

# Grief



## VFW Chaplains Training March 2026

Presentation by Chaplain Frank Correa

A woman with curly hair is sitting on a couch, looking thoughtful with her hand to her chin. The background shows a bedroom with a bed and a chair. The text "Understanding and Assisting Those Who Grieve" is overlaid in white serif font.

# Understanding and Assisting Those Who Grieve

# **The Work of the Chaplain**

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**First, the Chaplain  
nurtures the living.**

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**Second, the Chaplain  
cares for the dying.**

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**Third, the Chaplain  
honors the dead.**

# Learning objectives

- What is grief?
- Stages of grief
- Role of the chaplain
- How to minister in grief
- Resources



# Definition of Grief

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- Deep sorrow, especially that caused by a major loss



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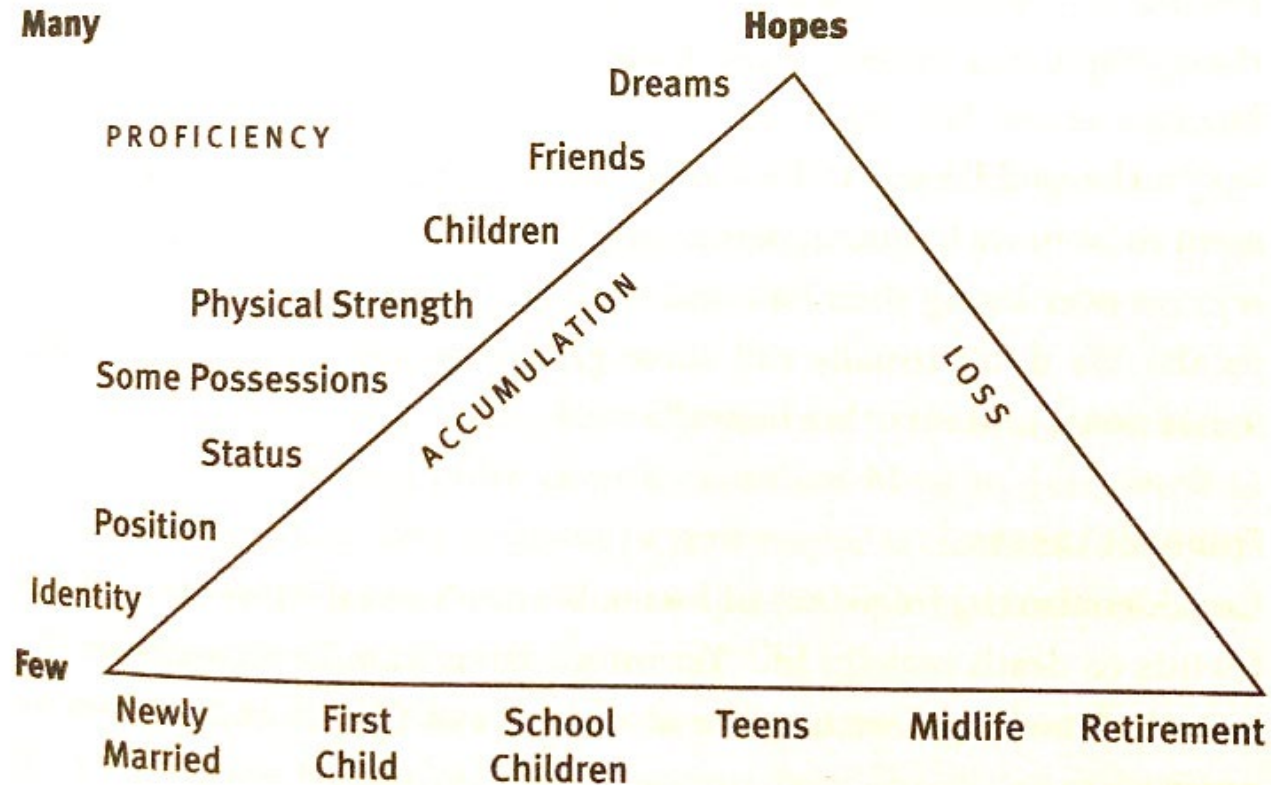
# Types of Loss

