



Grief Connection Space

Supporting Students and Colleagues Through Loss: Resources for the School Year

As we move further into the school year and fall season, grief and loss continue to touch the lives of the people we serve and support. Students, families, colleagues, and community members may be carrying grief from a recent loss—or learning about losses and changes that occurred over the summer or earlier in the year. These may include the death of someone they love, divorce or the end of a relationship, a move, changes in family circumstances, illness, or other significant life transitions.

And sometimes, we are carrying our own grief while supporting someone else.

Grief does not always have a clear beginning or end, and it may not look the way we expect. A student may struggle with concentration or behavior, a colleague may have difficulty staying engaged, or a family may be navigating a change that isn't visible to others. Creating space to acknowledge these experiences can be an important part of meaningful support.

At Grief Connection Space, we strive to provide resources and opportunities to learn more about grief and create more grief-informed spaces. To that end, we're highlighting two grief education opportunities that may be helpful for those supporting children and families. We are also sharing two grief support groups. One is in the suburbs and other in Chicago (Ravenswood). Feel free to share with others.

Available Now

In the Aftermath of Crisis and Loss: Practical Strategies & Tools for Educators & Other Caring Professionals to Talk With & Support Children Presented by Dr. David Schonfeld of the National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement. [Click HERE](#)

November 19 | Free

The Child We Once Were: How Lived Experience Shapes the Way We Support Kids Who Are Grieving

Presented by The Dougy Center, this webinar explores how our own lived experiences can shape the ways we understand and support grieving children. [Register HERE](#)

Resources for Your Community

At Grief Connection Space, we believe grief-informed communities begin with connection, education, and support. We are grateful to partner with schools, organizations, and community members who recognize the importance of making space for grief.

Visit www.GriefConnectionSpace.com for resources, tools, and information for schools, families, professionals, and community partners. If your school or organization is navigating a loss, looking for grief education, or interested in creating a more grief-informed community, please reach out at Hello@GriefConnectionSpace.com.

With care,

Michelle Halm, LCPC, PEL, FT

Sara Buttita, LSW

Liz Otto Haskins, Grief Support Professional

Grief is a Social Determinant of Health



- 1 in 5 newly bereaved children will have experienced the death of a parent from an overdose (CBEM, 2026)
- 88% of detained adolescents in Illinois experienced the death of at least one person close to them, and more than half had experienced the death of a parent/caregiver.
- Grief in the workplace costs U.S. Employers over \$75 billion a year nationally.





1 in 12 children



in Illinois will experience the death of a parent or sibling by age 18.

When Grief Enters the Classroom, Learning Changes

Grief Connection Space partners with schools to create grief-informed communities where students and staff feel seen, supported, and connected.

Grief affects more than emotions—it can impact learning, behavior, attendance, relationships, and a student's ability to engage in school. We help equip educators and school communities with the knowledge and tools to better understand grief and respond with confidence and compassion.

Why Bring This Training to Your School?

- ✓ Recognize how grief impacts student learning, behavior, and executive functioning
- ✓ Respond to grieving students with practical, classroom-ready strategies
- ✓ Identify when additional support or intervention may be needed
- ✓ Support students while maintaining healthy professional boundaries
- ✓ Build a school culture where grief is acknowledged rather than avoided

Training Topics May Include:

- Childhood and adolescent grief
- Supporting grieving students in the classroom
- Everyday classroom strategies for connection and resilience
- Responding to significant losses within the school community
- Educator self-care and compassion fatigue

Designed For:

Professional Development | Faculty/Staff Meetings | MTSS & SEL Initiatives | Crisis Response | Parent/Caregiver Education

Why This Matters:

Grief is a social determinant of health. To learn more please visit the [the Childhood Bereavement Estimation](#), [NYL's State of Grief Report](#) or [Evermore for All](#).

A grief-informed school recognizes that students and staff do not leave their grief at the classroom door.

93%

of educators agree that childhood grief is a serious problem that deserves more attention from schools.

92%

of educators agree that students who experience a significant loss generally need more support over the longer term.

99%

of educators agree that grief can frequently have an adverse impact on learning at school.



