



# GriefDocs™

**Death**

**By Karen O. Johnson**

**"In three words I can sum up everything I've  
learned about life: *It goes on.*" --Robert Frost**



## GRIEF GROUP

*Welcome to the world of GriefDocs™.*

*In a world that does not befriend death, it is imperative we, in the helping professions, guide our clients to a safe harbor to begin their grief journey, lean into its pain, and travel through their individual grief work. It is an honor for us to be trusted to handle such a delicate heart and it is our obligation to offer the most superior counseling available.*

*May you find these GriefDocs™ useful to guide your clients toward the pain of loss and the growth that awaits them. Caring can promise losing, and that heartbreak is significant.*

*And while you are helping a broken heart face changes and build hope,  
be good to yourself. Karen*

GriefDocs™ purpose is to use them in group and individual counseling as organized, meaningful, and practical reminders to escort our clients to their individual journey of grief.

Six Session Format: Mission Statement, GoRounds, Bibliotherapy/Art, Grief Gear™, and Closing



## GRIEF GROUP

### Session 1

#### o EveryDayGrief™

Mission Statement: Life will never be the same. Examine how death alters our lives.

GoRounds: Welcome. Thank. (for Trust & Courage) Tell your name and your favorite thing to do.

GriefGear™: Clay Please tell us your story. All of us would like to hear it. WHO, WHAT, WHY, WHEN

Bibliotherapy: *My Many Colored Days* by Dr. Seuss.

What color are you today? What mood is that color for you?

What color were you before \_\_\_\_\_ died?

Which animal are you today? Which animal were you before \_\_\_\_\_ died? Why?

Return clay to the container and write your name on container..

CrayonScribble™ with the color you feel today. Throw your papers on the floor. Look at all the colors. What does this tell us? What appeals to you about someone else's CrayonScribble™?

Closing: Why is it important to share our stories?

**Keep in Mind:** Clay provides a tactile experience that promotes safety and the movement of the hands encourages thought processing.

## GRIEF GROUP

### Session 2

- Leaning into the Pain

Mission Statement: To grow we have to “lean in” and embrace the pain.

GoRounds: What happened this week that reminded you that you are grieving?

Display picture sets (rooms, places, people) facing down. Select a picture from category. Look at it and tell why that person is feeling pain in their heart. What can they do to “lean into the pain?”

Grief Gear™: Dice Shake the dice. Whatever number you get share that many answers that describe what is hard for you since your loved one died.

Use an Action Figure or Stuffed Animal. It takes a lot of bold bravery to face hurt and pain. Pass around.

Who is a character who is brave and courageous? (movie, cartoon, t.v.)

Why do you consider them courageous? People in grief are Bold and Brave. How are you like them?

Bibliotherapy: *Tear Soup.* Summarize the story. Show pictures. How are you like the main character?

What ingredients are in your tear soup? What is your recipe for living with loss?

Choose a page. What is happening? What has happened to you that is similar?

Closing: What can you do to “lean into the pain” when you need to?

Keep in Mind: People do not tell about their activities of grief. They feel different from others.



### Session 3

- o Goodbye Yesterday/Hello Tomorrow

**Mission Statement:** Yesterday is gone. Today is now. The future will be.

Recognize: Time is our friend and our enemy.

**GoRounds:** Rank the last week for yourself and your heart 1=lousy to 10=joyous

Tell about your traditions when your loved one died. (funeral, viewing, cremation)

**Grief Gear™:** Give each person a compass. How is your life like a compass now?  
How much control do you have over the direction of your life?

**Pictures:** caskets, cemeteries, headstones, urns, funerals

What rituals did your family do after your loved one died? Who planned it?  
How did these make you feel? What do you wish had been done? What would have you planned?

**Closing:** What is the point of having family traditions and rituals? Where are you going?.

Keep your compass in a place that is yours. Please bring a picture and obituary next week.

**Keep in Mind:** No one has ever asked them to describe the activities around the death and how they felt about it. Memorials matter.



## GRIEF GROUP

### Session 4

- Changes & Challenges

Mission Statement: Identify stressors and ideas to endure them.

GoRounds: Show pictures. Read Obituaries. Tell what possessions you have of your loved one. Shake the dice. Tell that many memories of your loved one.

Art/Bibliotherapy: Read *Good Days, Bad Days* What happens on your bad days? Good days?

GriefGear™: Hold the slinky. Move it, stretch it, wad it, drop it, twist it. How is this like stress?  
What is the biggest change in your life right now? How do you cope with it?  
What do you wish you could do about it? Can you? What can we control?

Closing: What challenges are you expecting in the future? How will you face them?

