

Disclaimer

The information in this Library Talk on Grief is for educational purposes only and should not be construed as professional mental health advice, nor is the information a substitute for professional mental health expertise or treatment. If you have a mental health concern, you should consult with your licensed mental health care provider or seek other professional mental health treatment. If you think you may have a mental health emergency, such as feeling suicidal, call your doctor, mental health professional or emergency services immediately.



What is Psychosocial Support?

Actions that *help* individuals, families, & communities *draw upon* their psychological, social, and spiritual resources to deal with needs and life's challenges:

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- o The *psychological domain* includes feelings, emotions, thoughts, beliefs, perceptions, and behaviors
 - o The *social domain* includes traditions, values, upbringing, roles/relationships, family, and community networks
 - o The *spiritual domain* includes spiritual/faith identity, worldview, spiritual practices, faith and community networks

The three domains intersect and overlap. Our well-being in one domain affects our well-being in the others

Outcomes: Better understanding...

- o How Grief in response to loss is:
Normal, Healthy, Necessary
- o How to identify & grieve:
“Hidden or “Ambiguous” Losses
- o How grief can *keep teaching us* if we are open to its lessons

Story by

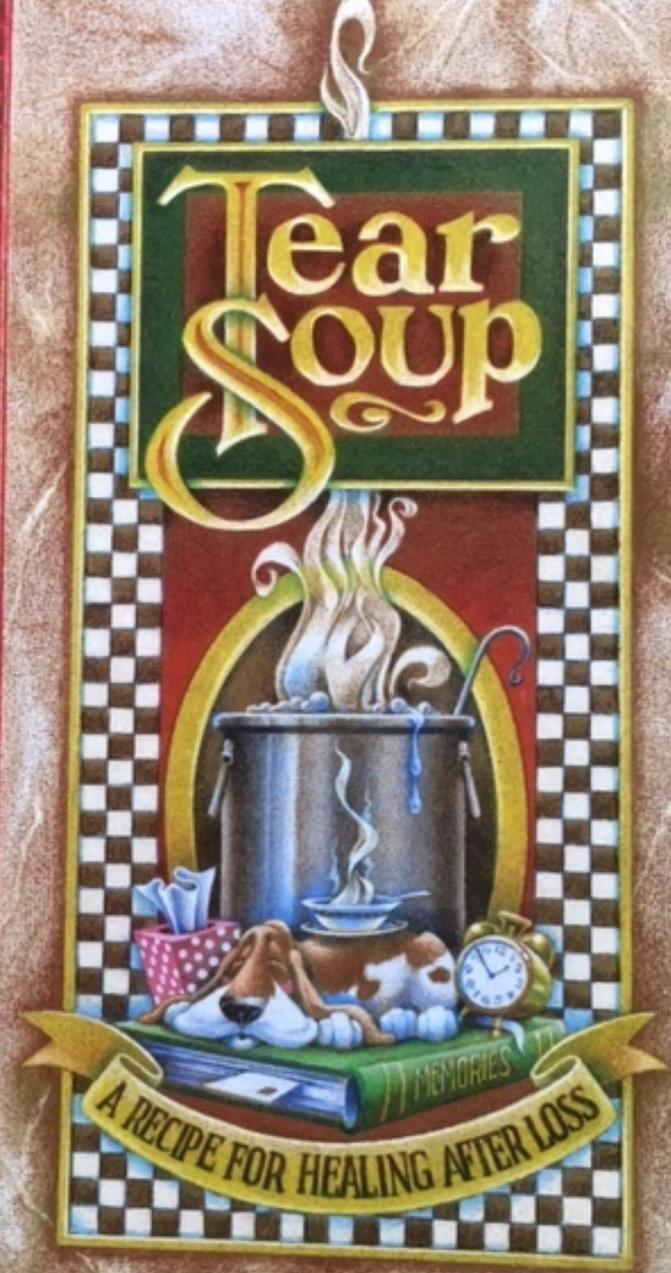
Pat Schwiebert
and
Chuck DeKlyen

Illustrated by

Taylor Bills

Sopa de Lágrimas

GriefWatch.com
1999, 2013 11th ed.





