

Summerside Community  
*.church*



# UNDERSTANDING GRIEF

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# UNDERSTANDING GRIEF WORKBOOK

## **BIBLICAL OVERVIEW:**

The central message of Christ is that suffering and death bring resurrection and transformation. Jesus says, "Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds." (John 12:24)

Remember, resurrection only comes out of death — real death.

Our losses are real.

And so is our God, the living God.

## **THE PURPOSE AND GOAL OF THE UNDERSTANDING GRIEF SESSION:**

The purpose of this course is to help you continue your journey of being transformed, healed, and set free, to be all you are called to be. To help you identify/face/embrace your realities in grief and to begin to allow grief to expand your capacity for love and new life.

Unresolved grief can hold us back and even cause some to turn away from God. Part of discipleship is practicing grief in the way God designed it, which is allowing it to change/transform us. Allowing it to enlarge our capacity to love God and love others as much as ourselves.

As a participant, you will learn to identify and practice grief in the way we are designed to, by choosing to allow it to expand your capacity to love both God and others more.

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

- Welcome (10 minutes)
- Course overview and workbook
- Ground rules (EHS)

## **STUDY:**

Joy — Henk & Tracy (20 minutes)

- Its relevance when working through deep heart issues

## **VIDEO:**

- Worship songs that have joyous notes that help connect to joy

## **GROWING CONNECTED:**

What is your favourite colour and why?

## STUDY:

A Bucket:— Henk (5 minutes)

Grief & It's Impact — Henk (25 minutes)

"We are your partners who are called to increase your joy." (1 Cor. 1:24 TPT)

Understanding Grief

The joy of the Lord is your strength. Neh. 8:10

Definitions

Loss – a previously met need now missing, especially a key relationship

Grief – emotional and physical distress from a key loss in any one of our 4 core human needs

Examples: a relationship through death or divorce, physical such as a breast or independence, psychological such as loss of memory, or spiritual such as peace with God.

Mourning – outward expression of grief and loss

Elizabeth Kübler-Ross Stages of Grief

Denial

Anger

Bargaining

Depression

Acceptance

The shock of a sudden loss

Fight

Flight

Freeze

Bodily and Mental Effects:

Learning & judgment go offline

Increased inflammation

Altered immune system (under-active or overactive)

Cardiovascular effects - "heartbreak"

Intestinal tract

Physical pain

Fatigue

Sleep

How resilience affects grief and loss

Childhood Adverse Experiences (especially if unhealed)

Pre-loss lifestyle & habits (like an “immunization”)

Pre-loss spiritual and emotional health and maturity

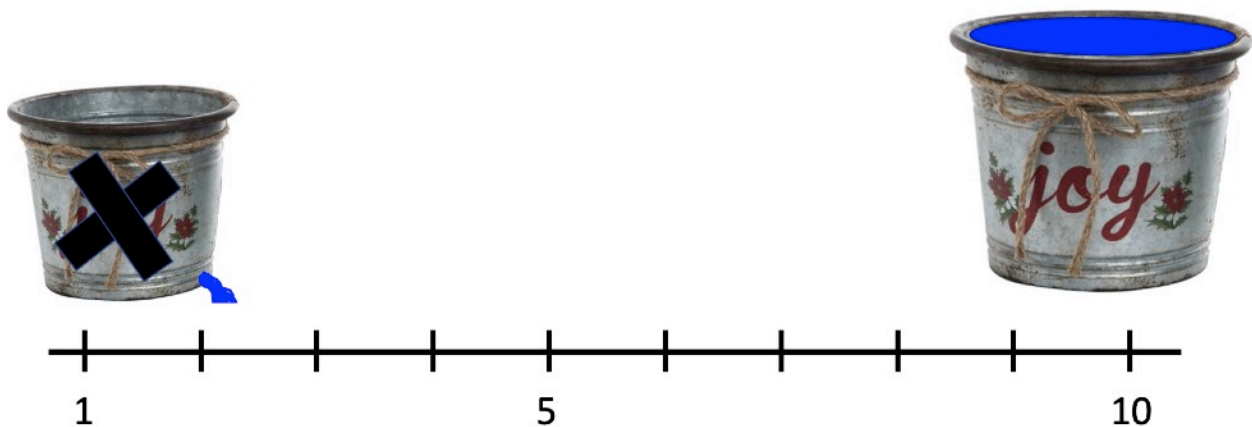
Return to old or new coping mechanisms (eg substances, food, avoidance, new hobby or project)

**INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY:** (20 minutes)

Grieving your loss(es) self-assessment

Are you stuck in grief? How would your closest family or friend answer that?