- Death
- Material
- Relationship
- Functional loss
- Role



# Lifespan

Figure 2



**Gains**

**losses**

# Understanding Grief

**Grief is Normal:**

**Grief is Personal:**

There is no “right” way to grieve

**Different Types of Grief:**

May types and causes, and reactions

**Grief Evolves**

It's a process



# FIVE STAGES OF GRIEF



1 DENIAL

2 ANGER

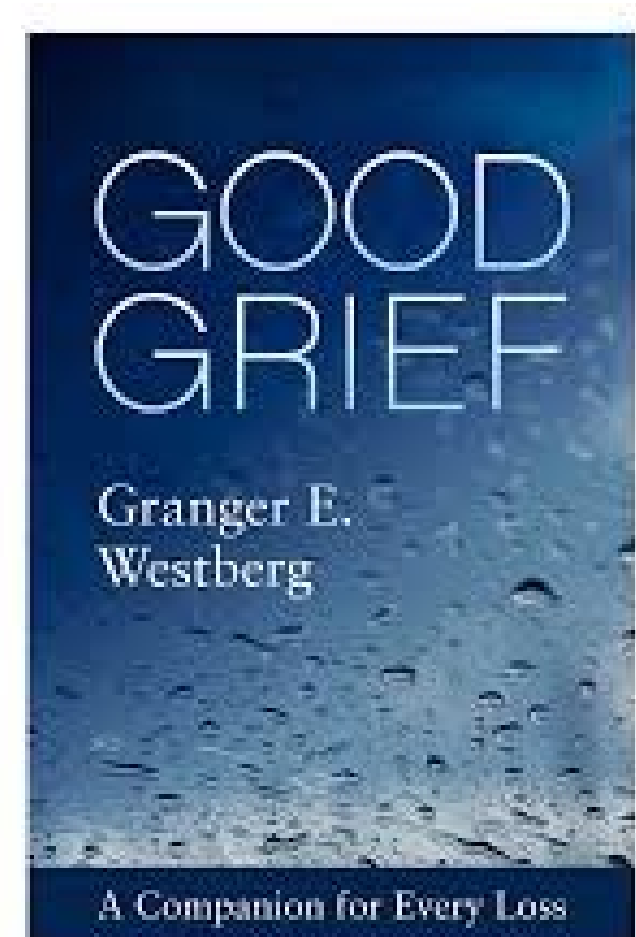
3 BARGAINING

4 DEPRESSION

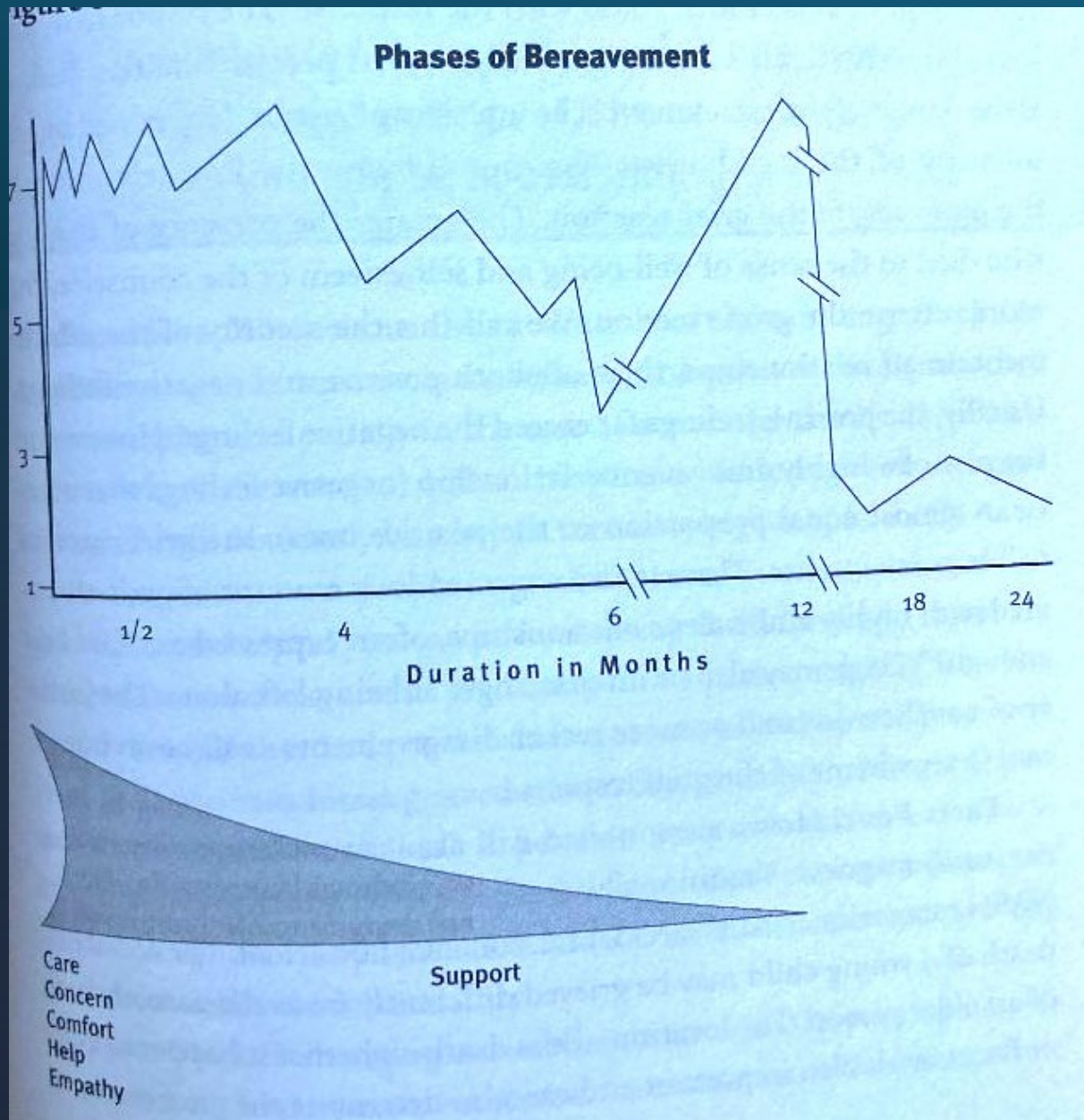
5 ACCEPTANCE

# 10 stage Westburg model of Grief

- We are in a state of Shock
- We express Emotion
- We feel Depressed, lonely
- We may feel physical distress
- We may experience Panic
- We feel a sense of Guilt
- We are filled with Anger and resentment
- We Resist returning to usual activities
- Hope gradually comes through
- We struggle to affirm reality



Spikes at  
6-8 weeks  
and one year



Wright H.  
Norman. *Crisis &  
Trauma  
Counseling*



**I don't know.  
What to say**

- Its OK to be silent
- Don't minimize or use cliches
- Make it safe to grieve openly
- Be prepared!

# Grief Intervention Stages



**Crisis  
Mode**

**Initial  
Contact**

**Long Term  
Care**

# Ten Commandments for comforters

## Ten Commandments for Comforters

1. Go to those who are bereaved as soon as possible, even if it is inconvenient for you.
2. Be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to react to words and feelings that may appear "un-Christian."