**Keep in Mind:** Changes are tiring. Alert those that matter for support and a listening ear.



## GRIEF GROUP

### Session 5

- o Riding the Rollercoaster

Mission Statement: Grief heightens stress levels. List tactics to cope.

GoRounds: Complete sentences: "I wish I \_\_\_\_\_, I get saddest about \_\_\_\_\_.  
When I am alone I \_\_\_\_\_, I am angry about \_\_\_\_\_, I long for \_\_\_\_\_, I smile when \_\_\_\_\_.

Grief Gear™: Beach Ball. Each section in this ball represents a hill on a rollercoaster.

What's the rollercoaster in your life? Bounce the ball and feel it.

How long can you keep the ball bouncing? How do you predict a hill in your rollercoaster?

What is it making you angry these days? Ideas to get rid of anger feelings?

Set up target. Say your biggest stress and throw the ball and smack it at the target.

What is the point of slapping the ball? What does the target represent?

Closing: Demonstrate Fingertaps. What happens when you put your fingers in them?

How is this like life? How is this like stress? \*

WARNING: next week is our last meeting so we will have to say goodbye to each other.

**Keep in Mind:** Stress is a daily occurrence. Listen to it.



## GRIEF GROUP

### Session 6

o *Living Life Counts™*

Mission Statement: It's our choice each day to live life. How to find joy with a broken heart.

GoRounds: Tell one thing you learned in group about each person's loved one.  
Tell one thing you learned in group about grief.

GriefGear™: Sacks, markers, crayons. Write the name of your loved one on a piece of paper. On the outside of the sack draw things that you remember about them. For the inside, on notecards, write private things about them that matter to you. Put them in; staple shut.

Closing: Thank You Circle. Go around the circle and thank the member for sharing about their loved one.

GriefGear™: Glasses. Put them on. My final word: It is okay to have fun.  
Blow Bubbles. Watch the bubbles. That's what grief is too. Watching your heart, remembering, missing, living, and finding fun. Group Huddle.  
Make sure everyone says the word: "Goodbye" to Group.

**Keep in Mind:** There is time for sadness and time for fun. It is okay to have both in grief.

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**Some of My Favorites**

Anholt, Catherine. *Good Days Bad Days*. G.P. Putman's & Sons, New York: New York. 1990.

Carle, Eric. *The Very Quiet Cricket*. Philomel Books. New York: New York. 1990.

Everitt, Betsy. *Mean Soup*. Harcourt, Brace & Company, San Diego: California. 1992.

Fox, M. *Tough Boris*. Harcourt, Brace & Co. San Diego: California. 1994.

Parr, Todd. *It's Okay to be Different*. Singapore, China. 2001.

Schwiebert, Pat and DeKlyen, Chuck. *Tear Soup A recipe for healing after loss*. 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. Peace House, Portland, Oregon. 2005.

Scieszka, Jon. *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs*. Penguin Books. New York, New York. 1989.

Seuss, Dr. *My Many Colored Days*.. Random House. New York. 1996.

Striker, Susan. *The Anti Coloring Book*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston. New York, New York. 1982.



**AND NOW, TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF!**

Sing a Song.

*Fly a Kite.*

Turn up the music.

SCREAM.

**TAKE A NAP.**

Sit.

Work up a sweat.

RECONNECT WITH AN OLD FRIEND.

**BEND.**

**Laugh.**

Set the timer for 10 min. Do nothing.

*Lie Down.*

**Read a novel.**

**Rollerblade.**

Watch the sunset.

*PLAY.*

**Embrace the new day.**

**Ponder.**



## AND MORE IDEAS

Whiteboards, dry erasers and rags  
Rearview mirror  
Bendables  
Griefsacks and clothesline  
Calculator  
Handcuffs  
Bubblegum  
Rocks  
Blocks  
Magnets  
Nerf toys  
Dark glasses  
Talking stick  
Pickup sticks

Cell phone  
Sociogram  
Print with left hand  
Remote control  
Chain  
Rip in pieces, tape together  
Gossip  
Balls  
koosh ball  
Coloring book  
Fat Crayons  
Wand  
Blocks  
butterfly net



Magnifying Glass  
Tape measure  
Paper plates  
Rocks  
Marbles  
Empty Places  
Puppets  
Putty  
Collage Cutting  
Balloons

### **AND MORE IDEAS**

Wallet  
Tattoos (fake)  
Popsicle sticks  
Microphone  
GriefTimes™ Graph  
Stationery  
Twine  
Tongue depressors  
Memory Box  
Doorknob hangers

There is no such thing as a Griefectomy.™