

Infant and Maternal Loss



A Toolkit for Grieving Fathers



MALE INVOLVEMENT
Where Dads Matter *Initiative*



NATIONAL
HEALTHY START
ASSOCIATION

DISCLAIMER

Trigger Warning: The information in this document includes the discussion of grief and loss as it pertains to how fatherhood practitioners can best support families experiencing this life change. Please engage in self-care as you read this document to support the work and effort that may be exerted as a result of this work.

The information provided in this toolkit may be updated as a working document and is provided for general knowledge and should not be used for medical advice. This toolkit is not a substitute for a proper mental health diagnosis, treatment and does not serve as a replacement for an appropriate health professional.

OVERVIEW

The National Healthy Start Association (NHSA) and its membership organization Fatherhood Practitioners worked collaboratively, to create the Infant and Maternal Loss: A Toolkit for Grieving Fathers as a resource to the fathers and families being served by Healthy Start (HS) services throughout the US including Puerto Rico.

While this document was curated with Healthy Start Fatherhood Practitioners in mind, other organizations that serve fathers can use this toolkit and its resources to support their participants.

CONTENTS

SECTION I - OVERVIEW

Purpose 5

Fathers in Healthy Start 7

SECTION II -

Glossary of Terms 8

SECTION III - GRIEF, LOSS, & BEREAVEMENT PROCESS

How Men Respond to Grief:
Signs and Symptoms 9

Examples of Self-Harm 10

- Alcohol and Substance Use
- Suicide
- Neglecting Health

Common Stages 11

SECTION IV - MANAGING GRIEF

Validate Your Participant's Feelings 13

Encourage Them to be Intentional
About Taking Care of Themselves 16

Allow Family and Friends to Help
and Comfort 17

Consider a Grief Group or Therapy 18

SECTION V - RESOURCES

Curricula, Learning Modules 20

Literature - Handouts 20

Programs & Community Supports 20

Helpful Websites on Grieving & Loss 21

Additional Reputable Resources 22

Additional Grief Resources 27

Acknowledgements 32

References 33

Closing Paragraphs 34

Purpose

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide resources to address grief, loss, and depression that fathers and men experience in response to the death of an infant or a maternal loss. There are several resources that are available to mothers who experience an infant loss and even to families during a maternal loss, but there are limited resources and/or tools available to fathers and men.



Fathers and men have been known to suffer in silence and are expected to be available to support others in the family (McNeil et al., 2021). This tool is designed to provide practical ways for Fatherhood Practitioners and program staff to help fathers navigate the grieving process.

Our hope is that the toolkit will provide guidance for fathers, program staff, and others to be able to recognize the signs of grief since everyone experiences grief differently. For example, some people tend to display more sadness and hopelessness, verbalize their feelings, and sleep more than others. Some people tend to become more irritable, aggressive, apathetic, and argumentative, use more alcohol and illicit substances, and engage in risky behaviors.

There is “no right way” to process a loss. This toolkit provides strategies to navigate this challenging time.

Infant and Maternal Loss

In 2020, the infant mortality rate in the US was 5.4 deaths per 1,000 live births (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022). The top five causes of infant mortality are birth defects, preterm death, injuries, sudden infant death syndrome, and maternal pregnancy complications (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022).

The US has one of the highest rates of maternal morbidity and mortality in developed countries. The leading causes of maternal death are cesarean sections, which are often not medically necessary. Other causes of maternal morbidity and mortality include but are not limited to obstetric hemorrhages and hypertensive disorders that occur during pregnancy.

Black, American Indian, and Alaska Native women are two to three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white women (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019). In 2020, the maternal mortality rate for non-Hispanic Black women was 2.9 times the rate for non-Hispanic White women (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022).



When a father loses the mother of his child, he often focuses on trying to provide for his children's core needs. Depending on the father-child relationship prior to the loss of the mother, he may minimize his own feelings. Counseling and other behavioral therapies typically are not at the top of his list for alleviating grief. Many men will use their work as a coping mechanism, but fulfillment from their jobs is often much less than prior to the loss (McNeil et al., 2021).

Fathers in Healthy Start

The Healthy Start (HS) fathers are a unique subset of fathers in the United States. The purpose of the HS program is to improve health outcomes before, during, and after pregnancy, and reduce racial/ethnic differences in rates of infant death and adverse perinatal outcomes.

HS delivers services to communities and priority populations, which are defined by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (2019) as groups most at risk of socially produced health inequities. HS works to improve birth outcomes and reduce racial/ethnic disparities for participants, in priority populations, who have the highest need and have infant mortality rates at least 1.5 times the US national average as well as high rates of other adverse perinatal outcomes (e.g., low birthweight, preterm birth, maternal morbidity and mortality).

Moreover, HS works to reduce the disparity in health status between the general population and individuals who are members of racial or ethnic minority groups. Fathers are not direct recipients of maternal and child health services but are a key part of the overall health and well-being of infants and families. The goal is to ensure that fathers are involved with the pregnancy, birth, and in their children's lives.



