

**Exploring the Impact of Grief on Psychological and Physical Wellbeing: A
Qualitative Study**

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Abstract

Grief is a universal experience that can have serious consequences for people's psychological and physical well-being. While previous research has looked into the impact of grief on these outcomes, there is still a lot to learn about the nuances of people's grief experiences. The purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate the impact of grief on psychological and physical well-being in a group of people who have experienced significant loss. The study will recruit participants through support groups and social media and will collect data about participants' grief experiences through individual interviews or focus groups. The data will be analyzed qualitatively to identify common themes and patterns in the experiences of the participants, as well as individual differences in coping strategies. The findings of this study will provide new insights into how grief affects individuals and may inform interventions to help those who are grieving.

Exploring the Impact of Grief on Psychological and Physical Wellbeing: A Qualitative Study

Experiencing the death of a loved one, particularly in young adults and students, can have profound effects on the life of the bereaved. Especially when it comes to college students, 40% of students have experienced the death of a friend or relative before the age of 18. Common grief reactions include emotions such as sadness, anger, and longing for the deceased person [1]. Across a number of campuses in the United States, the findings are fairly consistent that within a 12-month period, approximately 22–30% of a college student body has experienced death, typically of a family member or of a friend; percentages increase when students are asked if they have lost someone over a 24-month period. Personal growth has been further identified as an outcome arising when the loss challenges an individual's perception of the world. Similar to PTG, it comprises the following five domains: (1) self-perception, (2) increased sense of closeness with others, (3) new possibilities, (4) appreciation for life, and (5) spiritual/existential changes[3]. Qualitative analysis techniques, such as thematic analysis or grounded theory, will be used to analyze the data gathered from the interviews or focus groups. The proposed study may reveal how grieving affects mental and physical health. This study may help us comprehend grief's diverse effects by examining individual experiences. This insight could help build novel grief therapies and support measures.

Literature Review

The rate of college students who experience grief due to loss has been described as a “silent epidemic”. It is estimated that between 22–30% of college students have experienced the death of a family member or friend in the past 12 months [6]. 39–49% of students have experienced loss from death within the past 2 years. Students who are grieving often experience emotional turmoil, academic difficulty, and isolation from their peer groups [4]. In contrast, the years traditionally associated with college (young adulthood) are portrayed as life-affirming and expanding in terms of educational opportunities, intimacy, career plans, and family development. Such developmental tasks and activities seem antithetical to death and loss, and thus rarely are considered significant in the way college student life is managed. Yet, there is mounting evidence that a significant number of students experience the death of loved ones at the same time that they are negotiating the demands of college [7]. Many students do not view themselves as requiring mental health services during their time of grief, despite the finding that students reported their grieving processes to be more difficult, with more sadness, and more prolonged than they expected [4]. Although a number of students may shy away from receiving counseling services to treat their symptoms of grief, they tend to seek out the services of counselors or doctors to help with lack of energy and motivation, inability to concentrate, anxiety, decreased academic performance, chronic pain, and managing insomnia [7]. The profile of college students is changing in a variety of ways, specifically regarding mental health. The World Health Organization (WHO) recently revealed in their WHO World Mental Health International College Student project that mental health disorders among college students are rising. Commonly diagnosed disorders include major depression, mania/hypomania, anxiety, panic, as well as alcohol and drug abuse. Approximately

31% of students met diagnostic criteria for at least one of these disorders. The WHO report also indicated that campuses often do not have the resources to meet the demand for services [8].

Coping Strategies for Grief and Their Effectiveness

Let's talk about Coping mechanisms, they are typically adopted by bereaved students and comprise a mixture of formal and informal methods. Formal methods are defined as those involving the use of professional counseling or psychological services. There are still some reported advantages to students utilizing professional help services, such as the ability to receive a clear diagnosis of one's grieving pattern [24]. Seeking formal help may also provide the opportunity to find specific grief-focused therapies. Conversely, obtaining a diagnosis has been considered negative as it medicalizes grief, which is a natural occurrence [9]. Reasons for informal help-seeking in students include the ability to express grief without fear of judgment, feeling less isolated, and finding validation and normalization of the grief experiences [9]. Whilst informal support methods are more popular in bereaved students, this has not translated into peers and family being well-equipped to provide support. Peers and families willing to provide support may be hindered by their expectation that grief is finite. Consequently, informal support for bereaved students may not be available for as long as they may need it [10].

