



### Grief Leadership: What Can We Learn From the Story of the Life and Service of Captain America?

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*Superhero Grief: The Transformative Power of Loss*

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Presented by Boeing



THESE AIRCRAFT SERVED AMERICA - ALSO ECONOMICALLY - DIGITALIZE AMERICA! THE FIRST AIRCRAFT (2011)



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### Historical Background: Creation of Captain America



**Stanley Martin Lieber**  
(U.S. Army WWII Veteran)  
Professionally Known as:  
**Stan Lee**



**Hymie Simon**  
Professionally Known as:  
**Joseph Henry Simon**



**Jacob Kurtzberg**  
Professionally Known as:  
**Jack Kirby**

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### Steve Rogers: A Veteran's Perspective

Story by David F. Carey, LTC, U.S. Army (Retired)  
OIF I, OIF III, & OEF (2013)



Photo Source: [StockPhoto by PaulGardner](#)



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(Image: Don Clark, Photo: G. Basso, A. B. Rossi, J. 2016)

## Empathy and Hope

(Martin, J.A., Carey, D.F. & Cozza, S.J., 2021)

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## What is Grief Leadership?

- Bartone's (2019) Principles of Grief Leadership
- Uniformed Services University (USU) Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress (CSTS) *Grief Leadership Fact Sheet*



Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress

GRIEF LEADERSHIP: LEADERSHIP IN THE WAKE OF TRAGEDY

www.cstsonline.org

(Martin, J.A., Carey, D.F. & Cozza, S.J., 2021)

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## Grief and Loss

- Loss and acute grief
- Sudden, unexpected traumatic loss
- Impact: Individuals-Family-Community-Nation-World
- *Grief Leadership* and the well-being of the bereaved community



(Martin, J.A., Carey, D.F. & Cozza, S.J., 2021)

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## Grief Leadership Principles and Practices Examples from Captain America



(Martin, J.A., Carey, D.F. & Cozza, S.J., 2021)  
Photo Source: [Discipline by User:halibute\\_351](#)

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## Grief Leadership Principles and Practices

1. Provide public acknowledgment of the profound nature of the group's loss, as well as the validity of the associated pain and suffering experienced by group members

- recognize the lives that have been lost
- be aware of those that are most affected by the loss
- acknowledge the pain associated with the loss



©Captain America: The First Avenger Page, K. & Johnson, J. 2011

(Martin, J.A., Carey, D.F. & Cozza, S.J., 2021, p. 185)

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## Grief Leadership Principles and Practices

2. Provide group members with the necessary information to comprehend what has occurred, as well as a perspective that helps the group understand the loss and its significance

- give appropriate details of what occurred
- describe the effect of the loss on the group
- provide perspective regarding the significance of the loss



©Captain America: Civil War Page, K. & Russo, A. & Russo, J. 2016

(Martin, J.A., Carey, D.F. & Cozza, S.J., 2021, p. 185)

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## Grief Leadership Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic

### Challenges

- Global /national/community/individual impact
- Unexpected multiple losses
- Cumulative and collective grief
- Uncertainty/fear



(Martin, J.A., Carey, D.F. & Cozza, S.J., 2021)



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## Grief Leadership Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic

### Leader Qualities

- Compassion
- Diversity of opinion and perspective
- Timely, clear, and specific information on planned responses responses
- Receptiveness to knowledge and wisdom of experts
- Language tone: Conveys confidence, clarity, selflessness, empathy, and compassion
- Offers realistic hope
- Honors present sacrifice and appropriate time for memorialization



(Martin, J.A., Carey, D.F. & Cozza, S.J., 2021)



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## Film and Fiction: Grief Leadership A Teaching Tool



- *Harry Potter*
- *Star Wars*
- *Lord of the Rings*
- *Game of Thrones*

(Martin, J.A., Carey, D.F. & Cozza, S.J., 2021)



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### Grief Leadership in Everyday Life

Parents and caregivers  
The everyday heroes

(Martin, J.A., Carey, D.F. & Cozza, S.J., 2021)

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### Developing Grief Leaders



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### Conclusions and Recommendations

Effective leaders as demonstrated in the story of the life and service of *Captain America*

- Ensures safety for all
- Demonstrates empathy and compassion
- Acknowledges and values profound loss has occurred
- Offers realistic hope
- Provides a vision for moving forward

Ineffective leadership: Common denominator is lack of compassion for those overwhelmed by loss.



(Martin, J.A., Carey, D.F. & Cozza, S.J., 2021)  
Photo Source: (copyright) by Shutterstock, 311

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Superhero creators wanted to change the world for the better, most originating from traumatic loss histories. They created unifying characters – archetypes of strength and hope – fighting oppression and helping to ease suffering. They stirred the imagination of generations, and their legacy continues.

J.A. Harrington & R.A. Neimeyer (Eds.) (2021). *Superhero grief: The transformative power of loss*. Routledge.

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**About the TAPS Institute for Hope and Healing®**

Launched in March 2018 through an alliance with HFA, the TAPS Institute for Hope and Healing® serves as a resource and training center, providing programs for both professionals working in the field of grief and loss and the public.



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*Please note: The information provided on this program is intended for educational purposes only.*

*If you or a loved one needs professional support, please contact TAPS 24/7 at 800-959-TAPS (8277).*



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