

# Collective Trauma

## AND 10 tips for coping



### WHAT IS COLLECTIVE TRAUMA?

A traumatic event that is shared by a group of people. It may involve a small group, like a family, or it may involve an entire society.

### WHAT IS COLLECTIVE GRIEF?

When a community, society, village, or nation all experience extreme change or loss. Collective grief can manifest in the wake of major events such as war, natural disasters, or other events that result in mass casualties or widespread tragedy.

Grief is the anguish experienced after a significant loss, like the loss of a loved one, safety, or normalcy.

## SYMPTOMS OF GRIEF

### BEHAVIORS

- Sleep Issues
- Appetite Changes
- Withdrawal
- Absent-Mindedness

### COGNITIONS

- Obsessive Thinking
- Intrusive Thoughts

### FEELINGS

- Sadness
- Numbness
- Anger
- Guilt
- Anxiety

### PHYSICAL

- Tight Chest
- Lack of Energy
- Muscle Weakness
- Dry Mouth



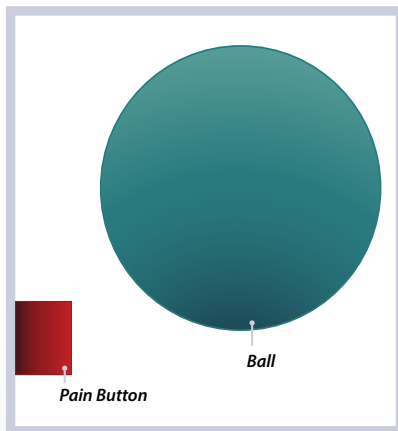
## THE COLLECTIVE GRIEF EXPERIENCE

Trauma can create feelings of grief for people directly impacted, as well as for people multiple steps removed from the event. Feelings are valid no matter your proximity to the event or people.

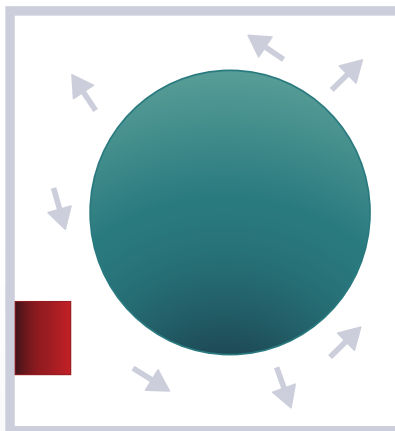
There are many emotions that may come up, but when you are feeling helpless it can be helpful to look at the layer of people one layer closer to the event and see how you can help.

## HEALING FROM GRIEF IS NOT LINEAR

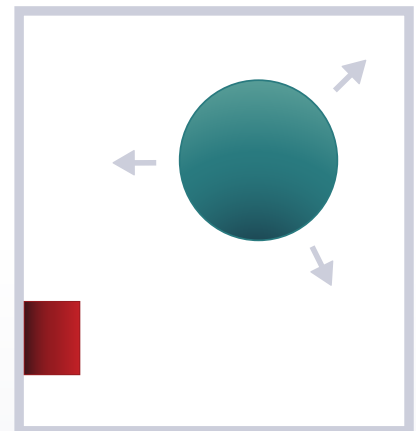
Grief may not ever disappear, but our goal is to reduce its size so that you have fewer opportunities to be triggered.



*The ball is your grief and the button are moments when you feel pain from that grief.*



*When your grief takes up a lot of space, there are more opportunities for your pain to be triggered.*



*When your grief is smaller you experience less moments of pain.*

**Your pain can grow and shrink at different moments in life.**

*This is something to be aware of as you navigate and manage your grief.*

# 10 TIPS

## for Coping with Collective Trauma and Grief

### 1 Acknowledge

Take the time to acknowledge that you have uncomfortable feelings. By acknowledging that discomfort, you can begin to find solutions.

### 2 Identify

What exactly is the uncomfortable feeling? Is it sadness, fear, anxiety, hopelessness, helplessness, or anger? By identifying it, it becomes less confusing, and we are able to react appropriately.

### 3 Plan

Make a plan. This can be making sure you have supportive people available to you, increasing self-care, or removing any triggering situations for a while.

### 4 Realistic Expectations

Be kind to yourself. Everybody grieves differently. Make sure that your expectations for healing are reasonable and within your means. There is no “speeding up the process” when it comes to healing.

### 5 Set Boundaries

Boundaries are guidelines, rules, or limits you create to identify the reasonable, safe and permissible ways for others to behave towards you and how you will respond when someone passes those limits. Some boundaries to consider when you are experiencing grief or trauma include:

- **Your information intake.** Consider cutting down on social media, news, or other sources of outside information.
- **Who you are around.** Time with unhealthy/unsupportive people should be eliminated or limited.
- **Time for yourself.** Find time for self-care routines that make you feel good (see tip #8).



## TAKE CARE OF YOUR WELL-BEING. YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO IT ALONE.

*If you are struggling to cope with recent traumatic events, you have options:*

- Turn to your Perspectives Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for confidential support and resources.

**Call or Text 24/7: 800.456.6327**

- Contact Perspectives Counseling and Psychotherapy Centers for telehealth or in-person counseling.

**Call: 866.296.5262**

- Contact Sales Executive, Braeden Schaefer, to bring Perspectives Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to your people.

**Call: 630.881.8925 or email: [bschaefer@perspectivesltd.com](mailto:bschaefer@perspectivesltd.com)**

### 6 Find Balance

Strike a balance between your work, family, and personal life. Identify where you feel there is an imbalance and then you can begin to produce solutions.

- **Consider This:** Identify areas you are lacking in, be mindful and intentional of those areas, and balance with the other areas.

### 7 Connect

After a trauma or experiencing grief, it may feel easier to isolate yourself. You may feel like a burden, or you may feel too depressed to be with others. Even if you do not feel fully up to it, connect with your social circles. When you remain connected with others, you feel a sense of belonging which can help the healing process. Do not be afraid to share how you are feeling, they could be feeling the same way.

### 8 Self-Care

We sometimes think of self-care as selfish, so it is important to reframe that. Consider the following idea "When I show up for myself, I can show up for others." Try self-care practices that have worked for you in the past like exercising, walking, reading a book, etc. If something no longer works, try something new.

- **Consider This:** Schedule your self-care like you would a work meeting or social activity, you are more likely to follow through if you put it on your calendar.

### 9 Community

During times of collective trauma and grief, we can feel a sense of helplessness. Although you may not be able to help directly, you can help in other ways. Volunteer in your community, share resources on social media and be a part of a solution.

### 10 Seek Help

It is okay to not be okay. You do not have to be at rock bottom, or in a crisis state to reach out for help. If you feel that something is off, or you are holding a lot of emotions and are not sure how to manage them, please reach out. You do not have to deal with it alone.