

## GRIEF & TRAUMA GLOSSARY

### A-Z GRIEF & TRAUMA GLOSSARY

*Spiritual and Clinical Terms to Support Healing, Teaching, and Transformation*

**A – Acceptance** The final stage in many grief models where one acknowledges the reality of the loss and begins to find ways to live again. It is not forgetting, but embracing a new form of hope. *KJV: Ecclesiastes 3:1 – “To everything there is a season...”*

**B – Bereavement** - The period of mourning and adjustment after a loss, especially after the death of a loved one. It includes emotional, psychological, and spiritual components.

**C – Complicated Grief** - An intense form of grief lasting longer than expected and interfering with daily life. It may include denial, bitterness, and inability to accept the loss.

**D – Disenfranchised Grief** - Grief not recognized or validated by society. Examples: death of a former spouse, miscarriage, or death from suicide.

**E – Emotional Flashback** - A trauma response in which a person experiences intense emotional reactions to present events that unconsciously trigger past trauma.

**F – Fight, Flight, Freeze, Fawn** - The four primary trauma responses. Individuals may react to trauma with aggression (fight), avoidance (flight), paralysis (freeze), or appeasement (fawn).

**G – Grief** - The natural response to any significant loss. It includes emotional, spiritual, and physical reactions, and is deeply rooted in both love and suffering.

**H – Healing** - The process of being made whole after trauma or grief. It includes emotional release, spiritual renewal, and reconnection to hope. *KJV: Jeremiah 33:6 – “Behold, I will bring it health and cure...”*

**I – Intrusive Thoughts** - Unwanted, distressing thoughts or images often associated with trauma or loss that invade a person’s consciousness.

**J – Journaling** - A therapeutic and spiritual practice of writing one’s thoughts and feelings to process grief or trauma. Often includes prayer or scripture reflections.

**K – Kindling Effect** - A trauma term describing how past unresolved trauma can cause a stronger response to newer, smaller stressors.

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**L – Lament** - A biblical form of crying out to God in sorrow or confusion. It is both a spiritual expression and a method of emotional release. *KJV: Psalm 6:6 – “I water my couch with my tears.”*

**M – Ministry of Presence** - A non-verbal form of grief support where one offers silent companionship to the bereaved without preaching, fixing, or giving advice.

**N – Numbness (Emotional)** - A state in which a person feels disconnected or unable to feel emotions as a protective response to overwhelming grief or trauma.

**O – Overwhelmed** - A common reaction to loss or trauma, in which the capacity to process emotions is diminished or shut down altogether.

**P – PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)** - A psychological condition triggered by experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event, marked by flashbacks, avoidance, and emotional distress.

**Q – Quiet Grief** - Internalized sorrow not spoken or shared, often present in those who feel they must be strong for others or who lack a support system.

**R – Restoration** - God’s divine work in restoring joy, purpose, and identity after devastation. *KJV: Joel 2:25 – “I will restore to you the years...”*

**S – Survivor’s Guilt** - A feeling of guilt experienced by those who survive a traumatic event where others did not, leading to self-blame or shame.

**T – Trigger** - Any sound, smell, place, image, or experience that reminds a person of past trauma or grief, causing a visceral emotional reaction.

**U – Unresolved Grief** - Grief that has not been fully processed, often manifesting in depression, anxiety, chronic sadness, or physical symptoms.

**V – Validation** - The affirmation that a person’s grief or trauma is real and worthy of support. It is essential for emotional and spiritual healing.

**W – Weeping** - An expression of deep emotional pain and release. *KJV: Psalm 30:5 – “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”*

**X – Xenophobia (Trauma-Linked)** - Though typically a fear of strangers or foreigners, trauma survivors may develop exaggerated fears of unknown people or environments due to loss of safety.

**Y – Yearning** - An intense longing or desire to be reunited with what has been lost, whether a person, relationship, or former self.

**Z – Zeal for Life Restored** - The passionate return to purpose and joy after healing from grief and trauma. It marks the completion of a redemptive cycle and a restored connection to divine calling.