Impacts of Grief on Psychological and Physical Wellbeing

In addition to academic standing, grief also impacts students' peer group associations and degree of social interaction. grieving students often report feeling isolated and unable to lean on peers and existing relationships for support. Some researchers found that Peers of bereaved students felt they were unable to assist their friend cope and therefore avoided that person. Other findings have shown peers to be fearful of being around a grieving person, and attempt to avoid the person in an effort to ignore the fact that they may lose a loved one, or become wearisome of

the length of time the student has been grieving; further isolating the bereaved student [4]. Self-transformation, or successful identity development, personal growth, and acceptance of the loss, are considered positive outcomes that may be attained through exploration and expression of grief. Creating a space where students are able to express their emotions related to their loss, explore their thoughts about death, and search for meaning in their situation is paramount to successful bereavement outcomes[6]. bereaved students are less likely to be recognized with academic honors and are more likely to have poor academic standing, be on academic probation, and withdraw from school. Additionally, students experiencing loss tend to experience higher rates of insomnia, an inability to maintain concentration on activities, and increased anxiety. As grade point average is an indicator of academic success, this study highlights the impact of grief on grades and the need for support services tailored to those bereaved students who may be struggling academically[11].

Interventions for Supporting Psychological and Physical Wellbeing in Individuals

Counseling psychologists have much to offer in the field of thanatology. We believe the ideological and practical aspects of the discipline of counseling psychology match well with the needs of bereaved individuals. Thanatology is a multidisciplinary field composed of professionals practicing medicine, philosophy, theology, sociology, social work, and psychology. The unifying themes of counseling psychology appear to complement the existing work in the thanatology field. Counseling psychologists have traditionally worked with clients who are experiencing normal problems of living rather than psychotic symptoms. The death of a loved one is arguably one of the quintessential “problems of living.” [12]. A focus on the experience of bereaved college students is a logical and reasonable place for counseling psychology to link with the field of thanatology. Counseling psychologists are highly represented on college and university campuses,

and the discipline has its earliest roots in higher education. The ever-growing diversity of the college student population coupled with the idiosyncratic and highly context-based experiences of grief and mourning would appear to create the type of complex and multifaceted mixture within which counseling psychologists often thrive and subsequently make substantial contributions[12].

Grief Models

Grief models are conceptual frameworks that explain the process of coping with grief and bereavement. They provide a theoretical understanding of how individuals may experience and cope with the loss of a loved one. Contemporary models have been developed to explain the process of coping with grief and bereavement. The Dual Process Model (DPM) and the Meaning Reconstruction and Loss Framework (MRL) are two such models that acknowledge both the negative and positive outcomes of bereavement [13]. DPM describes the grief process as a continuous process involving oscillation between loss-oriented and restoration-oriented work, while the previous approaches assumed bereaved individuals would gradually move away from the pain associated with the loss, leading to its de-prioritization in life [14]. MRL describes the process undertaken by bereaved individuals in rebuilding their understanding of themselves and their environment. It involves sense-making, benefit-finding, and identity-change activities. Encountering stronger levels of distress are believed to interact positively with the amount of reconstruction undertaken within the MRL framework [13]. Identity change refers to adjustments in an individual's self-perception and behavioral characteristics resulting from experiencing loss. Like benefit-finding, the changes experienced are generally considered positive and embody elements of personal growth. However, negative social and personality changes may also occur, impacting the drive to achieve life aspirations. This may also affect the quality of relationships with oneself and others, including with faith [15].

Method

The proposed study will use a qualitative research design to explore the impact of grief on the psychological and physical well-being of bereaved individuals. The proposed study will use a qualitative research design to explore the impact of grief on the psychological and physical well-being of bereaved individuals. This is due to the fact that the purpose of the research is to investigate the subjective experiences of grief and its impact on the mental and physical health of individuals. Exploring subjective experiences and collecting in-depth data on how individuals perceive and experience events are best adapted to qualitative research. The research design would entail undertaking in-depth interviews with participants (Currently the data will be imaginary) who have experienced grief and examining their experiences, coping mechanisms, and how grief has affected their mental and physical health. The interview data will be analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns in the experiences of the participants. The sample size for the study will be determined by selecting participants who have experienced grief and are prepared to share their experiences through purposive sampling. The research will be conducted on a college campus, and participants will be recruited through posters posted in student centers, libraries, and counseling offices. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms will be assigned to participants, and all collected data will be anonymized. Overall, the research design for 'Exploring the Impact of Grief on Psychological and Physical Wellbeing: A Qualitative Study' entails conducting in-depth interviews with a purposive sample of participants and analyzing the data using thematic analysis. The research design is appropriate for the aims and objectives of the study and will provide in-depth insights into the psychological and physical effects of bereavement. The

study will employ a phenomenological methodology, which seeks to comprehend the essence of human experiences as lived and described by the participants.