Grief defined:

“Grief is the process
you go through as you adjust
to the loss of
anything or anyone
important in your life.”

Tear Soup, p 47



Questions

What is one loss you have experienced during Covid?

How did it affect you?

How did it affect those around you?



Poem

6 Feet Didn't Seem That Far

by

Jennarose Colucci

2020

“6 feet doesn’t seem that far,”

I thought to myself on the first day of quarantine.

“This will be easy.”

It doesn’t seem that far

until your mom comes home from a long day at work
and can’t sit at the dining room table with us for dinner
because two of her coworkers just tested positive.

It doesn’t seem that far....

until your parents haven’t hugged in almost two months
because she’s an essential worker
and he’s high risk because he had a kidney transplant.

It doesn't seem that far
until your grandma is standing on her porch
alone
on her 80th birthday
as her seven kids and 16 grandkids
wave from the car.

It doesn't seem that far....
until you are at a funeral and you can't even
hug your cousins as their father
is lowered
6 feet away from them
forever.

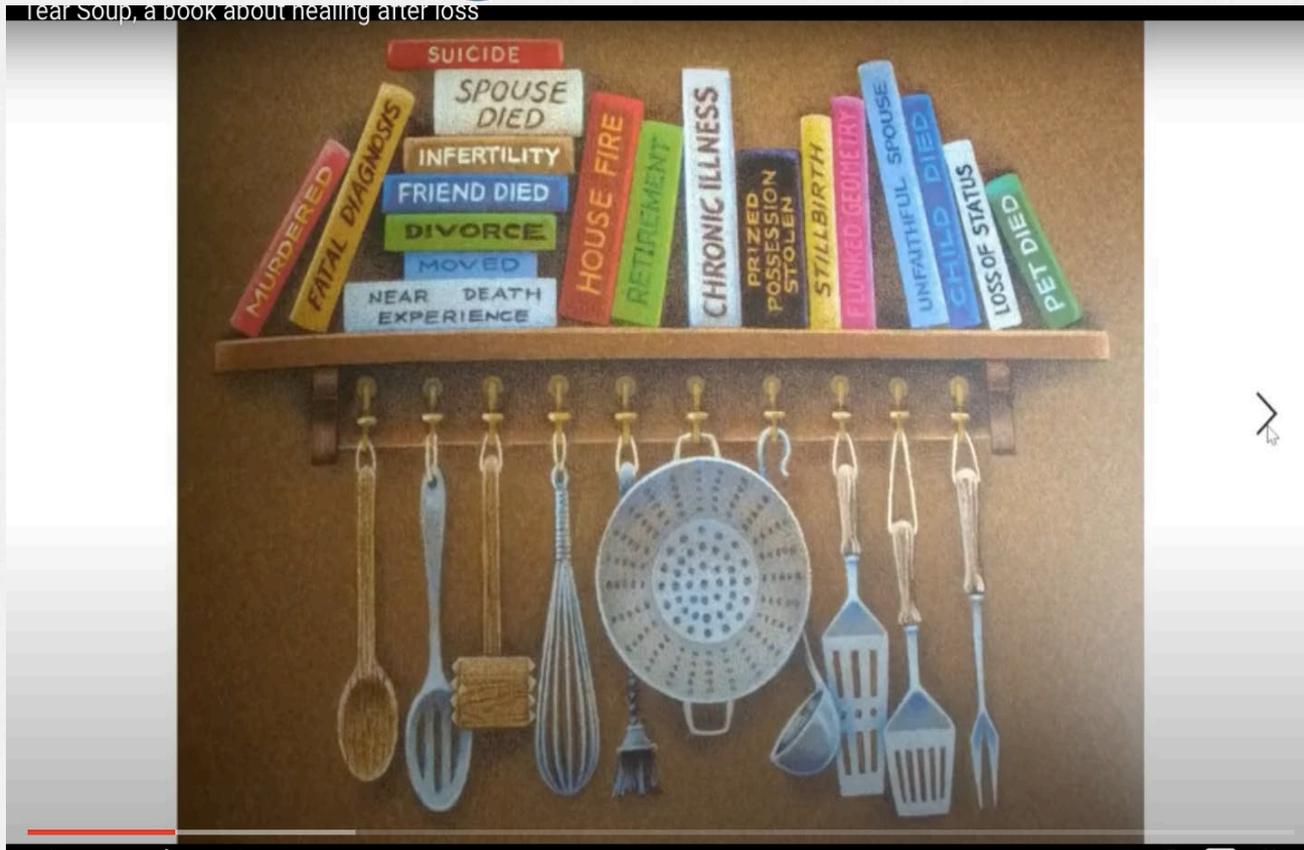
Stay home and save lives because I was wrong.
Six feet feels like a world away when all you need
is a hand
to hold.