CARRYING GRIEF, FINDING STRENGTH

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

Co-Sponsored by



No Retreat, No Surrender (nrnsfoundation5013c.org)



Grief Connection Space (griefconnectionspspace.com)

and



First Congregational Church of Western Springs (wscongo.org)

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH OF WESTERN SPRINGS
1106 CHESTNUT ST.
WESTERN SPRINGS

Please join us for six weeks of support and psychoeducation as we explore grief, learn helpful ways to process it, and navigate the upcoming holiday season.

Ages 18+



WEDNESDAYS STARTING OCT 7
THROUGH NOVEMBER 11
6:30-7:45PM

SCAN TO REGISTER
-OR-
TAP HERE

Questions: colleen@nrnsfoundation5013c.org



Colleen Narbone, LCPC
cdpcc.org



Michelle Halm, LCPC, FT
griefconnectionspspace.com

Bridgepoint Psychology Center

Grief Process Group: Spousal/Partner Loss in Young Adulthood

Young adults ages 21-45 who have experienced the death of a spouse or partner

Mondays, 7:00pm- 8:15pm CT

Led by: Michelle Halm, LCPC & Sara Buttita, LSW

Together, we will:

- Process your grief in a supportive space, without judgment or pressure
- Navigate changes to identity, relationships, and future plans.
- Build coping strategies to adjust to life after loss.
- Connect with peers who truly understand your experience

Insurance accepted: BCBS PPO, Blue choice PPO, United Healthcare PPO, UMR, Aetna PPO

\$65 per session for self-pay participants



In-person group at 5547
N Ravenswood Ave
Chicago, IL



Closed group; Intake
Required
Registration closes 10/12



8 weekly sessions, beginning
October 19
60-min group + 15-minute
optional expressive arts
activity

Valuable Resources

Join us as we

FLIP THE SCRIPT



Grief Resource Guide (Abridged)

For additional resources or support please connect with us at:
www.GriefConnectionSpace.com or Hello@GriefConnectionSpace.com

SPECIFIC LOSS SUPPORT

- AFSP (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention)
- Chicago Survivors
- GRASP (Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing)
- HERO (Heroin Epidemic Relief Organization)
- LIVE4LIFE LOSS - Loving Outreach to Survivors of Suicide (Catholic Charities)
- Shellah A. Doyle Foundation
- more resources at Grief Care Network - www.griefcarenetwork.org

GRIEF SUPPORT & GROUPS (Chicagoland area)

- Buddy's Place, Pillars Community Health
- Bereaved Parents of the USA
- Fox Valley Hands of Hope
- Grief Care Network
- Grief Connection Space
- GriefShare
- Legacy Guild
- Lightways Hospice and Serious Illness Grief Support
- Missing Pieces
- Willow House

GRIEF CONNECTION SPACE's Local Collaborators

- Coalition to Support Grieving Students
- Doug's Center
- Judi's House / JAG Institute
- NACG (National Alliance for Children's Grief)
- New York Life Foundation
- Children's Hospital Los Angeles
- National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement

Individual Student Bereavement Support Plan

A RESOURCE FROM NACG MEMBERS



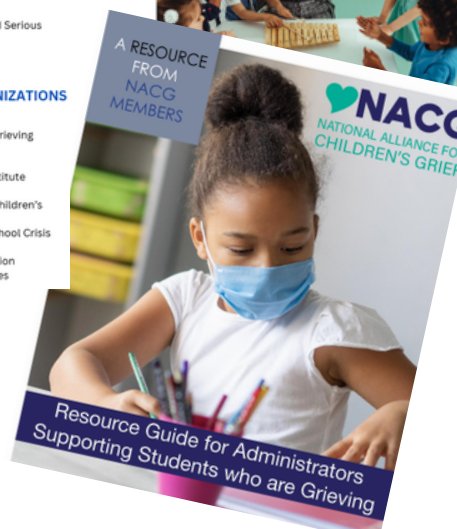
SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE GRIEVING

ACTIVITIES

Read Now



A RESOURCE FROM NACG MEMBERS



Resource Guide for Administrators Supporting Students who are Grieving

2025 New York Life Foundation

State of Grief Report:

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE CULTURE
OF CARE AND GRIEF SUPPORT



Foundation



COALITION to SUPPORT
GRIEVING STUDENTS



NATIONAL CENTER
FOR SCHOOL CRISIS
AND BEREAVEMENT



Upcoming Important Dates to Note in 2026:

November 2nd - Dia de los muertos

November - Children's Grief Awareness Month

November 19th - Children's Grief Awareness Day

November 21st - International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day

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