



# Grieving and Growing: Helping Families Navigate Bereavement Together

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We're in it together.

A young girl in a pink hoodie, the Elmo puppet, and a woman in a yellow shirt are sitting on a large grey rock by the edge of a pond in a park. They are all looking away from the camera towards the water and the trees. The scene is bright and sunny, with a clear blue sky and lush green foliage. The pond's surface reflects the surrounding trees and sky.

SESAME WORKSHOP

# A History of Support

- Began with physical toolkits to support military families and general population.
- Evolved to be one of our most visited topic pages.



Explore

## How to Start Managing Pain

Talking openly and honestly—and letting kids ask questions—can help them cope.



### What Happened?

Adults may feel unsure about how to start a difficult conversation or what exactly to say, but it's important to talk openly and honestly about grief.

Grief Ages 1-6



### Answering Difficult Questions

Listen and be honest as you help children understand what happened.

Feelings Ages 1-6



### Coping With Big Feelings

Encourage kids to talk with grown-ups when they feel sad.

## Sharing Feelings as a Family

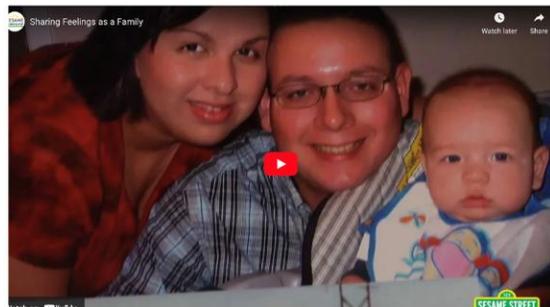
Video | Preschooler (3-5) | Kindergarten (5-6) | Under 5 min

Watch families share their feelings to begin healing together.

Watch Video | Share | Favorite | en Español



How to Talk to Kids about Tough Topics / Grief / Sharing Feelings as a Family



# A History of Support

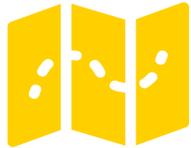
Resources help grown-ups talk about death with young children, offer ways to remember and celebrate loved ones, and help express big feelings.

# The Opportunity: Helping Families Grieve

After someone dies, grief continues to be a part of a family's life, especially as children grow and change.



# Through research, we...



**1.** Examined how the challenges experienced by grieving families evolve over time and identified the strategies they employ to cope with them.



**2.** Learned about resources (i.e., programs, activities, or information sources) that have helped families cope with grief.



**3.** Gauged caregivers' reactions to Sesame Workshop's concepts for future resources on the topic of grief.

# Research Recommendations



# Key Recommendations

- **Highlight** that the grief process for children is incredibly complex. Children often have a delayed grief response, have episodes of short-lived “grief bursts,” and re-grieve as they hit new milestones.
- **Encourage** parents to validate their children’s emotions, model grief for their children, reassure children that the death was not their fault, and include them in decision-making.
- **Prepare** caregivers for challenges that may arise years after the death, such as re-grieving at important milestones, and responding to more specific and technical questions about the death.
- **Feature** parent and child grief support groups or grief camps as helpful outlets for forming community and sharing ideas.
- **Be** inclusive of indigenous and other non-Western grief rituals.

# Key Recommendations

- **Include** diverse perspectives in resources when possible, including examples of families experiencing disenfranchised grief.
- **Avoid** language that implies “moving on,” since it may turn off caregivers who are early in their grief and are wary of language that seems like it minimizes their struggle or makes them think of leaving the deceased loved one in the past.
- **Create** materials to help families through financial challenges, but ensure that eligibility criteria is included when recommending resources.
- **Encourage** caregivers to practice self-care and highlight that it is ok for them to also “find new joy” as they move through their grief.

# Meeting Needs Through Media



Articles for caregivers explore types of grief and its broader implications.



### The Complexity of Loss

Consider different types of grief and loss.



### Disenfranchised Grief

Learn about disenfranchised grief.



### New Family Roles

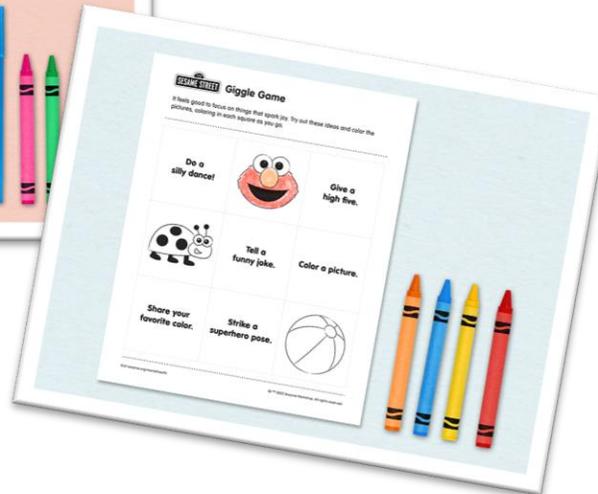
deas to help families navigate changes after loss.