Glossary of Terms

Acceptance - Stage of grief where individuals are at peace with loss of loved one

Anger - The stage of grief where an individual expresses resentment, disappointment, or blame in the loss individual, their higher power or themselves

Apathy - Loss of interest in things enjoyed, i.e., socialization, hobbies, recreational activities

Bargaining - The stage of grief where an individual thinks of ways that the loss of a loved one could have been avoided and is often accompanied by guilt

Denial - Stage of grief where an individual does not believe or recognize the loss of a loved one, and therefore does not do the necessary things to address the loss

Depression - A stage of grief that represents a state of mind where an individual experiences sadness, irritability, worry, becomes antisocial and may have changes in appetite, sleep, sex drive, energy, or motivation for a period of warranting an intervention to resolve the symptoms

Fatherhood Practitioners - Staff members of the HS community that work with fathers during pregnancy and 18 months after the child is born

Grief - The act of being sad or discouraged due to the loss of a loved one

Resilience - The ability of an individual to persevere despite challenges

Mortality - Is another term for the death of a person

Morbidity - A severe complication or illness related to a condition or negative outcome

Grief, Loss, and Bereavement Process

How Men Respond to Grief: Signs and Symptoms

For men, grief can be lonely and isolating. In times of crisis, there is a perception that men are expected to be the protectors and providers, who care for their loved ones. These expectations often cause them to minimize, deter, or hide their own grief to be strong and protect their families (Miller et al., 2019; Obst & Due, 2021). Phrases such as “keeping it together” and “holding it together” reflect the cultural expectation that men must remain stoic and put on a brave front when facing difficulties (Bonnette & Broom, 2012).



However, despite cultural expectations, the reality is that the strongest thing one can do to support family is to take care of oneself and this is often through healthy expression of emotions, which improves resilience (Connor & Davidson, 2003). The purpose of emotions is to help one to regulate experiences in a safe way before crisis occurs (Faye & Hooper, 2018).

With regards to pregnancy loss, men often feel that they must support their partner and are reluctant to seek support for themselves. Some men may not outwardly express their emotions and may need to spend time alone to “deal” with their emotions. Participating in numerous distractions may be a strategy to avoid speaking about the grief. They are often more comfortable expressing their grief by doing or fixing things rather than talking about it (Kersting, 2012).

Grief, Loss, and Bereavement Process cont.

How Men Respond to Grief: Self Harm

Below are examples of ways men knowingly or unknowingly harm themselves.

Alcohol and Substance Use

Many individuals are susceptible to alcohol, substance use and/or engaging in risky behavior following the loss of a loved one. Many men feel that it is culturally unacceptable to outwardly express grief, so they often turn to substance use to “self-medicate” and hide from emotions to cope with the tremendous pain of their loss. A study by Pilling et al. (2012) found that men who grieved for two years or longer were two times as likely to have alcohol use disorder than men who did not grieve.

Suicide

In 2020, the suicide rate among men was four times higher than among women (Garnett et al., 2022). A risk factor for suicide is the loss of a loved one as well as social isolation. Due to cultural norms, men are told to be tough and to not ask for help, which often make men reluctant to ask for support when they need it. They will often face struggles alone because they do not want to appear as weak (Young et al., 2012).

Neglecting Health

Men may neglect their health while grieving. They may skip doctor visits and forget to take medications.



Common Stages

The common stages of grief are denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance (Kubler-Ross & Kessler, 2014).

Denial

In this stage, everything becomes overwhelming. This is a stage of shock and numbness. It is the “this is not happening” stage. This is where a parent may believe that the doctors made a mistake in diagnosis or about the loss.

Anger

This is where a parent may feel resentment and blame someone for the loss. This is the “why me” and “life is not fair” stage. A father may blame the doctor for not recognizing the signs earlier and for not being able to prevent a pregnancy loss. A mother may blame herself or her partner. Often, anger impacts one’s faith and a higher power is blamed for allowing the tragedy.

Bargaining

This is the “what if” and “if only” stage. It is when a parent wonders what he or she could have done differently to avoid the loss. Individuals may question and/or negotiate with their higher power with promises to improve in some fashion if the loved one is spared.

Depression

At this stage, a parent becomes aware of the magnitude of the loss. A parent might feel numb, have difficulty concentrating, and may feel hopeless about the future.

Acceptance

At this stage, a parent learns to live with the loss as the new norm. A parent begins to look for avenues to move on.

Grief, Loss, and Bereavement Process cont.

It is important to note that recovering from grief often occurs over a lifetime without a specific timeframe for the grief process to end or processing through the stages successively. One might experience the stages in order, out of order, and some stages may be skipped altogether. Experiencing one or more of the stages years after the death is also common. In fact, most people never “get over” the death of a loved one, but, process the loss over a lifetime, oscillating through the stages.

Often individuals seeking assistance for grief have expectations of eliminating the pain associated with the loss. However, experiencing grief is indeed a process – there is no magic or specific activity associated with immediate elimination of the pain. Ironically, the only way to get through the grief, and reduce the pain, is to fully experience the pain. This is like the analogy of driving through a storm. Often when one comes upon a storm while driving, the only way to get out of the storm is to drive straight through it.

The process of bereavement is often referred to as “grief work” and that is because it is indeed hard work. Guiding participants to experience thoughts and emotions surrounding the death with specific questions and activities is the best strategy to assist with coming to accept the death, appreciating the value of the loved one in their life, and learning to imagine a hopeful future without the person in their life.