The visual scale below helps you to be more self-aware of your grieving journey. Where you are on the scale is not right or wrong. Everyone’s grief journey is different.



On the scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is VERY STUCK in grief (represented by an empty, leaking “joy” bucket), 5 is MODERATELY STUCK in grief, and 10 is a state of POST-GRIEF GROWTH (with a full “joy” bucket), circle where you feel you are today.

**GROWING CONNECTED:**

Share with your small group what you are learning about grief.

**STUDY:**

Healing Grief — Cheryl & Erin (30 minutes)

- Acknowledging Grief – Cheryl Millman

- Permission — Erin Hoffert

- Honour — Erin Hoffert

## **STORY:**

A Journey of Grief and Beyond —Wendy Hawbolt (20min)

Grief for me.....

- Moving through grief
- Choosing to grow despite the grief
- Finding growth in relationship with God and others

## **BREAK: 10 minutes**

### **STUDY:**

Letting Grief Change You - Tracy Linkletter (20 minutes)

### **Grief has everything to do with being human**

*“You are imperfect, you are wired for struggle, but you are worthy of love and belonging.”*  
— Brene Brown

As a disciple of Jesus we are called to practice grief, it's a key part of the spiritual life.

We are invited to —

- Be open to it (engage & embrace)
- Be present to it
- Turn toward the pain of our loss

This is counterintuitive. But in fact the heart of Christianity is that the way to life is through death, the pathway to resurrection is through crucifixion.

### **To practice grief is to practice vulnerability**

To be present to our loss and our limits, is a very vulnerable place and to be truly vulnerable is to let go of control ....

“Grief is the conflicting feelings caused by the end of or change in a familiar pattern of behaviour.”

Our culture looks at loss as a huge inconvenience or interruption, it's a blocker on my way to success, my enjoyment of life and being happy. The results of not facing reality is that we numb our pain through denial, blaming, rationalization, addictions, and avoidance. We search for **spiritual shortcuts around our wounds**, instead of walking onto them. We want others to take away our pain.

YET we are wired for struggle, we have real limits, we face many deaths within our lives. As we look at our reality we have a choice.

Will these deaths will be terminal (crushing our spirit & life) \*\*holding us in a cage OR  
Will we be vulnerable and allow for new possibilities and depths of transformation in Christ.

### **The Story of Peter**

#### **You are imperfect**

As Christians this is where we recognize our sin nature.  
We long to do what is right, but we don't...

#### **You are wired for struggle**

Living in the ongoing tension between the soul & the spirit.

*"We run from grief because loss scares us, yet our hearts reach toward grief because the broken parts want to mend." — Brene Brown*

#### **You are worthy of love & belonging**

God loved us before we even knew what love was.

#### **A part of Vulnerability is grieving our limits, it's one of our greatest losses.**

Our limits bring us to a place of humility before God and others like nothing else

Your Physical Body

Your Family Of Origin

Your Martial Status

Your Intellectual Capacity

Your Talents & Gifts

Your Material Wealth

Your Raw Material

Your Time

Your Work & Relationship Realities

Your Spiritual Understanding

**Good grieving is not just letting go, but also letting it bless us.**

**GROWING CONNECTED:**

What is your next step? (15 minutes) —Cheryl & Erin  
Each person grieves differently.

\*\*I am going to open part of my heart, I am going to ask the Lord to come into this place. Giving God permission to walk it with....

Actions / a physical action can be helpful.

**PICK YOUR NEXT STEP:**

- Are you letting something go?
- Are you picking something up?
- Are you walking over the line?
- Clenched fist / Open hand.

Take some time to ask God how he sees you in your grief?  
Journal what you sense, see or hear God say to you.