Video

3 minute Introduction to *Tear Soup*

Losses big, small, hidden



What size pot does your loss need?

Tear Soup

Helpful ingredients to consider

A pot full of tears

One heart willing to be broken open

A dash of bitters

A bunch of good friends

Many handfuls of comfort food

A lot of patience

Buckets of water to replace the tears

Plenty of exercise

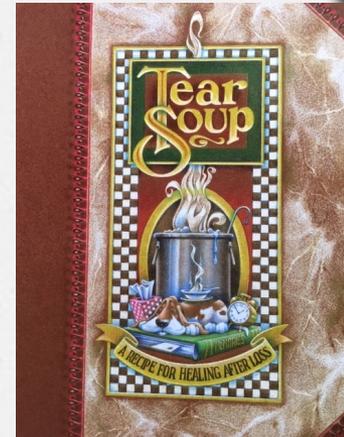
A variety of helpful reading material

Enough self care

Season with memories

Optional: one good therapist and/or support group

From *Tear Soup*



Is there anything you would add to these ingredients?



Panelists Share

Tom Miyashiro, MA

-- Personal story of loss

Jane Gangi, PhD

-- Review of *Tear Soup*

Ambiguous Loss

Pauline Boss, PhD

Learning to Cope with Unresolved Grief

Defined:

A loss that occurs without closure or clear understanding, which can **halt** or **freeze** the grief process and lead to **unresolved grief**.

“Incomprehensible” “The irresolvable *context is pathological*, not the individual or family.” (Boss)

Signs that a loss is ambiguous:

*fluctuating, ambivalent or contradictory emotions
(love/anger)

*leads to anxiety, which if not managed can lead to
traumatizing stress

Ambiguous loss (continued)

Examples:

Physical – Missing in Action, miscarriage, no funerals (Covid)

Psychological – dementia, divorce, mental ill health

Can be the most stressful type of loss

Six Goals for Resilience despite Ambiguous Loss:

- finding meaning (continuing rituals/celebrations)
- letting go of need for control
- normalizing ambivalence
- reconstructing identity (roles, rules, rituals)
- discovering new hope (arts more than sciences help)

UNRESOLVED GRIEF

From the lack of awareness of many
“hidden”, intangible, or “ambiguous losses

Loss of a familiar world

Loss of sense of security

Loss of a dream

Loss of status

Loss of lifestyle

Loss of sense of belonging
or “system identity”

Covid cancellations

Loss of a job

Loss of relationships

Loss of possessions

Loss of personal space

Loss of the past that never was

Loss of role models

Loss of the past that was

Loss of health or mental health

**Losses during COVID are often:
multiple, simultaneous, intense, and unresolved**



Keys to Good Grief:

Permission to Grieve

People to Comfort

Difference between comfort and encouragement

Time to Process



Panelists Share

Tom Miyashiro, MA

- Perspective working with youth and at risk kids
- challenges/concerns related to Covid

Jane Gangi, PhD

- “Check-ins” and teaching during Covid
- Questions from participants

Focusing on the Positive

What have you gained during this pandemic?