Below are some video presentations of personal stories of men expressing their experiences with grief and loss:

[A Dad's Grief](#)

[A Dad's Mind After A Miscarriage](#)

[Losing A Child | My Journey Through Grief](#)

[Grief Out Loud: Teens Talk About Loss](#)



Managing Grief

As fatherhood practitioners, our job is to work with men to be there to listen and help them become better fathers, understand child development, and find the best solution for their situation. Unfortunately, there are times within our practice when we must help a father navigate a loss, but working within the relationship you have built with the participant in the Healthy Start Program can guide the process. Below are suggestions that may help the fathers you work with and serve through this tough time.

Validate Your Participant's Feelings

It is only natural to struggle or experience difficulties coming to terms with the flood of feelings after a loss. There are many individuals, who struggle with identifying their feelings. Individuals growing up in households in which feelings were not discussed, may have more difficulty identifying feelings. Below are some examples of how practitioners can offer support to a parent after experiencing a loss. These examples do not constitute an exhaustive list of supportive techniques, practitioners are encouraged to tailor their approach to the respective participant's needs.

Remember to validate your participant's feelings and offer valuable tools, techniques, and strategies for coping effectively.

Denial: Shock and emotional numbness that may manifest as a flat affect or incongruent emotional response to a stimulus.

Practitioner Support: Denial might be a coping mechanism preventing the parent from addressing the impact of the loss. Following are some strategies for helping the parent address denial, such as encouraging the parent to (Bailey & Pico, 2020):

1. Think about the rationale for avoiding acceptance of the loss and identify thoughts that are hindering acceptance
2. Consider the consequences of not accepting the loss
3. Talk with a close friend or loved one, who may be able to offer some honest, more objective perspective

Managing Grief cont.

Anger or Frustration: These emotions may manifest with aggressive outbursts or fixated on negative thoughts and feelings.

Practitioner Support: Individuals cannot control when anger manifests but can control the response. Practitioners can encourage the participant to focus on responses that are protective and purposeful. Strategies to support parents with addressing anger might include the following:

1. Help the participant develop ways to process feelings of anger and understanding triggers
2. Practice having tough discussion beforehand with a therapists or close friend
3. Avoid self-medication because harmful substances in your system can be damaging to physical, emotional, and mental health
4. Encourage exercise

Bargaining: Feelings of confusion, disbelief, or a sense of unreality that may manifest as irrational thoughts or guilt associated with not staying in better contact with the loved one who died or being present for their death.

Practitioner Support: Encourage participants to assess what can and cannot be controlled.

1. Use this activity to explore a sense of control.
2. Document an experience where you did something you did not think you could do. We all must do things that we are scared or unsure of sometimes. Use this activity as a chance to commemorate one instance in your life.

Depression: Hopelessness or despair with depressed mood that may manifest with thoughts of suicide, verbalizing inability to see a future with potential joy, lack of participation in daily activities, or sleeping more than usual.

Practitioner Support: Provide motivation and support to encourage action. Often agreeing to an activity for a short period of time will lead to continuing the activity for longer than expected. Sometimes just getting up and taking a shower can motivate someone to accomplish even more. Following are strategies for supporting parenting experiencing depression:

1. Encourage engaging in activities that bring the participant joy (i.e., gentle exercise, preexisting hobbies, socializing, etc.).
2. Create a list of small wins and victories. Focusing on small achievements helps recenter the mind and makes tasks seem less daunting.
3. Use this worksheet to explore strategies for supporting parents experiencing depression.

Managing Grief cont.

Acceptance: This may manifest with a sudden participation in enjoyable activities, language indicating hope for the future, or statements indicating gratitude for the loved ones who were present in the participant's life.

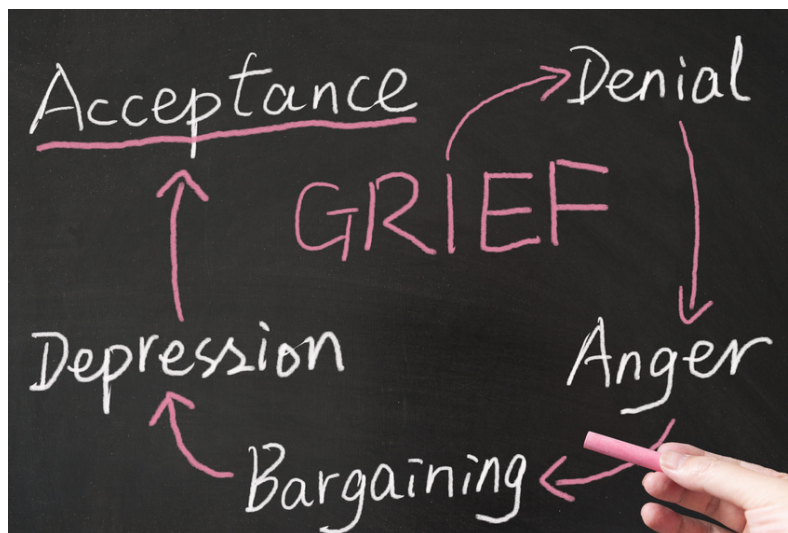
Practitioner Support: Review strategies for coping with grief and loss for emotional safety planning and maintenance. Help the participant to appreciate that grief is a work in progress and a process that occurs over a lifetime. Encourage the father by highlighting just how far he has come and document everything he has accomplished and overcome. Offer strategies for coping when acute feelings of grief resurface. This occurs often during major milestones (i.e., birthdays, death anniversaries, holidays, etc.) or triggered memories (i.e., familiar smells, songs, places, etc.).