**WRAP UP:**



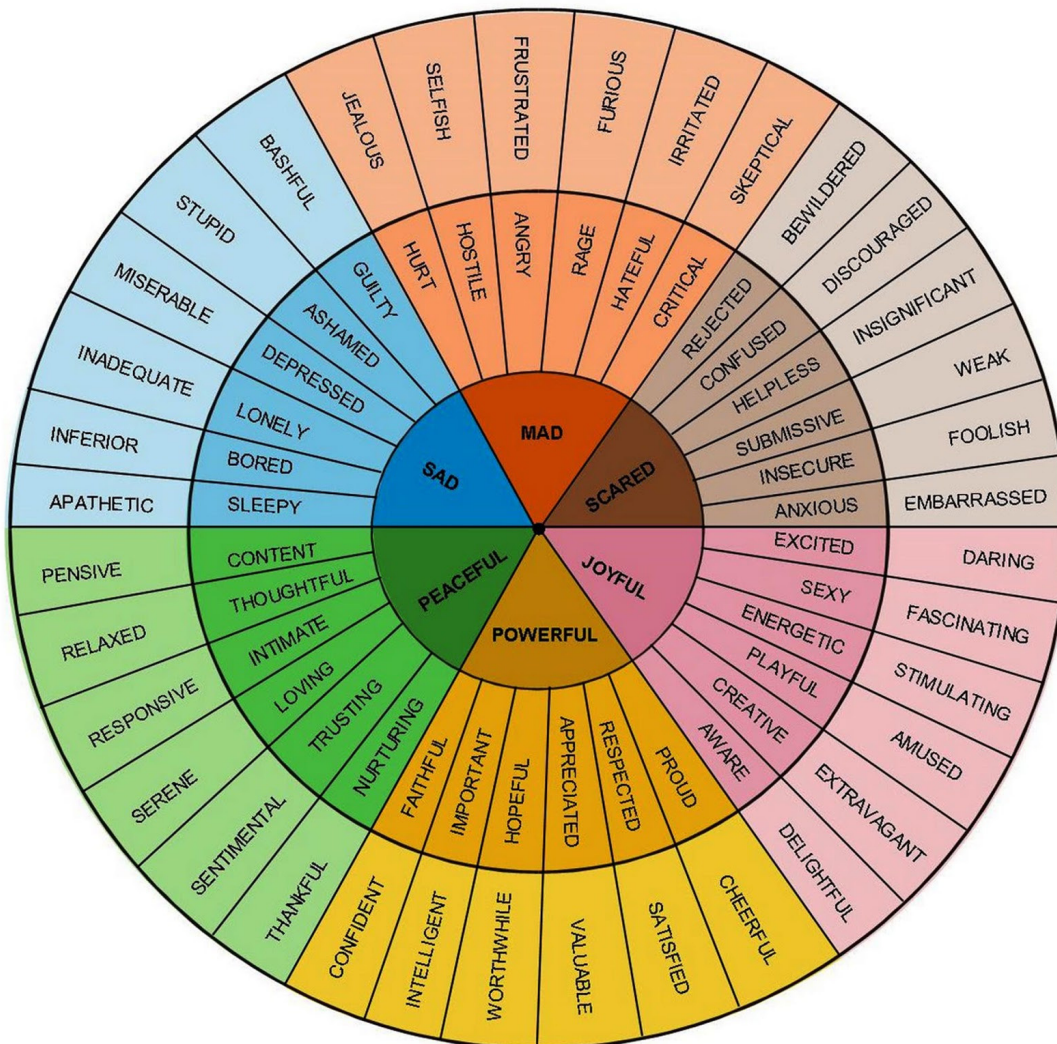
## RESOURCES:



# FEELINGS WHEEL

## A TOOL FOR UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONS

The Feelings Wheel can help people recognize and communicate what they are feeling. The inner circle is labeled with names of primary feelings (mad, sad, scared, joyful, powerful, and peaceful). The outer rings contain names of secondary feelings related to the primary ones. Use the Feelings Wheel to describe how you're feeling.