## 70 GRIEF & TRAUMA WORDS GLOSSARY

### *Comprehensive Definitions for Spiritual and Emotional Understanding*

1. **Acute Stress Response** The body's immediate reaction to a traumatic event, characterized by shock, confusion, hypervigilance, and emotional overwhelm.
2. **Adjustment Disorder** - A stress-related condition in which emotional or behavioral symptoms develop in response to a life change or stressor.
3. **Anhedonia** - A loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed, often seen in those grieving or traumatized.
4. **Anniversary Reaction** - A recurrence of grief symptoms on the anniversary of a loss or traumatic event.
5. **Attachment** - An emotional bond, often formed in childhood, that influences how we grieve and recover from loss.
6. **Bereavement** The state of having lost someone through death. Bereavement includes the emotional and physical responses that follow such a loss.
7. **Boundaries** - Personal limits set to protect emotional, spiritual, or physical well-being during grief and trauma recovery.
8. **Caregiver Fatigue** - Emotional and physical exhaustion resulting from supporting someone who is grieving or recovering from trauma.
9. **Cognitive Dissonance** - Emotional discomfort from holding conflicting thoughts, often experienced when grieving a difficult or complex relationship.
10. **Collective Grief** - Grief experienced by a community or group after a shared loss or traumatic event.
11. **Compassion Fatigue** - Emotional burnout from prolonged exposure to others' suffering, often seen in ministry and counseling roles.
12. **Complicated Grief** - Grief that is prolonged, intense, and interferes with normal functioning. It may involve denial, numbness, or an inability to move forward after a loss.
13. **Crisis of Faith** - A period of spiritual doubt or disconnection triggered by trauma or deep grief.
14. **Death Anxiety** - Fear or anxiety related to death or dying, often intensified after trauma or bereavement.

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15. **Despair** - A deep sense of hopelessness that can accompany intense or prolonged grief.
16. **Disenfranchised Grief** - Grief that is not acknowledged or supported by society. Examples include miscarriage, loss of a pet, or grieving a relationship that others did not approve of or understand.
17. **Dissociation** - A psychological response to trauma where a person disconnects from thoughts, identity, or reality.
18. **Emotional Numbness** A state in which a person feels detached from emotions as a result of trauma, grief, or overwhelming stress. It may manifest as apathy, indifference, or disconnection.
19. **Empathy** - The ability to understand and share the feelings of others, critical in grief and trauma ministry.
20. **Existential Grief** - Grief tied to questions about life's meaning, purpose, and mortality.
21. **Forgiveness Journey** The process of releasing resentment or bitterness, often essential in grief recovery.
22. **Frozen Grief** - Unexpressed grief that remains buried, creating long-term emotional barriers.
23. **Generational Trauma** - Trauma passed down through families, affecting future generations emotionally and spiritually.
24. **Grace Space** - A spiritual environment where one can process grief freely without judgment, grounded in God's love.
25. **Grief** A deep sorrow and emotional response to loss, particularly the death of a loved one. Grief may also occur due to life transitions, broken relationships, or shattered expectations. *KJV Reference: John 11:35 – "Jesus wept."*
26. **Grief Fatigue** - Physical, emotional, and spiritual exhaustion due to ongoing or intense grieving.
27. **Grief Rituals** - Intentional actions (prayer, journaling, memorials) that honor loss and support healing.
28. **Grief Timeline** A tool used to map out major losses or grief experiences over a person's lifetime to understand patterns, unresolved pain, or recurring emotional wounds.

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29. **Grief Work** The process of actively engaging with grief in order to accept the reality of the loss, express the pain, adjust to life without the person or thing lost, and reinvest in the future.
30. **Guilt (False vs. True)** - True guilt arises from wrongdoing; false guilt emerges from unrealistic self-blame often seen in grief.
31. **Helplessness** - A common trauma response where one feels powerless to change or influence outcomes.
32. **Hidden Grief** - Unseen or suppressed grief often masked by productivity or denial.
33. **Hope Anchor** A spiritual metaphor describing the steadfast confidence in God's promises amid grief and trauma. *KJV Reference: Hebrews 6:19 – “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul...”*
34. **Hope Deferred** - Delay in the realization of one's expectations or desires, often leading to heartache. *KJV: Proverbs 13:12*
35. **Hyperarousal** - A state of increased alertness and anxiety common in PTSD and unresolved trauma.
36. **Identity Shift** - Change in self-perception after a traumatic loss, such as becoming a widow or orphan.
37. **Inner Healing** - Spiritual restoration through prayer, forgiveness, and the Holy Spirit's work in wounded areas.
38. **Isolation** - The withdrawal from others due to grief or emotional pain.
39. **Lament** A passionate expression of grief or sorrow, often directed toward God. Lament is a biblical form of crying out in pain and seeking divine intervention. *KJV Reference: Lamentations 3:19-24*
40. **Liminal Space** - The transitional space between loss and renewal, often where transformation begins.
41. **Loss Aversion** - A psychological tendency to fear loss more than valuing gain, influencing how people process grief.
42. **Memory Triggers** - Objects, sounds, or dates that evoke painful memories tied to trauma or loss.
43. **Ministry of Presence** A spiritual care approach that emphasizes being silently present with someone in grief, rather than trying to fix or give advice. It reflects Jesus' model of compassion. *KJV Reference: Job 2:13 – “So they sat down with him upon the ground... and none spake a word unto him.”*