Stages of grief do not always happen in any particular order. Keep in mind that experiencing a certain stage of grief does not mean you will not experience that stage again.

Additional experiences:

1. Physical pain
2. Relief that they are no longer in pain
3. Apathy
4. Loss of sexual drive or interest

Please note: No matter how the loss impacts a participant, remember that their feelings are valid even if they do not align with what others think they "should" feel. Appreciate and respect their feelings – encourage participants to avoid disregarding these feelings.



Encourage Them to be Intentional About Taking Care of Themselves

During this time, your participant could be experiencing sleepless nights along with a wide range of emotions and responses to grief.

Here are a few strategies to increase focus on personal care among participants:

Sleep: set aside 7 to 9 hours each night for sleep (if you have trouble sleeping, wind down, calming music, avoid caffeine, keep cool, go dark, or seek help from your health provider).

Food and Water: Make sure that they have healthy snacks and fruits, and if possible, provide gift cards to help with purchasing items or connect them to local services that can provide food. Encourage them to drink plenty of water (at least 8 to 10 glasses of water or half your body weight in ounces).

Rest and recharge with fulfilling hobbies such as playing sports, yard work, listening to music, fishing, reading, art, etc.

Meditating or Keep a Journal can help in processing emotions.

Please note: Participants should be intentional about scheduling specific times for each of the self-care focus areas listed above. As well as setting reminders on the phone can be helpful. Yes, even water intake and times for eating should be scheduled to ensure consistency.



Helpful Suggestions when working with Participants Experiencing Grief

Some ways that may be helpful to suggest to your participant may include, encouraging your participant to talk to their healthcare provider about any new physical or mental health symptoms.

Reaching out to friends and other loved ones for support. Friends and loved ones may not know exactly what to say if they have not faced the same type of loss, but their presence can still help one feel less alone. Empowering participants to identify and share with family and friends exactly what help is needed/desired, or even share what type of communication would be most supportive from family and friends. Understanding that they have a friend and family plays a part helping to keep them from feeling overwhelmed from loss; friends and family can cook meals, childcare, or handle errands and help lighten the mood.



Consider a Grief Group or Therapy

Help your participant find a group that supports fathers in grief; it could be beneficial for him to hear from other men having experienced loss as a father. If the participant does not say anything, just attending the session could be helpful and may encourage him to speak up about how he is feeling. Also, assist with finding him a therapist; use your knowledge and relationship with your participant to help find the best possible therapist that gives him what he needs.

Every communication with participants is an opportunity to provide sensitive and empathic support. It is good practice to meet with participants who want to join a grief group beforehand to assess his appropriateness for the group. Requiring people to register before joining is one way to assure that you speak with or meet in-person. You may choose to ask participants to complete a brief questionnaire or self-assessment for grief as part of the process, which will give you and them a sense of their challenges and goals.

Participants can expect a group facilitator or counselor to

1. Explain the purpose of the group, general guidelines or rules for the group and the limits of confidentiality.
2. Dispel any known or unknown myths about a group process or group counseling.
3. Explore desired outcomes for members and explain in detail what members can expect from their group process.
4. Inform group members about the duration of the group and what termination of the group process will look like.



Managing Grief cont.

Practitioners should also encourage participants to provide feedback on the experience. This will assist practitioners in:

1. Finding strategies to support the grief group process
2. Build a network of outside facilitators for future use
3. Assess the benefit on the participants as they move through the stages of grief.

The questions below are examples of questions that practitioners can use to obtain feedback from practitioners:

Group process sample feedback questions for practitioners

1. What was the most/least helpful?
2. What changes would you recommend?
3. Was the facilitator clear, knowledgeable, and sensitive to the needs of the group?
(You can use a rating scale here if you choose, 1 being low, 10 being high.)
4. Did you find the resources and handouts helpful?
5. Did you find the location and timing of the group suitable?
6. How would you compare how you felt before the group, and now that you have completed it?
7. Did you make connections with one or more other members, and do you intend to stay connected?
8. What was the most important thing you learned about your grief and coping with grief?
9. Was there anything missing for you in this group?
10. Would you recommend this group to a friend, family member or colleague? Why or why not?



Resources

The list below identifies resources that can be used as additional options for grieving fathers that can support group therapy or be used when group therapy is not preferred.