Source: Feeling Wheel from Willcox, Gloria (1982): "The Feeling Wheel: A Tool for Expanding Awareness of Emotions and Increasing Spontaneity and Intimacy"



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Newfoundland-Labrador



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## **More on Acknowledging Grief – Cheryl Millman**

Grief is normal. God made us to feel. We cannot deny the conflicting feelings of grief. It is part of who we are. If we do not grieve properly, we will suffer on many levels physically, spiritually, emotionally. Jesus promised He came to give us life to the full; a rich and satisfying life. (John 10:10). If you are not experiencing a rich and satisfying life then you either need to explore who Jesus is or you need to explore where the enemy has got you believing a lie. His purpose is to steal, kill and destroy your life which is the opposite of God's purpose for your life. Psalm 23:4. Psalm 84: 5-6 are good examples of this.

Healing and recovery from grief and loss must start with the acknowledgement that loss is just part of our lives.

### **GRIEF LETTER:**

#### **Grief Recovery Handbook (GRH)** by John James and Russell Friedman

One of the best ways to continue the grief healing journey is to do all the homework in this great book. It takes you through a process of healing which culminates with letter writing. A letter is written to anyone in your life past or present with whom you have incompleteness. This means you have a wish that the relationship was different, better or more.

The letter is just for you and should NEVER be seen by the person to whom you are writing the letter. In fact once you have finished to letter it is important to read it out loud to a safe person like a friend or mentor or counsellor. When that is done I have found it very helpful not to keep the letter but rather to destroy it ceremonially. Put the letter through a shredder or throw it in a campfire and as you do that, thank God for the good things you have from this relationship and then release this person or persons from your responsibility and give them over to God. State that this person 'owes me nothing' and "now I am free' or something in that nature. It is important that you do not hold onto the letter because you might go back to it and rehash all the things you already completed in the relationship.

The letter has 5 parts: Greeting, Apologies, Forgiveness, Emotional Statements, and Sign off. Most are self-explanatory on the worksheet but the forgiveness section may be tricky. Neil Anderson in his book Victory Over the Darkness says:

Forgiveness is about your freedom and does not mean that the person who hurt you is absolved of their responsibility. Forgiveness is a choice. We choose to face and acknowledge the hurt and the hate to forgive from the heart. But forgiveness is difficult for us because it pulls against our concept of justice. We want revenge for offences suffered. But we are told never to take our own revenge (Romans 12:19). "Why should I let them off the hook?" we protest. You let them off your hook, but they are never off God's hook. He will deal with them fairly - something we cannot do. If you don't let offenders off your hook, you are hooked to them and the past, and that just means continued pain for you. Stop the pain; let it go. You don't forgive someone merely for his or her sake; you do it for your sake so you can be free. Your need to forgive isn't an issue between you and the offender; it's between you and God.

The forgiveness piece in this letter should not be taken lightly because it is crucial to real freedom. The GRH describes the process as the Completion letter. The point is to take a complete and detailed inventory and see where relationships are incomplete. See below:

**Incompleteness** is an assortment of undelivered communications, large and small, that have emotional value to you. It is essential that we grieve what is unfinished in us. Sometimes incompleteness is caused by our action or lack of action. Sometimes it is caused by situation beyond our control because of what people have done to us. Death is an obvious reason for incompleteness but when we look at difficult relationships with living people – parents, siblings,

and others – we recognize many things that we wish had been *different, better or more*. Most of the time, it is the accumulation of undelivered communications that limit us in these relationships

Sometimes incompleteness is caused or exaggerated by others. Some people will not allow us to say meaningful things to them. Since we cannot force them to listen to us, we often get trapped with these undelivered communications, both positive and negative. Sometimes we are afraid to say emotionally charged things. Or we have been waiting for the right moment or circumstances. Sometimes the right time never comes. Or we forget. Or we get sidetracked. And then someone dies. And we are stuck with the undelivered emotional communication. In short, emotional incompleteness is any undelivered emotional communication. Sometimes we are not sure what we said or did. This can cause feelings of incompleteness. Sometimes we are not sure whether the other person heard us, or whether they received our communication the way we intended. This also can leave us feeling unfinished.