For what are you grateful?

Are there things that you have you learned that you could live without?



Helping Children/Youth with grief and death a loved one

1. Children **model** what they see in adults
 - how you grieve as a parent/adult matters
2. Children usually want to **be included**
 - belonging>respect>significance>security
3. Children need to **be prepared**
 - plans, reactions they may witness, questions



Video animation

6 minutes

Guide for Parents and Carers:

[Telling Children about the Death of a Relative](#)

Dr Louise Dalton, Dr Elizabeth Rapa, Helena Channon-Wells, Dr Virginia Davies and Prof Alan Stein louise.dalton@psych.ox.ac.uk | March 2020 | [thelancet.com/series/communicating-with-children](https://www.thelancet.com/series/communicating-with-children)

How to tell children that someone has died

STEP 1: PREPARE YOURSELF

- Thinking about talking to children about this probably feels the hardest thing in the world. It's completely understandable to want to protect them from this news.
- If there is another adult at home with you, share the news with them first, so you can talk to the children together.
- Write out a simple list of what happened with [Name] after they went to hospital. You can use this to support your conversations with the children.

- Take a minute to breathe as slowly and deeply as you can.
- Try to keep your focus on the next few minutes and how you want the children to hear the news of their loved one's death.
- We know that even very young children (under 2 years) often already know something is happening and need an explanation for what they can see and hear around them.

STEP 2: PREPARE INFORMATION

- Take a minute to think about what each of the children know about what has been happening. What's been their understanding and experience of illness and death so far?
- As everyone is isolating in their houses, the children will be very aware of any phone calls and will be waiting to hear about their relative. This means you will need to tell them the news as soon as possible, so they are not left worrying about what has happened.

- Even though you need to talk to them as soon as possible after our phone call, it's helpful to look at [this leaflet by the British Psychological Society](#)
- It's not long and explains what children understand about illness at different ages and levels of maturity.

STEP 3: PREPARE ENVIRONMENT

- Think about whereabouts in the house you want to talk to the children.
- Depending on the age of the children, decide whether you want to tell them together, or whether very young children can be

Tear Soup

Suggestions for use of video

Video introductory clip (3 minutes):

[You Tube](#)

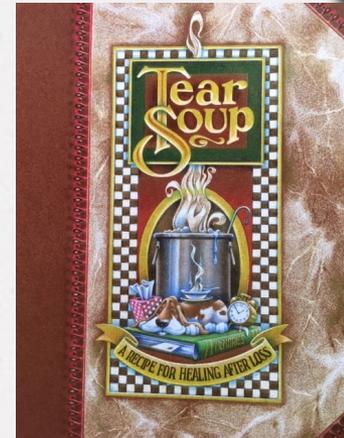
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=USN8GGbC4Ck>

Full version (YouTube link) on Library Resource Sheet

- When you want to work on your grief, invite a friend to watch with you
- Families can watch together
- Teachers and students