3. Do not try to explain everything.
4. Share the promises of God.
5. Avoid saying, "I know just how you feel." Nobody will believe you, and the statement accomplishes nothing.
6. Words often fail, so express yourself through a loving hug, a handshake, even a simple touch. Just being there is a ministry.
7. Do not be afraid to "weep with those who weep."
8. Remember that grieving is a difficult process that takes time. Be patient with those who mourn and try not to say, "Aren't you over it yet?"
9. Visit regularly during the weeks after the funeral.
10. Keep confidence. Don't turn the experience into a sermon illustration, unless the family gives you permission.

Wiersbe,  
Warren.

*Comforting the  
Bereaved*

# Supporting Someone who is Grieving

1. Listen More Than You Speak
2. Acknowledge Their Loss
3. Offer Practical Help
4. Respect Their Need for Space and Time
5. Be Mindful of Their Emotions
6. Follow Their Lead
7. Respect Their Ways of Coping
8. Don't Rush Their Healing
9. The Value of a Support Group
10. Offer Long-Term Support
11. Respect Cultural or Religious Differences



# Suggested Books

- Westberg, Granger. *Good Grief*
- Baily, Joseph. *The Last Thing We Talk About*
- Linn, Erin. *I know Just How You Feel: avoiding the clichés of grief*
- Wiersbe, Warren. *Comforting the Bereaved*
- Wiersbe, Warren. *When Life Falls Apart*
- Wright H. Norman. *Crisis & Trauma Counseling*





*Thank  
You*  
for your time



**Questions?**