Your objective is to discover those relationships that are incomplete. To resolve an emotionally incomplete loss, you must complete it. Completing does not mean that you will forget your loved one. What we are completing is our relationship to the pain caused by the loss. We are completing anything left unfinished at the time of the loss. We will be looking for the things we wish we had said or not said. We will be looking for the things we wish we had done or not done. And we will be looking for the things we wish the other person had said or done.

In negative relationships, there is inevitably the hope that someday we will get some fences mended, or that the other person will apologize for what we believe he or she has done to harm us. Many people grew up in dysfunctional homes, surrounded by alcoholism or other debilitating conditions. As children, they did not always know there was a different way to live. Sometimes, as adults, they realize that they missed out on a normal, healthy childhood. It is essential that they grieve and complete the pain from their childhood. In effect, they must look backward at what they now realize would have been normal hopes, dreams, and expectations. Some people have horrible relationships with parents or siblings. Occasionally, they can work out their differences and arrive at a new positive relationship. It is essential that you understand the power of the unfinished emotions attached to future events.

## **GRIEF LETTER:**

**Dear (Name):**

**I have been reviewing our relationship and there are some things I need to say.**

**1. Things I did to hurt him/her/them:**

**I Apologize for:**

(List each one separately in point form with no explanation):

**2. They did to hurt me:**

**I Forgive you for:**

(List each one separately in point form with no explanation):

**3. Things I wanted to say but didn't have a chance:**

**Significant Emotional Statements:**

(This is the place of unsaid things which is not an apology or forgiveness which contribute to your sense of incompleteness. These are things you say you wished you had done or you wished you had said or wished they had known about you and your relationship with them).

**4. Closing off: this part is unique to you and how you want to close off this relationship.**

(Because this is a completion to an old relationship that closing is very significant.

You are not saying goodbye to this person (unless you need to do this), you are saying goodbye to the old relationship you had. It says where you choose to go from here.

**I have to go now / Goodbye / I love you / I miss you / have a good life, etc.**

## **HEALING GRIEF EXERCISE:**

When you identify a feeling, belief or emotion you are connecting to a piece of your self (heart) that is helping you process your loss. The goal of this prayer is to invite this piece to process with Jesus so that He can provide spiritual integration of your emotions as you work through the grieving process.

The goal of this prayer is not necessarily to 'let go' of the emotion (though that is an option) but rather to give permission for Jesus to come into and sit with you in the process, however long that may be.

Once you have identified the emotion/thought/feeling take a moment to find a place of connection with the Lord. Sit in that place until you feel the spirit of peace and you feel safe. When you are ready pray:

"Heavenly Father, I am grieving the loss of \_\_\_\_\_.

Right now I am feeling \_\_\_\_\_.

I want to invite you to be a part of my grieving process and I ask for your peace and comfort during this time. I want to honour the work that this emotion piece of my heart is doing and I ask you to come sit with me in this space.

Please guide my steps as I move through these feelings of \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you for your great love and kindness and help me extend this great love towards myself.  
Amen."

## **READING RESOURCES:**

\*The Grief Recovery Handbook, John James & Russell Friedman

\*The Healing Path: How the Hurts in Your Past Can Lead You to a More Abundant Life, Dan Allender

\*Emotionally Healthy Spirituality - Pete Scazzero

## **COUNSELLING RESOURCES / INNER HEALING**

There are times in everyone's life when it helps to speak with someone outside of your circle. If you are experiencing a time of need, please review the list below for someone who can walk with you. This is a list of counselling resources Summerside Community Church has compiled for those who would like to dig deeper into their personal lives and deal with issues that are surfacing.

Others from our SCC Family are willing to come along side of you as a listening ear, inner healing, prayer ministry, coaching, etc. contact Pastor Andrew/Tracy for information on who might be best suited to help you with the situation you are going through. Email the church office at [sccoffice@sccpei.com](mailto:sccoffice@sccpei.com).