### How Children Grieve and How to Help

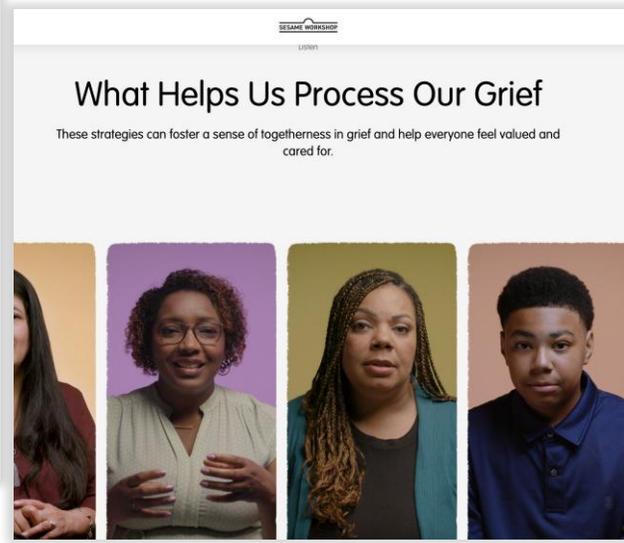
Consider the different ways children experience grief as they grow, and how you might help.

Child-facing resources encourage emotional expression and conversations about change and hope.



# New Muppet Videos ft. Jesse





# Andrew Garfield and Elmo Explain Grief



# Meet your presenters!



**Michaelleen (Micki) Burns, PhD**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Judi's House/JAG Institute



**Jeffrey Lin, PhD**  
Director of Evaluation and Research  
Judi's House/JAG Institute

# Elmo and Jesse Remember Uncle Jack



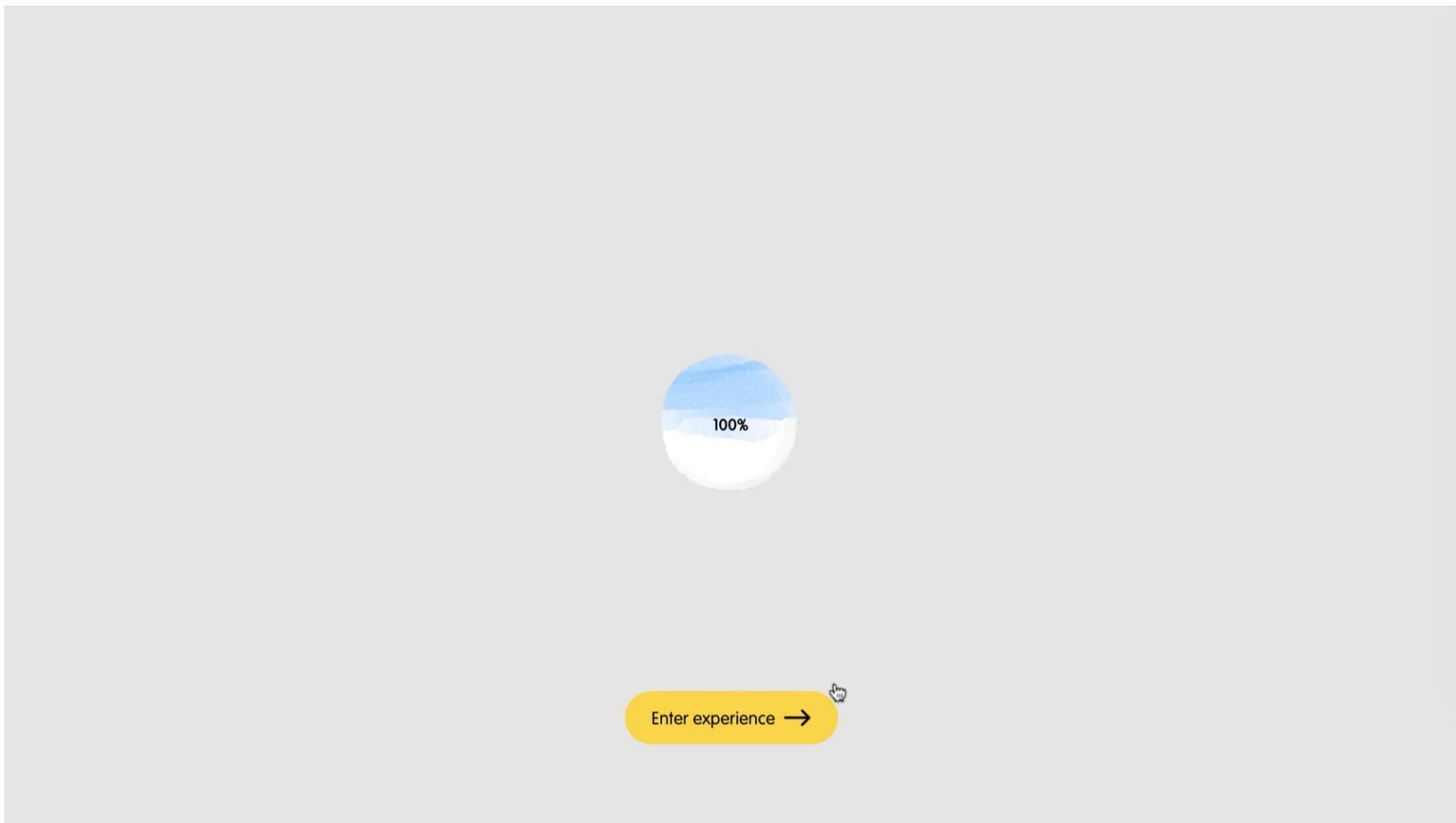
# Meet your presenter!



**Gina Samson, PsyD**

Licensed Clinical Psychologist at the University of California San Francisco  
Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health Sciences

# Growing Around Grief



# Meet your presenter!



**Brianne "Brie" Overton, FT, LPC-S, NCC**  
Chief Clinical Officer  
Experience Camps

# Expressing grief through play



Even though  
many things have  
changed,  
and some things  
will never be the  
same,  
**I am still me,  
and I am**

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For all these resources  
and more, visit  
[www.sesame.org/grief](http://www.sesame.org/grief)





Thank you!