Curricula, Learning Modules – Additional information

- [Resilient Parenting for Bereaved Families: From Science to Service](#)
- [100 Art Therapy Exercises to Make Your Mind, Body, and Spirit Sing](#)
- [Circle of Control](#)
- [Depression Coping Skills](#)
- [Coping with Grief and Loss](#)

Literature (e.g., Handouts)

- [Paternal Psychological Stress After Detection of Fetal Anomaly During Pregnancy. A Prospective Longitudinal Observational Study](#)
- [Grief and Bereavement in Fathers After the Death of a Child: A Systematic Review](#)
- [Men's Grief Following Pregnancy Loss and Neonatal Loss: A Systematic Review and Emerging Theoretical Model](#)
- [Factors Contributing to Men's Grief Following Pregnancy Loss and Neonatal Death: Further Development of an Emerging Model in an Australian Sample](#)
- [The Journal of Death and Dying](#)

Programs and Community Supports

[The Grief Recovery Method](#)

This grief support group facilitates workshops for people dealing with loss and grief. They help individuals to learn of coping skills and arm individuals with the necessary tools needed to get through the grieving process. They help individuals to work through individuals grief emotions to regain a sense of purpose and hope in life. Individuals will also learn how they can use their experience to help others going through loss.

[SAVE \(Suicide Awareness Voice of Education\)](#)

SAVE is a grief support group resource and suicide prevention group for people who have lost their loved ones to suicide. It gives you access to the best groups for your needs and arms you with coping skills to help you through your grief process to find healing. You will be in the company of others who have lost loved ones to suicide. This gives you a safe space to share, learn, and find healing from your suicide loss. SAVE gives you a platform to share your story to help others going through the same situation.

Resources cont.

Programs and Community Supports

- [Mensgroup.com](https://www.mensgroup.com)

If you are a man going through loss and grief, men's group is a men-only online support group for you. Unlike most women's support groups, the normal culture of the world discourages men from openly showing their emotions. At the same time, men are judged for not being emotionally available, which can be confusing. At mensgroup.com, men are allowed to share their fears and emotions related to the loss of a loved one. It offers a safe space for widowers and even young adults to vent and find healing without fear of judgment or ridicule. You will be in the company of other men who have also gone through loss and have managed to find healing. By being in this company, you learn healthy coping skills and how to continue living a positive and successful life even after a loss. You are not alone. In this COVID-19 times, an online grief support group can be the best choice to avert a health crisis related to loss.

- [Bereaved Parents of the USA](https://www.bereavedparents.org)
- [Grief Share](https://www.griefshare.com)

Helpful Websites on Grieving and Loss

- [Coping With Loss: 115 Helpful Websites on Grief & Bereavement](https://www.griefrecoveryinstitute.com)
- [Grieving Dads Project](https://www.grievingdadsproject.com): is a blog that goes in depth discussing the issues faced by fathers who deal with loss and how they are often relegated to receiving less attention due to the notion they are supposed to support others grieving. The blog gives insightful support to these men and makes it easier to live productive lives in the face of tragedy.
- [The Grief Recovery Method](https://www.griefrecoveryinstitute.com): has been thoroughly developed at the Grief Recovery Institute over the last 30 years and has established itself as a reputable source of information on how to overcome grief. The site features a great blog, but also interesting articles that are incredibly informative.
- [Unspoken Grief](https://www.unspoken grief.com): aims to address issues less talked about concerning miscarriages, stillbirths, & neonatal loss. Since these issues often go unrecognized, the site has been crucial in confronting these topics.
- [Walking Through Grief](https://www.walkingthroughgrief.com): is a series of DVD's that examine individual aspects of the loss and grieving process, making it more manageable to understand what one is feeling when someone they know passes away. The site has content for those needing support, as well as those who need help.

Additional Reputable Resources

Resources for Addressing Mental Illness

Community resources are available to also provide information and support to consumers about mental health that discuss symptoms and treatment. The following information will provide information on community resources that can provide support for individuals with mental illness and their families.

- [National Suicide Help Line - Call 988](#)
- [National Alliance for Mental Illness Faith Net](#)
- [American Psychological Association](#)
- [Gilda's Club](#)

Support organizations and advocacy groups for patients with Bipolar Disorder or Schizophrenia

- [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention \(AFSP\)](#)
- [Caregiver Action Network \(CAN\)](#)
- [Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance \(DBSA\)](#)
- [Mental Health America](#)
- [National Institute of Mental Health \(NIMH\)](#)
- [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#)
- [The Schizophrenia & Psychosis Action Alliance](#)
- [Family Caregiver Alliance \(FCA\)](#)
- [International Bipolar Foundation](#)

Online Resources to Support Mental Health

- [Better Help](#) (world's largest online therapy service)
- [ReGain](#) (couples' therapists trained in relationship counseling)
- [Faithful Counseling](#) (licensed counselors specifically for Christians)
- [Teen Counseling](#) (specialists in counseling who help teens flourish)
- [Calmerry](#) (Budget-friendly online therapy at home and on the go)
- [TalkSpace](#) (speak to licensed counselors with a simple, secure app)
- [PRIDE Counseling](#) (professional therapy for the LGBTQ community)
- [Online-Therapy.com](#) (Complete cognitive behavioral therapy toolbox)
- [HealthSapiens](#) (24/7 virtual access to behavioral therapists & medical professionals)

Resources cont.

Mobile Apps that Support Mental Health

Meditation, mindfulness, and breathing techniques can also be useful for addressing anxiety. These techniques may be used with or without pharmacological or cognitive therapies but should not be used to substitute proper evaluation and treatment by a medical professional. There are many mobile apps available via the Apple Store, Google Store or can be downloaded from the web. The following are a few examples of commonly used mobile apps.

