


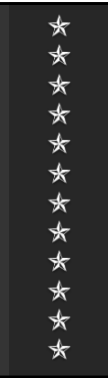
TAPAS
Institute for Hope and Healing

Men, Grief, and Posttraumatic Growth

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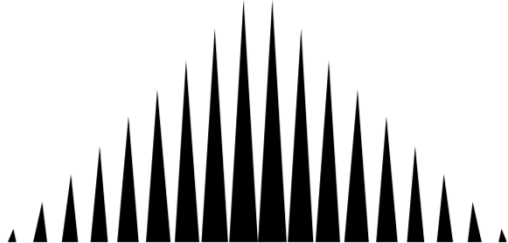
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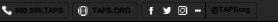
February 12, 2019
Presented by Boeing 



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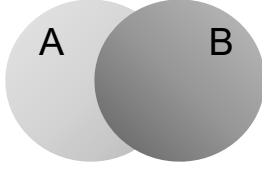
Grieving Styles Exist along a Continuum




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Grieving Styles: An Alternate Visualization
Intuitive vs. Instrumental



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Intuitive Grief

- Experiences strong affective reactions
- Expression mirrors inner feelings
- Adaptation involves expression and exploration of feelings

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Instrumental Grief

- Experience of grief is primarily cognitive or physical
- Grief often is expressed cognitively or behaviorally
- Adaptation generally involves thinking and doing

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Blended Grievors

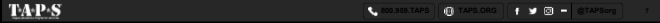
VENN DIAGRAM!

- Share experiences, expressions, and adaptation strategies of both intuitive and instrumental grievers
- Will often have varied experiences and use strategies depending on the relationship to the deceased, the situation experienced, and the time since the loss

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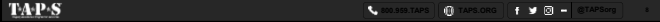

Dissonant Grief
Discontinuity in Experience vs. Expression



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Oregon Center for Applied Science
Ways of Portraying Model

- Heart grievers
- Head grievers
- Head + heart
- Head vs. heart

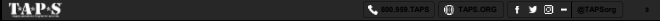


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Men, Grief, and Growth




- Many men (and some women) have an instrumental style that emphasizes active and cognitive ways of grieving
- Such an approach to grief can often facilitate meaning-making and posttraumatic growth



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Men's Grief



- Examples of creative attempts to deal with loss
- Smith suggests that Shakespeare's way of dealing with his grief over the death of his 11-year-old son, Hamnet, was to process his grief in his subsequent plays
- His contemporary, Ben Johnson, composed moving elegies to his two deceased children
- Eric Clapton composed *Tears in Heaven* after his son died

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So grief can be an impetus to new growth!

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Transformative Grief


- In Celtic Mythology, *thin places* are places where the boundaries between this world and the other world are permeable
- In a sense, grief exists within this thin place



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Significant or Traumatic Loss



- Significant or traumatic losses are seismic events that not only cause emotional distress but also challenge beliefs, goals, and one's sense of personal narrative
- Life is now divided into before and after the event

(Calhoun & Tedeschi)

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The Mysterious Math of Grief

- 3-1=2
- 3-1=0
- 3-1=5

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Possible Changes

- Renewed spirituality
- Greater appreciation of life, relationships, and priorities
- Growth in character, perceptions of strength
- Existential awareness
- Growth in skills
- Changes in lifestyle

(Calhoun & Tedeschi)

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How Can We Enhance Transformation?

- Language of survivorship
- Empowering language – challenge, courage, confidence (Chappellear)
- Small choices empower bigger ones
- Assist clients in developing a mission
- Examination of positive and negative adaptations
- Reflection “How has this loss changed you?”
- “Can you imagine what your life would be like (what you would have become) if this had not happened?”
- The value of “benefit finding” in the experience of grief

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Grief Counseling




Studies show that clients will do better in groups when leaders have transformation rather than coping as a goal of therapy or support

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**Summary:
Strength-Based Grief Counseling**

- Focuses on personal strengths
- Strengths of significant others
- Reviews strategies and solutions that worked in the past
- Focuses on hopes for future




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The Possibility of Posttraumatic Growth

- Growth in grief (Calhoun and Tedeschi)
- The abduction of Adam Walsh
- John Walsh – Center for Missing and Exploited Children, *America's Most Wanted*
- The value of benefit finding and meaning-making




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Looking Backward


- What is lost?
- What is left?
- Reviewing strengths
 - Internal
 - External



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Looking Forward



- What do I need to bring from my old life into my new life?
- What do I need to leave behind?
- What do I need to add?

