writing on grief at the Center for  
Complicated Grief at Columbia  
University, NYC

# A grief map



# Derailers can block the healing pathway





# Integrated Grief

Grief that has an ongoing place in a person's life but does not dominate or cause significant impairment to a person's psychological, physical or mental wellness

However grief can be activated at certain holidays, reminders, death anniversaries or new milestones



# Grief and Suicidality

Because of the attachment insecurity and the shock occurring to the body's physiological and psychological regulatory systems it is normal to experience waves of INTENSE emotions

It is normal to not know how or even want to go on living after a person we love has died

However, as care providers we must continue to assess for suicidality and re-assess each session and staff appropriately

As needed, we safety plan and initiate crisis referrals



Riding the waves

Breathing

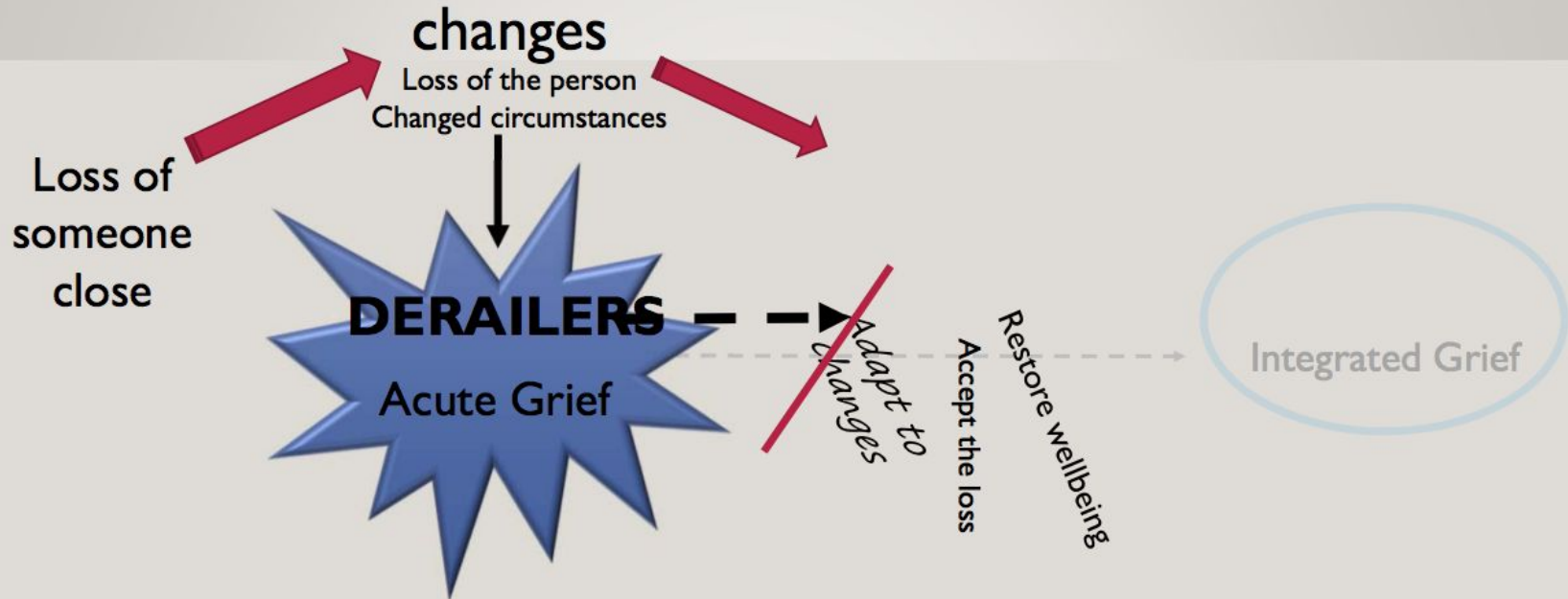
Moment by moment

# Multicultural considerations

We consider the multicultural identity of each the person in front of us. What is their racial identity? What is their lived experience?