### **Faith-Based Help (Fees apply - contact for specifics)**

**SOZO** - Centre 150, Thursdays by appointment.

The SOZO ministry is a unique inner healing ministry in which the main aim is to get to the root of those things hindering your personal connection with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Contact Pastor Andrew or Pastor Tracy for information at [sccoffice@sccpei.com](mailto:sccoffice@sccpei.com) or call our church office phone #902-436-8300. (Fees may apply)

**Josh & Erin Hoffert** - As a couple they do inner healing ministry. Contact info: [erin.plester@gmail.com](mailto:erin.plester@gmail.com), [hoffertjoshua@gmail.com](mailto:hoffertjoshua@gmail.com), phone #'s: 604-999-2005, 778-552-6275. They are part of the SCC family. (Suggested donation)

**Inner Health Transformation Centre, Inc.** - Integrated Health Transformation Centre Inc. is an incorporated nonprofit on PEI with a mission to provide education and healthcare services to supplement existing services. Our approach is on the whole person and is based on the bio-psycho-social-spiritual model of health and wellness. Contact Information: Email: [healing@ihtc.info](mailto:healing@ihtc.info)

**Gloria MacLean** - Personal life certified coach/mentoring. Also does inner healing ministry. Contact information: phone #'s: 902-886-3449 /(c) 902-303-9755. (Fee Structure)

**Moe Hashie** - Certified Life Coach, Adult Educator, Youth Worker. Contact info: phone #(c) 902-439-1925, email: [lifecoach.hashie@gmail.com](mailto:lifecoach.hashie@gmail.com). (Fee structure)

**Jason Dodd** - Certified Life Coach (CCF) Contact info: phone #902-439-4438, email: [jason@blueskyyourlife.com](mailto:jason@blueskyyourlife.com) (Fee structure)

**Ann & Melis Visser** - Ann does coaching, and together, they both do marriage coaching. Ann also will provide voice calls/support. Contact information: Phone: 902-393-9580, Email: [ann@4better4ever.com](mailto:ann@4better4ever.com), Website: [www.4better4ever.com](http://www.4better4ever.com). (Fees apply).

**Amanda Dunham**, MACP, Counselling Therapist, Phone: 902-888-7854. (Fees apply)

**Hali Reimer - Chaplin** - Anger Management & Life Coaching, Psychotherapy (grief, anxiety, depression) Her phone # is 902-598-8134, email: [info@12stonescounselling.ca](mailto:info@12stonescounselling.ca) (Fees apply)

**MacMillan Counselling Services** - Mary Beth & John MacMillan, 50 Prince Charles Drive, Charlottetown, are marriage, individual and family counsellors. They charge a going rate of approximately \$90 per hour. Their office # is 902-892-9264. They are social workers so can be covered by insurance.

**Catholic Family Services Bureau** - 129 Pownal St. Charlottetown, C1A 7L3. They have a collection of counsellors and charge on a "pay as you can" basis. Their phone # is 902-894-3515.

**Dwight Ingersoll** - Canadian Certified Counsellor, Pathway Christian Counselling, Cornwall, Website: [pathwaycounsellingpei.ca](http://pathwaycounsellingpei.ca) His phone # 920-393-1882. (Fees apply)

**Touchstone Counselling Group**, The Red Lion Complex, 23 High St. Moncton, NB E1C 6B4, also on Facebook. (Fees apply)

### **Not Faith-Based (Fees apply - contact for specifics)**

**Mike Hughes** - Peer support specialist at Canadian Mental Health Assn. 101 Longworth Ave., Charlottetown. Office phone# 902-628-3666.

This is free. There are 4 counsellors and Mike is one of them. He seems very good. He is called the rainmaker because he makes people cry which I think is the best. He says he tries to meet people where they are at so there is no one approach that fits everyone. He tailors to each individual.

**Gestalt Therapists** - in Charlottetown. Both of these people deal with feelings and the inner child. This is not cognitive behaviour therapy. This goes deep into an individual's childhood.

**Margaret Flood** - Gestalt Therapist, 2040 Route 25, York Road, Covehead. Phone # 902-940-3873 or contact her on Facebook. Technically not a counsellor or social worker, not covered by insurance. \$60.00 per ~1-1 1/2 hours.

**Brian McCabe** - Gestalt Therapist, 84 Bonavista Ave. Cornwall, 902-566-4083. He is in his seventies and has been part of AA for most of his life. (Fee structure)

**Medavie Blue Cross** - "In Confidence" Counselling for people who have Blue Cross coverage.