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Looking Forward, Backward

- Consistent with the Dual Process Model of Stroebe and Schut (1999)
- Allows acknowledgment of loss while adjusting to a new life created by loss

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Transformative Group Technique: Grief Narrative

- Begin each session with a group round
- *How has my story changed since the last session?*
- Focused on what was learned, new insights, skills growth


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Looking Forward: A Group Exercise

- At termination
- Ask individuals in the group where they will be a year from now if you meet in the future

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Attracting Male Clients to Counseling



Special Get-Back-in-Shape Issue!
Men's Health
LEAN MUSCLE FAST!
HI-DEF ABS
SEX TONIGHT
STRIP AWAY BELLY FAT!
1,783
 WAYS TO GET BETTER AT EVERYTHING

- Utilize males in online and print advertisements
- Have male-oriented magazines in the waiting room


(Troyer, *Counseling Widowers*)

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Counseling Instrumental Grievers


- Assess
- Traditional approaches may not work well
- Cognitive therapies
- Active approaches
- Therapeutic metaphors (carrying a heavy load etc.)
- Psycho-educational approaches, especially the use of books and videos



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Counseling Male Instrumental Grievers Strategies




- Use styles compatible with the male role such as storytelling
- Recognize that men will move in and out of emotions, often using dosing and humor

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Counseling Male Instrumental Grievers
Strategies


- Rituals have had an important cultural and historical role with men, such as rites of initiation
- Rituals draw on the need to "do" and offer elements of symbolic control
- For example, building a coffin for a dead cat with one's son



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Counseling Male Instrumental Grievers
Strategies



- Reframing strengths
- For example, men take pride in coping with hardship
- *"It might be tough to sit with your wife as she expresses pain – but that could be a helpful sacrifice"*


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Counseling Male Clients
Building on Strengths

While Levant *et al.* stress dysfunctional elements of male ideology, other, more positive aspects can be utilized

- Self-sacrifice
- Protect the weak
- Courage valued
- "Take one for the team" – social responsibility and being a team player




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Using Film for Male Role Models

1. *Who was or were heroes in the movie?*
2. *What made the character heroic?*
3. *Have you seen in your experience behavior similar to the hero?*
4. *Did you ever do anything similar to the hero? Are there opportunities where you might?*
5. *How are you similar or different from the hero?*
6. *What motivates the hero?*

(Gladding & Villalba, 2014)



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The Possible Paradox

- Instrumental grievers attraction to the field
- The culture of counseling

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Posttraumatic Growth

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Can We Recognize the Strengths of the Veteran?

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Can We Recognize the Strengths of the Veteran?

- Can we see the veteran as strong rather than broken while acknowledging the struggle?
- Can we acknowledge that the struggle sometimes is about combat and sometimes about other traumas?
- Can we recognize that military service and combat experience can strengthen veterans for civilian life?
- Can we see the possibility of growth in the aftermath of trauma?
- Can we find ways to facilitate this growth, identify the strength, and turn this to further service in our communities?

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Trauma & Core Beliefs


Cognitive reassessments

- Challenging or shattering the *assumptive world*: Core beliefs about
 - How benevolent people are
 - How much faith I can put in leadership
 - How fair life is
 - How predictable events are
 - How controllable the world is
 - How vulnerable I am
 - How capable I am
 - Who I am, what kind of person am I?

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Reconstruction Needed



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Posttraumatic Growth (PTG)

Posttraumatic Growth is both a process and an outcome: The experience of *positive changes* in oneself as a result of the *struggle* with traumatic events.

- New possibilities
- Relating to others
- Personal strength
- Appreciation of life
- Spiritual and existential change

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Resilience vs. PTG

- Resilience: "The ability to recover readily from illness, depression, adversity or the like." The ability to regain shape. Also, *resistance* to adversity.
- Versus PTG: a new level of functioning and perspective—*transformative* responses to adversity.

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Christianity and Suffering

"Suffering, on the other hand, tends to plow up the surface of our lives to uncover the depths that provide greater strength of purpose and accomplishment. Only deeply plowed earth can yield bountiful harvests." (Graham, 1981, p. 27).

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Islam and Suffering

In a passion play in which the seventh century Shiite martyr Husain, about to be killed states: "Trials, afflictions, and pains, the thicker they fall on man, the better, dear sister, do they prepare him for his journey heavenward."

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Buddhism and Suffering

The Noble Truths are organized around the issue of suffering:

- "There is suffering." Do not make it personal and react to it in a habitual way.
- "Suffering should be understood."
- Accept the suffering, stand under or embrace it rather than just react to it.
- When you have actually practiced with suffering - looking at it, accepting it, knowing it and letting it be the way it is - then it is understood.

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The Existential Dilemma of PTG

"I am a more sensitive person, a more effective pastor, a more sympathetic counselor because of Aaron's life and death than I would ever have been without it. And I would give up all those gains in a second if I could have my son back. If I could choose, I would forego all of the spiritual growth and depth which has come my way because of our experiences, and be what I was fifteen years ago, an average rabbi, an indifferent counselor, helping some people and unable to help others, and the father of a bright, happy boy. But I cannot choose."

Rabbi Harold Kushner in Viorst, J. (1996) Necessary Losses. p. 295.

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Trauma as Gift

"I'm not glad [it] happened. I wish it hadn't. I would give anything if Robert and Eric could still be here. But I'm not going to waste what has been given to me. I'm not going to dishonor their memories by just rolling over and giving up. Their sacrifices gave me a new lease on life. I would give it back to them, but I can't. I have to keep moving forward and living how they would expect me to live."