Da'Mere Wilson and Mary-Frances O'Conner at the University of Arizona in their research article *From Grief to Grievance: Combined Axes of Personal and Collective Grief Among Black Americans* widen the scope of acute grief to explore the impact of American's history of racialization and racial violence on African Americans.

# Derailers can block the healing pathway



# Evidenced-based treatments

Multicultural awareness

Peer-based Grief support interventions

Prolonged Grief Disorder Therapy (PGDT)

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) for Grief

Meaning in Loss (MIL) Therapy

The Family Bereavement Program (FBP)

Grief and Trauma Intervention for Children  
(GTI)

Medications for Complicated Grief





“You can’t heal someone’s pain by trying to take it away from them.”

Megan Devine



Who is the compassionate  
Witness to our pain and  
suffering?

# Jesus our Wounded Healer

“He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.”

Isaiah 53:3 (ESV)

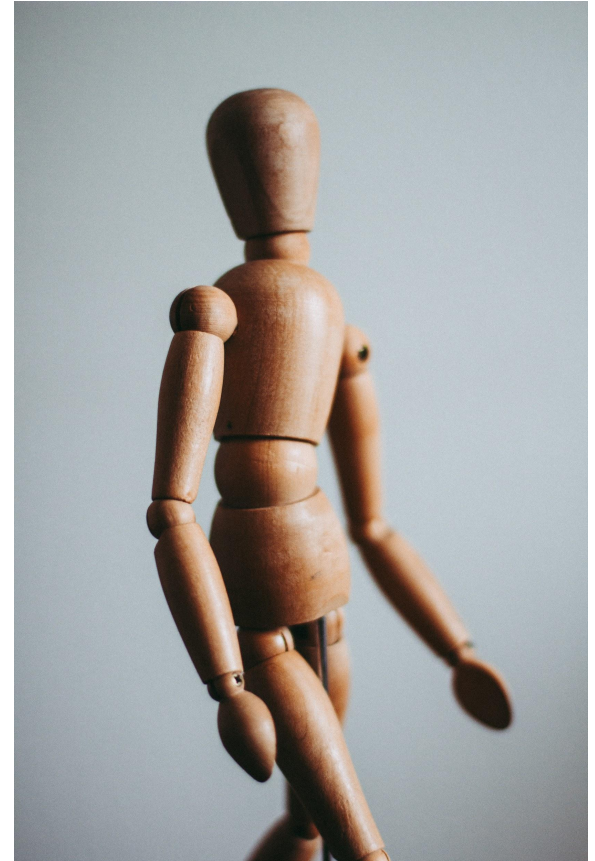
“Behold, You desire truth in the  
inward parts, And in the hidden  
part You will make me to know  
wisdom.”

Psalm 51:6 (NKJV)

“We must understand that following Jesus, the Man of Sorrows, will mean more tears for us, not less.”

Michael Card, *The Hidden Face of God*, p.30

Because grief is a  
whole body  
experience  
we need a whole  
body approach



# In practice: Wellness Vs Worseness

What are the activities you will be doing when you feel better?

What are the activities or signs that you are feeling worse?



Grief has to be experienced in and expressed with our bodies. You can be active in your grief, actively moving through it and moving it out of abstraction and into healthy physical experiences as a way to **acknowledge, process and express it**





**Janae Kachikis**

Just now · 🧑🏻



celebrating mom today with ice-cream and sharing stories about her. i am so grateful for her love and all she nurtured in me. and i am so looking forward to when there will be more years together than we ever had apart. 🍦❤️





YOU

# Community-based supports and Resources

988 - National Crisis Hotline

Columbia Survivors of Suicide  
SOSColumbia@gmail.com  
1st Tuesday/ month 7-8:30 p.m.  
Westminster Presbyterian Church

Griefshare.com

Divorcecare.com

Alcoholics Anonymous  
www.aa.org

Center for Prolonged Grief

Postpartum Support International  
<https://www.postpartum.net/>

Post-abortion support group  
Daybreak Life Care Center  
Daybreakcola.org

Care Ministry at Crossroads Church  
Support Services, Care Teams,  
Specialized Services

Center for Loss & Life Transition  
Dr. Alan Wolfelt  
<https://www.centerforloss.com/>