- Standard meditation app: [Insight Timer](#)
- Meditation apps for breathing: [iBreathe](#), [Breathe+](#), [Pause Breathwork](#)
- Apps for quick meditation: [Oak](#), [Whil](#), [Simple Habit](#)
- Meditation apps for spirituality: [Mindfulness with Petit BamBou](#), [Waking Up](#)
- Meditation apps for a budget: [The Mindfulness App](#), [Sattva](#)
- Meditation apps for beginners: [Meditation Studio](#), [Happy Not Perfect](#)
- Guided meditation apps: [Breethe](#), [Headspace](#), [MyLife Meditation](#)
- Meditation apps for sleep: [Calm](#), [Buddify](#)
- [Smiling Mind](#)
- [My Life](#)
- [UCLA Mindful](#)
- [Healthy Minds Program](#)
- [Mindfulness Daily](#)
- [Ten Happier: Meditation](#)
- [Take a Break!](#)
- [Omvana](#)
- [Welzen](#)
- [Mindfulness Coach](#)
- [Relax Melodies](#)

For additional reading:

- [12 of the Best Meditation Apps of 2022](#)
- [Ready to Give Meditation a Try?](#)- A Beginner's Guide to Quieting the Mind in a Time of Stress

Resources for Black/African Americans

- [Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective \(BEAM\)](#) : Group aimed at removing the barriers that Black people experience getting access to or staying connected with emotional health care and healing. They do this through education, training, advocacy, and the creative arts.
- [Black Men Heal](#): Limited and selective free mental health service opportunities for Black men.
- [Black Mental Health Alliance](#) – **(410) 338-2642** : Provides information and resources and a "Find a Therapist" locator to connect with a culturally competent mental health professional.
- [Black Mental Wellness](#): Provides access to evidence-based information and resources about mental health and behavioral health topics from a Black perspective, as well as training opportunities for students and professionals.
- [Black Women's Health Imperative](#): Organization advancing health equity and social justice for Black women through policy, advocacy, education, research, and leadership development.
- [Boris Lawrence Henson Foundation \(BLHF\)](#): BLHF has launched the COVID-19 Free Virtual Therapy Support Campaign to raise money for mental health services provided by licensed clinicians in our network. Individuals with life-changing stressors and anxiety related to the coronavirus will have the cost for up to five (5) individual sessions defrayed on a first come, first serve basis until all funds are committed or exhausted.
- [Brother, You're on My Mind](#): An initiative launched by Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. and NIMHD to raise awareness of the mental health challenges associated with depression and stress that affect Black men and families. Website offers an online toolkit that provides Omega Psi Phi Fraternity chapters with the materials needed to educate fellow fraternity brothers and community members on depression and stress in Black men.
- [A Growing List Of Black Mental Health Resources](#): List of Black-owned and focused mental health resources by state as compiled by Ebony magazine.
- [Hurdle](#): Provides culturally sensitive self-care support and teletherapy for Black men and their families. Currently in pilot program available only to residents of MD, VA, and DC. Residents of other states can join their waiting list and will be notified when Hurdle is available in their state.
- [Melanin and Mental Health](#) - Connects individuals with culturally competent clinicians committed to serving the mental health needs of Black & Latinx/Hispanic communities. Promotes the growth and healing of diverse communities through its website, online directory, and events.

Resources for Black/African Americans

Online Resources

- [Unapologetically Us](#): Launched in 2014, is a lifestyle brand and online community designed for Black women. In this digital space, our platform is to responsibly inform, foster creativity and engage in thoughtful dialogue.

Educational Materials, Books and Podcasts

- [A Fight Worth Finishing](#): Written by mental health advocate and self help book author Jasmin Pierre, this book is based on her experiences with major depressive disorder and suicide, this two-part series is written to encourage others to never give up, no matter the adversity and to always keep fighting till the finish.
- Alice Berry is an artist and clinical counselor who specializes in the mental health challenges that artists and creatives face. She authored a study about African American artists and mental health, found [here](#).
- [Black Families In Therapy: Understanding the African American Experience](#)
- [Highwater Podcast](#) - The Artist's Guide To Mental Health Poet Mental Health Advocate Bassey Ikpi #NoShameDay
- [Relish Culinary Therapy](#): A blog founded by Kiara Whack that teaches people how to preserve your mental stability by implementing proper holistic nutrition. Recipes, food news, and other information about how to use food as medicine so we do not have to frequent the doctor is present.
- [Rivers Are Coming](#): A classic compilation of essays and poems on healing from emotional wounds inflicted by depression and trauma and celebrating the survival of being lost and discovering one's ability to live wholeheartedly. Author Minaa B. uses the river as a metaphor to solicit change and extends an invitation to welcome the power of uncertainty into the lives of people so that we can be introduced to love, hope and healing, and to progress in an upward trajectory.

Resources for Black/African Americans

Educational Materials, Books and Podcasts

- [Self-Inflicted Wounds: Heartwarming Tales of Epic Humiliation by Aisha Tyler:](#)

The Siwe Project – A global non-profit started by Bassey Ikpi dedicated to promoting mental health awareness throughout the global Black community. The goal of the organization is to widen the public dialogue regarding the lived experiences of people of African Descent with mental illness. By providing opportunities for dialogue and the uplifting of new narratives and discourse, The Siwe Project aims to encourage more people to seek treatment without shame.