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Using the PTG Model to Create Interventions

- An Existential, Cognitive, Narrative Integration; can be integrated with other approaches to PTSD
- Based on the perspective: "It's not what's wrong, it's what happened"
- The facilitator is an Expert Companion
 - A person who listens to the worst
 - A person who learns from the survivor
 - A person who tolerates the "craziness"
 - A person who is there for the long haul

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5 Elements of PTG Intervention/Facilitation

- First described by Tedeschi & McNally (*American Psychologist*, 2011)
- Expanded by Calhoun & Tedeschi into the book, *Posttraumatic Growth in Clinical Practice*, 2013
- A Self-Help version by Tedeschi & Moore in the *Posttraumatic Growth Workbook*, 2016

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Part 1: Understanding Trauma Response as a Precursor to PTG

- Shattered beliefs form the foundation for later posttraumatic growth.
- Basic physiological and psychological responses are normal in trauma.
- These reactions do not indicate a defect in one's character, or identity, or sanity.

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Part 2: Emotion Regulation Enhancement

- Managing dysregulated sympathetic nervous system responses and intrusive thinking
 - Responses that are adaptive for survival in trauma can provoke long-term maladaptive functioning:
 - Behavioral and emotional effects of circulating norepinephrine, epinephrine, and cortisol (stress hormones) sustain the body's alarm reaction
 - Jitteriness, hypervigilance, sleep disruption, appetite suppression, etc.
- Encouraging reflective rumination in contrast to brooding.

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Part 3: Constructive Self-disclosure

- *Telling the story* of the trauma, but especially the experience of the *aftermath* of trauma.
- Learning how to use social connections and establish new ones.

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Part 4 Creating a Trauma Narrative with PTG Domains

- Organizing the story of trauma into a coherent narrative with the trauma as a catalyst, turning point.
- Appreciating paradox—"opposites" can coincide:
 - Loss & gain
 - Support & individual strength
 - Control & lack of control
 - Grief & gratitude
 - Vulnerability & strength
- Referring to the five domains of posttraumatic growth, with stories that illustrate the possibility of change.

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Part 5: Developing Life Principles that are Robust to Challenges

- Finding ways to serve, be altruistic
- Accepting growth without guilt as benefiting others; honoring deceased comrades can mitigate guilt
- Accepting social identity as a trauma survivor, or compassionate, wise person, somewhat separate from others, but more closely connected to the human condition
- Considering the ancient Greek/Roman concept of the hero as an ordinary person who experiences an extraordinary event, survives it, and returns to the everyday world to express an important truth about life

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Some Things to Remember about PTG

- It's not the trauma, it's the struggle
- People first struggle to survive, not grow
- Psychological fitness, distress and PTG: It's curvilinear
- PTG and PTSD coexist

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Further Reading

- Tedeschi, R. T. & Moore, B. A. (2018). Boulder crest retreat: Integrating non-traditional and traditional interventions for military veterans. *The Military Psychologist*, 33, 11-14.
- Tedeschi, R. T. & Moore, B. A. (2016). Community-based laboratories for postdeployment adjustment: A model. *The Military Psychologist*, 31, 6-10.
- Tedeschi, R. T. & Moore, B. A. (2016). The Posttraumatic Growth Workbook: *Coming Through Trauma Wiser, Stronger, and More Resilient*


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Questions?



Bret Moore, PsyD, ABPP
Clinical Psychologist and prescribing Psychologist



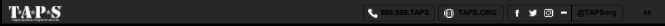
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About the TAPS Institute for Hope and Healing®

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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Upcoming TAPS Institute Programs

- March 8— *Finding Your North Star: Building a Life After Loss*
Presenters: **Eileen O’Grady**, PhD, RN, NP, PCC; **Jean Johnson**, PhD, RN, FAAN, and **Paul Tschudi**, EdS, MA, LPC
- March 28— *Underserved and Overlooked: Supporting Widowed Parents*
Presenter: **Justin M. Yopp**, PhD
Moderator: **Chantel Dooley**, MS, PhD Candidate
- April 17-18— *Helping Individuals and Families Along Their Grief Journey: A Guide for Professionals*
Presenter: **Ken Doka**, PhD, MDiv

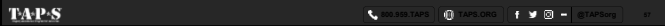
Visit taps.org/institute to learn more and RSVP!



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Additional TAPS Resources

- TAPS National Military Survivor Helpline— Phone number: 1-800-959-8277
- Survivor Care Team— <https://www.taps.org/survivorcareteam>
- Grief Counseling— <https://www.taps.org/griefcounseling>
- Casework— <https://www.taps.org/casework>
- Education Assistance— <https://www.taps.org/edu>
- Suicide Loss— <https://www.taps.org/suicide>
- TAPS Magazine— <https://www.taps.org/magazine>
- TAPS Publications— <https://www.taps.org/publications>
- Grief and Loss Education— <https://www.taps.org/institute>
- For Grief Professionals— <https://www.taps.org/professionals>
- Additional Resources— <https://www.taps.org/additionalresources>



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