

# GRIEF RIVER®: A NEW APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING LOSS



## DESCRIPTION:

The *Grief River*® model evolved organically from two dominant conceptual metaphors describing grief as *waves* and time as a *river*. It makes use of the phases of a river (headwaters, rapids, run, delta, and rejoining the sea) and integrates a host of other water-related analogies to provide a coherent narrative (model), helping to orient a person's current loss within the context of the entire life journey. It acknowledges the personal and environmental factors contributing to the intensity and duration of the *rapids* and offers tips (targeted interventions) that hospice professionals can suggest to those seeking assistance to navigate their way toward *calmer waters*.

The *Grief River* model should be considered a complementary or adjunctive approach to contemporary evidence-based research and practice in the field of thanatology. Its strength lies in providing connection and consolation through fostering ecological relationships and validation and inspiration through a multidisciplinary dialogue between thanatology research, the arts and humanities, philosophy, spirituality, and personal experiences.

The objective of this webinar is not to supply participants with a map for the grief journey but rather to outfit hospice and health care providers with a compass and additional supplies needed to accompany the bereaved.

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## PROGRAM DETAILS:

This presentation features experienced professionals offering their own expertise on the topic. On the screen, you will see the slide presentation and will be able to hear the experts talking and presenting. If you login for the live version of the program, you'll also have the opportunity to email or text the experts' questions that they will discuss and answer during the program's Q & A session.

<b>RELEASE DATE:</b>	Program originally premiered May 14, 2024
<b>ON DEMAND:</b>	Available for 1 year; until May 13, 2025
<b>LENGTH:</b>	90 minutes
<b>CEs:</b>	1.5 hours for a wide variety of professional boards
<b>CONTENT LEVEL:</b>	The program is mainly for professionals already working in the field but is practical for all levels of education – entry level, intermediate or advanced.
<b>TARGET AUDIENCE:</b>	Health care clinicians, social service clinicians and others working in the hospice, palliative care, counseling, hospital, nursing home, funeral home, or faith community environments

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## TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

To view the program, you will need a computer and screen, reliable internet access, and speakers.

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## PROGRAM FEES/MATERIALS:

**Registration includes continuing education and on-demand viewing for 1 year from live date.** As there are no refunds on registration (all registrations have immediate access to program video & materials), please be sure to test the system requirements prior to purchase.

## **ADVANCE PURCHASE Single Webinar Registration**

Individual Viewer: Member: \$27.30 | Non-member: \$45.50  
Organizational Viewing: Member: \$156.00 | Non-member: \$260.00

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## **SAME DAY and ON-DEMAND PURCHASE Single Webinar Registration**

Individual Viewer: Member: \$29.70 | Non-member: \$49.50  
Organizational Viewing: Member: \$165.00 | Non-member: \$275.00

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## **WEBINAR PACKAGE (9 programs)**

Individual Viewer: Member: \$241.80 | Non-member: \$403.00  
Organizational Viewing: Member: \$1,398.60 | Non-member: \$2,331.00

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### **HOW TO REGISTER:**

Register directly online, on HFA's website: <https://www.hospicefoundation.org>

### **MATERIALS AREA:**

Materials are available on HFA's website at <https://hospicefoundation.org/Shop-HFA/My-Account>. From here, click on "Orders/Courses."

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### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

At the conclusion of this webinar, participants will be able to:

1. Explain to others the key elements of the *Grief River* model, which makes use of nature-inspired metaphors and offers a coherent narrative of loss in the context of the life journey.
  2. Discover additional resources for further study and interventions for use with those who have experienced a loss.
  3. Demonstrate the metaphors you use in a more intentional way when engaging in helping relationships.
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### **PROGRAM OUTLINE:**

- A. Orientation & Launch (15 Minutes)
  - a. Grief River Model
  - b. Phases of a River
  - c. Learning Objectives
  - d. Statement of Ethics
  - e. The Poetic Use of Metaphor
- B. The Topography of Total Pain (15 Minutes)
  - a. Surveying the Landscape Loss & Suffering
  - b. 3 Grief trajectories over 2 years
  - c. Individualized Approach
  - d. All Our Losses Across the Landscape of Life
  - e. Zeroing in on the Loss of Connection (Isolation)
- C. Of Metaphors & Models (15 Minutes)
  - a. Metaphor
  - b. Two Dominant Metaphors in the language of loss
  - c. Caution: Clinical Metaphors

- d. Model
  - e. Existing Models of Grief & Key Concepts
  - D. The Grief River Model (15 Minutes)
    - a. Phases of the River and Timely Interventions
    - b. Rapids
    - c. Headwaters
    - d. Run
    - e. Delta
    - f. Rejoining the Sea
  - E. Views from the River (10 Minutes)
    - a. Advice for River Guides
    - b. Related Entailments and Water Analogies
    - c. Problems, critiques, and counter indications
    - d. Summation: Contemporary Grief Theory
  - F. Questions & Responses (20 Minutes)
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### **CONTINUING EDUCATION:**

This program is valid for 1.5 continuing education contact hours. CE hours are available until May 13, 2025.

A complete list of board approvals for this webinar program is posted to HFA's website at [www.hospicefoundation.org](http://www.hospicefoundation.org).

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### **COURSE COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS:**

Participants must attend the entire 1.5 hour program. Partial credit is not awarded. Participants must also complete the entire CE process online which includes a required evaluation form and exam. The exam must be completed at 80% or above (*the exam may be re-taken, if necessary*).

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### **EXPERT PANELISTS:**

**Thom Dennis, D. Min., LCPC, LMHC, FT**, is the creator of the *Grief River*® model. With over 30 years of experience supporting individuals and families as they navigate their way through some of life's most turbulent and troubled waters, Thom brings real-world, practical knowledge applicable to all interdisciplinary team members working in hospice and palliative care. With a professional career immersed in pastoral care and counseling, he has served in various culturally diverse settings, including parish ministry, hospital chaplaincy, and for the past 18 years as a hospice bereavement services coordinator and grief counselor.

Thom is currently on staff at the mental health clinic at Midwest Medical Center in Galena, Illinois, where he also maintains a private psychotherapy practice and offers *Grief River*® weekend workshops and retreats. As an artist, poet, and riparian, he strives to integrate into his personal life the wisdom he's been exposed to as a companion of the bereaved. For additional information, visit: <http://www.griefriver.com>.

### **REVIEWER:**

**Angela Novas, MSN, RN, CRNP, ACHPN**, *Senior Medical Officer*, Hospice Foundation of America

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**SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITY (ADA):**

Reasonable accommodation may be made available, on an individual basis. To request accommodation, please contact HFA via email at [educate@hospicefoundation.org](mailto:educate@hospicefoundation.org) or call 800-854-3402, or write to HFA, 1707 L Street NW, Suite 220, Washington, DC 20036.

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**CONFLICT OF INTEREST:**

Planners (Panelists and Review Committee Members) disclose no conflict of interest relative to this educational activity. None of the planners or presenters for this educational activity have relevant financial relationships to disclose with ineligible companies.

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**FOR QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, OR ADDRESSING GRIEVANCES**

**Please contact Hospice Foundation of America (HFA)**

Hospice Foundation of America  
1707 L Street NW, Suite 220, Washington, DC 20036  
[educate@hospicefoundation.org](mailto:educate@hospicefoundation.org)  
1-800-854-3402 toll-free / (202) 457-5811 phone  
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