

Traditional & Non-Traditional Therapies

This worksheet is a supplemental resource for the "Understanding Grief after Suicide" Workshop

Support Groups

A group setting where a person can connect with others who are experiencing a similar loss or experience and find community, support, and healing. These groups often meet twice monthly but some meet more or less frequently. They are available online and in-person.

Talk Therapy

Talk therapy gives a person an opportunity to identify and discuss issues that are causing emotional distress. It also includes setting goals and learning skills. Talk therapy helps individuals understand that they can do something to improve their life, such as being more self-compassionate, expressing emotions differently, or improving performance at work or school.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

Cognitive behavioral therapy, an evidence-based therapy, focuses on challenging and changing certain thinking patterns and behaviors, improving management of emotions, and developing coping strategies to help solve current problems.

Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT)

Dialectical behavior therapy is an evidence-based psychotherapy that began with efforts to treat borderline personality disorder. There is evidence that DBT can be useful in treating mood disorders, suicidal ideation, and in changing behavioral patterns such as self-harm and substance use.

Grief therapy/counseling

Grief counseling is a form of psychotherapy that aims to help people cope with the physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and cognitive responses to loss. Some grief counselors complete coursework and/or certification before they begin working with clients who are grieving.

EMDR

Eye movement, desensitization, and reprocessing ([EMDR](#)) was designed to alleviate the distress associated with traumatic memories. The hallmark of EMDR, which is bilateral stimulation (such as side-to-side eye movement or hand tapping) is unusual among mental health treatments. There is increasing research, however, that shows that EMDR is an effective treatment for trauma and grief.

Meditation

Meditation is a practice where one uses a technique (e.g. mindfulness, focusing on an object, thought, or activity) to train attention and awareness, and achieve a mentally clear and emotionally calm and stable state. These practices can help us in healing our grief, because they help us live in the present moment, become more aware of our pain and sadness, and in turn begin to heal.

Self-compassion

Self-compassion has three key elements: self-kindness versus self-judgement; sense of common humanity versus isolation; and mindfulness versus over-identification when confronting painful thoughts and emotions. Self-compassion allows us to accept grief as the form love takes when someone we love dies, rather than trying to "get over" the grief, push it away, or put on a mask.

Medication

Medications can be used to alleviate some grief symptoms that become too intense to cope with. Common medications are anti-depressants, anti-anxiety medications, and medications to promote sleep. Most people who experience grief do not need medications but when grief is traumatic and complicated, temporary use of medications can bring some relief.

Nature-based healing

Nature therapy, also called ecotherapy, is the practice of being in nature to promote growth and healing. Nature therapy is usually led by a trained professional who is there to provide support. When people are grieving, nature can provide a grounded base to explore and process feelings. [Here](#) is an interesting blog on this topic.