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44. **Mourner's Bench** - A symbolic or literal place of grieving used in religious settings for prayer and healing.
45. **Mourning** The external expression of grief, often shaped by cultural or religious traditions such as wearing black, attending funerals, or observing periods of silence or prayer.
46. **Night Terror** - Severe nightmares or sleep disturbances related to trauma.
47. **Over functioning** - Taking on excessive responsibility as a coping mechanism for grief or trauma.
48. **Panic Response** - Sudden, intense fear often associated with trauma flashbacks or deep sorrow.
49. **Pastoral Care** - Spiritual guidance and emotional support offered by clergy during grief and trauma.
50. **Perinatal Grief** - Grief following the loss of a pregnancy, infant, or birth dream.
51. **Post-Loss Identity** - The new self that emerges after grief, reshaped by sorrow, survival, and spiritual growth.
52. **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)** A mental health condition triggered by experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event, often marked by flashbacks, nightmares, severe anxiety, and avoidance behaviors.
53. **Prayer of Lament** - A biblical cry of the heart expressing grief to God. *KJV: Psalm 13*
54. **Psychological Safety** - An emotional environment where individuals feel safe to express vulnerability and pain.
55. **Reframing** - A therapeutic practice of seeing a situation differently, often infused with faith for hope.
56. **Regression** - Temporary return to earlier behavior or emotional states under trauma-related stress.
57. **Resilience** The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties and emotional pain. Spiritually, resilience includes trusting in God's power to heal and restore. *KJV Reference: Romans 8:37 – "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us."*
58. **Restoration** The act of being spiritually, emotionally, and mentally renewed after loss or trauma. In biblical terms, it represents God's promise to rebuild what was broken. *KJV Reference: Joel 2:25 – "And I will restore to you the years..."*

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59. **Sacred Pause** - A spiritual discipline of slowing down to acknowledge pain and invite God's comfort.
60. **Safe Space** An environment—physical, emotional, or spiritual—where individuals feel protected, heard, and supported without judgment.
61. **Shame Spiral** A cycle of self-blame and unworthiness often rooted in traumatic experiences.
62. **Silent Grief** - Grief that is not spoken about due to fear, stigma, or cultural norms.
63. **Soul Fragmentation** - Spiritual concept of being internally shattered by trauma, needing divine restoration.
64. **Soul Wound** A term often used to describe deep, spiritual pain resulting from trauma, betrayal, or loss that affects one's identity, sense of worth, and spiritual health.
65. **Survivor's Strength** - The resilience developed after enduring grief and trauma.
66. **Tear Ministry** - Offering one's presence, compassion, or shared weeping as a ministry of healing. *KJV: Romans 12:15 – "Weep with them that weep."*
67. **Trauma** A deeply distressing or disturbing experience that overwhelms an individual's ability to cope. Trauma may be physical, emotional, psychological, or spiritual in nature and often results from abuse, violence, accidents, or witnessing suffering.
68. **Trauma Bond** An unhealthy emotional attachment to an abuser or harmful situation, formed through cycles of abuse, manipulation, or fear.
69. **Trauma-Informed Care** - An approach to ministry and support that acknowledges trauma's impact and prioritizes safety, compassion, and empowerment.
70. **Trigger** An internal or external cue that reminds someone of a traumatic event, leading to distressing emotions, memories, or physical symptoms.