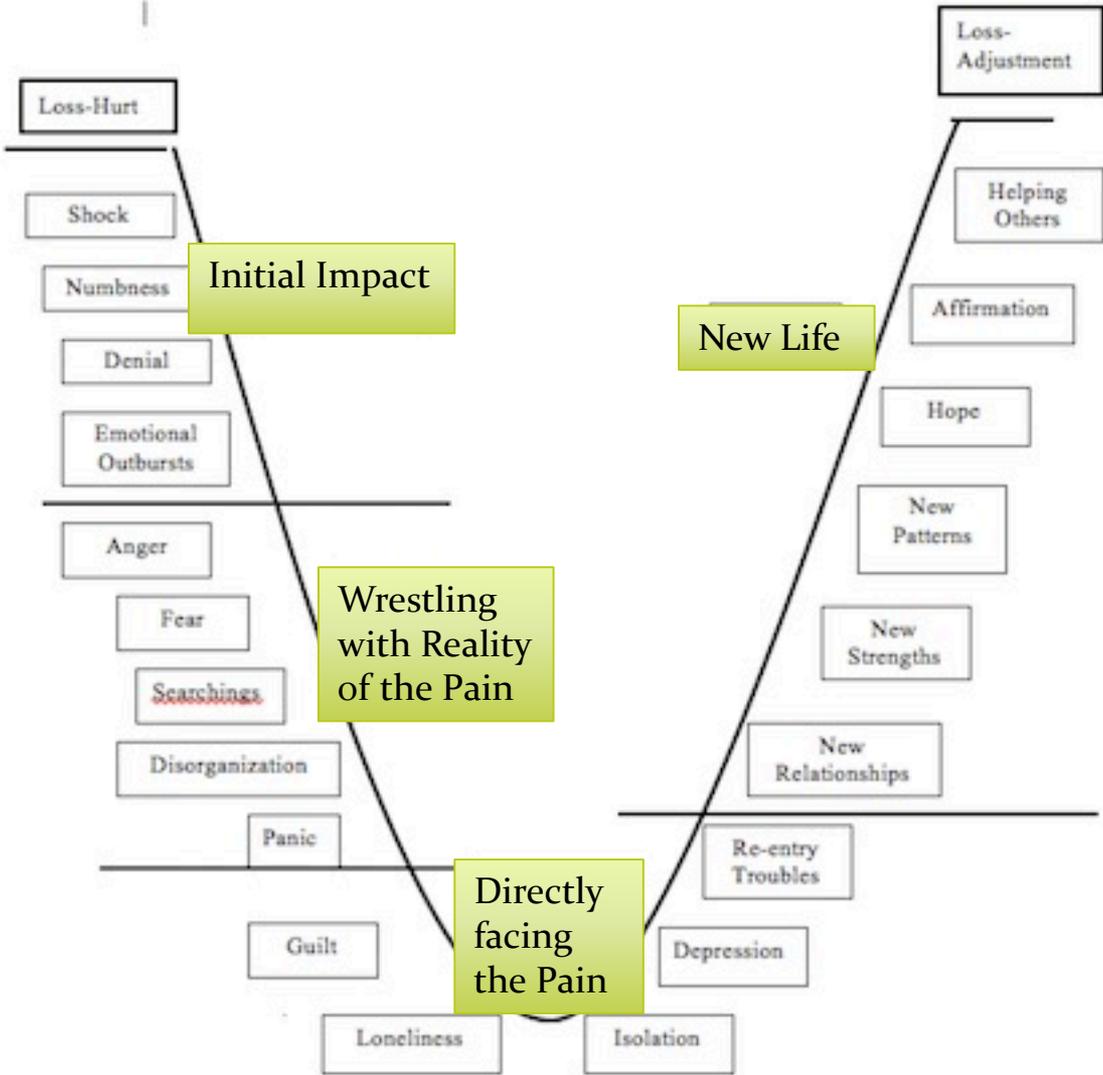
SEE GriefWatch.com “Downloads” > [Tear Soup DVD Viewer's Guide](#)
Viewer’s Guide also **available in Spanish**

WHAT RESOURCES CAN YOU SHARE?



GRIEF/LOSS CYCLE

Charlotte Gresson, Mary Hollingsworth, and Michael Washburn, The Grief Adjustment Guide (Sisters, Oregon: Questar Publishers, Inc., 1990).





Thank you

For joining the
conversation on
LOSS and GRIEF
during Covid!

Waterford Public Library
Connercticut ,USA