Videos

- [A Dad's Grief](#)
- [Losing a Child | My Journey Through Grief](#)
- [Grief Out Loud: Teens Talk About Loss](#)
- [Guided Meditation for Loneliness](#): This video comes from the YouTube Channel Journey into Positivity. This is from a married couple, in reviewing their background, no education or experience of the couple is published, although, having listened through the above link, the strategy is in alignment with best practices and theories of appropriate meditation techniques.
- [Black Men Meditate](#): by owner Dejr Bostick with a master's in divinity and BS in Business Marketing

Additional Grief Resources

- [Dealing with grief after the death of your baby](#)
- [When a baby dies, dads are often forgotten](#)
- [Miscarriage and loss](#)
- [Miscarriage: A guide for men](#)
- [Dads feel the heartbreak of miscarriage too](#)
- [Men need to know this to help their partner through their miscarriage](#)
- [How to Handle a Miscarriage | The Art of Manliness](#)
- [Healing Hearts Baby Loss Comfort: Grief Resources](#)
- [Infant Loss Organizations — M.E.N.D. \(mend.org\)](#)

Resources for Latino Fathers

Online Resources

- [Feel Better, Connect with a Latinx Therapist Today \(therapyforlatinx.com\)](https://therapyforlatinx.com)
- [Latinx Therapy](#): Latinx Therapy was founded in 2018 with the mission to destigmatize mental health in the Latinx community. Since then, we have expanded to become a bilingual podcast and national directory to find a Latinx Therapist (98% of our directory are Spanish speakers). Latinx Therapy strives to provide culturally-grounded workshops and services to our community.
- [Las Manos de Apá \(The Hands of My Father\): Fathers' Group Lessons | Fatherhood.gov](#): Las Manos de Apá resources are designed to support Latino fathers as early literacy models for their children. The resources outline creating father-friendly environments, building community supports, sharing stories, and supporting early literacy for young children. Head Start and Early Head Start staff may find these practice models useful when working with Latino fathers. These lessons use a group process called "circulo de hombres," or circle of men, to experiment with storytelling to support children's early literacy skills. The fathers support each other in skill-building and learn the value of holding babies, singing to babies, caressing babies, making faces, and playing with board books and toys. They learn to help their children build foundational reading skills, which help them to become successful later in school. Many of the activities are in English and Spanish.
- [National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute - Welcome To The National Compadres Network](#): The National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute is a national effort with a focus to reinforce the positive involvement of Chicano/Latino/Native males in the lives of their families, communities, and society. Since its inception, NCFI has focused its efforts on the healing, developing and reinforcing of Chicano/Latino/Native boys and men based through the development of "circulos" (extended kinship networks). As a result of the overwhelming need locally and nationally, the National Latino Fatherhood & Family Institute (NLFFI) was launched.

Resources for Latino Fathers

Online Resources

- [Understanding Bereavement in Latino Families: A Practical Guide for Practitioners](#): The death of a child is one of the most stressful life events that a family can experience. Every year, thousands of families in the U.S. lose a child due to miscarriage, stillbirth or complications shortly after birth. No matter how far the pregnancy progressed, families may experience a range of emotions. Grieving is a part of the normal process of reacting to loss. Grief is a universal phenomena that is expressed in culturally specific ways, and people from different cultures may grieve differently. Understanding how Latino families express grief is an important step in assisting those families through this very difficult period.

Literature

- [Death Rituals Reported by White, Black, and Hispanic Parents Following the ICU Death of an Infant or Child](#): Ritual Practices after the death of a loved one, including dealing with the deceased's remains, wakes, funerals, burials and gathering celebrations, differ across cultures, religions, race and ethnicity and ages of the deceased. These rituals help those who remain acknowledge the death, deal with their grief, accept the loss, maintain a connection with the deceased, and continue their own functioning (Gudmundsdottir & Chesla, 2006; Weeks, 2004). The most common rituals after death are the wake or viewing, memorial service, funeral or cremation and celebrations of the deceased's life (Reeves, 2011). However, the literature on death rituals is limited; much of it is dated and focuses on adult deaths. Reports of ritual practices after infant or child death are very limited.
- [Perinatal Grief in Latino Parents](#): Extensive research exists that describes the meaning of perinatal loss to some parents, but the experience of loss from the perspective of Latino parents is not clearly understood. Additionally, current perinatal bereavement practices used often to facilitate memory-making for parents (such as viewing or holding the baby, taking photographs, or collecting mementos) are based upon research done primarily with non-Latino families. Are these common practices appropriate for this population? Because there is a paucity of research on this topic, this article describes what has been written over the past 30 years on the topic of grief and perinatal loss in Latino culture.

Resources for American Indian/Alaska Native Fathers

Online Resources

- [National American Indian and Alaska Native MHTTC | Mental Health Technology Transfer Center \(MHTTC\) Network \(mhttcnetwork.org\)](https://mhttcnetwork.org): The National American Indian and Alaska Native MHTTC works with organizations and treatment practitioners involved in the delivery of mental health services to American Indian and Alaska Native individuals, families, and tribal and urban Indian communities to strengthen their capacity to deliver effective evidence-based and experience-based practices. This includes the full continuum of services spanning mental illness, prevention, treatment, and recovery support.
- [Native American Counseling and Healing Collective \(NACAHC\)](https://nacaahc.org): We can provide brief (6-week), goal-oriented counseling, depending on the need, or longer term individual, family, or group counseling (therapy) services to children and adults from a Native perspective. Our focus is to support you in your healing process and support you should you incorporate traditional medicines. We serve those that are going through changes in their personal journey, those that are seeking professional help with anxiety, depression, trauma responses, alcohol use, drug use, grief, or work stress.

Podcast

- [Healing Trauma, Attending To Grief - Native Wellness Institute & Jillene Joseph: Feb 5th, 2021, Episode 182](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...): For the past twenty years, the Native Wellness Institute has worked to promote wellness and balance for Native people throughout North America. Their Executive Director, Jillene Joseph, joined us to discuss how settler colonial policies outlawing funeral rights purposefully cut people off from traditional knowledge and practices. This trauma reverberates today as Native communities work to reconnect with those practices. We also talk about what it means to take a healthy risk in grief, the importance of attending to grief emotionally, physically, spiritually, and mentally, and how Native Wellness Institute is continuing to promote health and wellness with their Power Hours. Learn more about Native Wellness Institute. Tune in to Native Wellness Power Hours every M-F at 12 pm (PST) on Facebook. Watch past Power Hours on their YouTube channel.

Resources for American Indian/Alaska Native Fathers

Literature

- [Appropriate Bereavement Practice After the Death of a Native American Child: Joanne Cacciatone](#) - Native Americans and other minorities are statistically overrepresented in the thousands of infants and young children who die every year. Many of these deaths are unpreventable, sudden, and unexpected. Unique rituals and beliefs affect the way Native American families respond to these types of deaths. This paper is a guide for social workers and other caregivers. It examines best practices for culturally competent care and conveying respect for the Native American family. It is vital for social workers to educate, support, and advocate for families of culture in an aware, but not presumptive, style that allows reconciliation between two very different cultures. A case example is provided to illustrate important implications for culturally competent care when a child dies
- [Native American Healing Traditions](#) - Indigenous healing practices among Native Americans have been documented in the United States since colonization. Cultural encapsulation has deterred the acknowledgement of Native American medicinal practices as a precursor to folk medicine and many herbal remedies, which have greatly influenced modern medicine. Understanding Native American healing practices requires helping professionals to have knowledge of Native American cultural belief systems about health and wellness, with the many influences that create change in the mind, body, spirit, and natural environment. Native Americans believe their healing practices and traditions operate in the context of relationship to four constructs—namely, spirituality (Creator, Mother Earth, Great Father); community (family, clan, tribe/nation); environment (daily life, nature, balance); and self (inner passions and peace, thoughts, and values). This article provides insight into the relationship among each of the constructs and Native American healing traditions. Also, specific examples of current Native American indigenous healing practices in the United States are presented.

Self Care Resources for Practitioners

- [Tips for Health Care Practitioners and Responders: Helping Survivors Cope With Grief After a Disaster or Traumatic Event](#): This tip sheet offers health care practitioners and responders guidelines for communicating with survivors experiencing grief. Background information about the grieving process and what happens when the grief process is interrupted and complicated or traumatic grief occurs is included as well as helpful resources for additional assistance.
- [Self-care Strategies for Maximizing Human Potential](#): Seeking constant and never-ending improvement is a life philosophy that can help inform and form people's attitudes and guide their thoughts and actions. This article describes self-care strategies for educators that can help nurture the best in oneself and others.
- [Man 2.0: Normalizing Self-Care for Men](#): It goes deeper than just feeling good. It's how we impact everyone around us.

Additional Grief Resources

- [Loss Resources](#)
- [Camp Erin](#)
- [Psychology Today Search for Providers](#)
- **Support Groups**
 - Pen Pal Program & Facebook Group Support
 - [Pregnancy & Infant Loss Support Network](#)
- **Books**
 - Miscarriage: A Man's Book, by Rick Wheat
 - A Guide for Fathers: When a Baby Dies, by Tim Nelson
 - Men and Miscarriage: A Dad's Guide to Grief, Relationships, and Healing After Loss, by Aaron Gouveia
- **Articles**
 - [Long-term effects of the Family Bereavement Program on spousally bereaved parents: Grief, mental health problems, alcohol problems, and coping efficacy](#)
 - [Grief and Bereavement in Fathers After the Death of a Child: A Systematic Review](#)
 - [The "How" and "When" of Parental Loss in Adulthood: Effects on Grief and Adjustment](#)

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the following individuals for helping guide the outline and content for this toolkit:

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Closing Remarks

While losing a partner or a child is incredibly difficult, NHSA and fatherhood practitioners hope to provide some relief and guidance to participants with this toolkit and resource guide. NHSA is sensitive in understanding that grief, loss, and depression have no particular path and every person's experience is different but having the tools and resources to navigate this challenging time can relieve some stress. Fatherhood practitioners can provide unique services that participants may not be able to otherwise receive and connect them to other resources in their community.



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