Here is an imaginary dataset for the study 'Exploring the Impact of Grief on Psychological and Physical Wellbeing: A Qualitative Study':

Participants: 8 individuals between the ages of 50 and 70 who recently lost a parent; 6 females and 2 males; 4 with a bachelor's degree or higher and 4 with a high school diploma or less; and 6 females and 2 males.

Data Collection: Recruitment will be done through social media and online job/school platforms. Participants will be asked to complete an online screening survey to assess their eligibility for the study. Participants who meet the eligibility criteria will be invited to participate in a semi-structured interview. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants prior to the interview. Interviews will be conducted in person or through video conferencing, based on the participant's preference. Each interview will last between 60-90 minutes. The interview questions will be designed to explore the participants' experiences with stress, including the types of stress they have encountered, the sources of stress, and their coping mechanisms. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed for analysis. The data will be analyzed using a thematic analysis approach to identify key themes and patterns in the participants' responses. Any personal information collected during the study will be kept confidential, and all data will be anonymized to ensure participant privacy. Overall, the aim of this research proposal is to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of stress on individuals' psychological and physical well-being. The proposed methodology is designed to ensure that the data collected is rich and detailed, allowing for a thorough analysis of the participants' experiences with stress.

Several measures will be taken to reduce bias and increase the validity of the results in order to guarantee the data's quality. First, the semi-structured interview questions will be devised based on a comprehensive review of the pertinent literature, ensuring that they are grounded in the existing research on stress and coping. In addition, the interview questions will be pre-tested with a limited sample of participants to ensure their clarity and relevance.

In addition, we will receive training in qualitative interviewing and thematic analysis in order to ensure that the data collection and analysis procedures are carried out effectively. In order to increase the dependability of the results, inter-rater reliability tests will be conducted to evaluate the consistency of coding across numerous researchers. To ensure that the participants feel at ease and are willing to share their experiences, the researcher will establish a rapport with them prior to the interview and allow them to ask any questions they may have about the study. In addition, the participants will be informed that their participation is voluntary and that they may disengage from the study at any time without repercussions. Twenty participants are an appropriate sample size for a qualitative study because it will allow for a comprehensive analysis of the data while keeping the process of data collection and analysis manageable. The proposed methodology is intended to collect comprehensive and abundant data on the stress experiences of individuals while ensuring that the data are collected and analyzed in an ethical and rigorous manner. The findings of this study will contribute to the existing literature on stress and coping, and they may have implications for the development of interventions to assist individuals who experience daily stress.

Ethical considerations are an essential aspect of any research project, and it is essential to address these concerns when conducting research with human participants. This study will adhere to the ethical guidelines set forth by the American Psychological Association (APA) and ensure

that all participants provide informed consent. Participants in this study will be made aware that their participation is voluntary, and they will be informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks and benefits. Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained throughout the study, and all data will be kept secure and accessible only to the research team. Participants will be informed that they can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The study will not include vulnerable populations, such as minors, individuals with cognitive or intellectual disabilities, or individuals who may be at risk of harm due to their participation in the study. Any potential risks to participants will be minimized, and the study will not involve any invasive procedures or interventions that could harm participants. Any potential conflicts of interest will be disclosed and addressed, and the research team will ensure that the study is conducted in an unbiased and impartial manner. The study will adhere to the principles of research ethics, including respect for persons, beneficence, and justice, and any ethical concerns that arise will be addressed promptly and transparently.

Proposed Analyses

The proposed analyses of the given data will employ grounded theory, a well-established method for investigating and comprehending complex phenomena. The purpose of grounded theory is to identify patterns and themes that arise from the data through a process of iterative data collection and analysis. This method is particularly well-suited for qualitative research because it permits an in-depth exploration of the experiences and perspectives of participants.

The first step in the analysis process will be to transcribe the semi-structured interviews verbatim. This will involve carefully listening to the audio recordings and transcribing the interviews word-for-word. The transcripts will then be reviewed and checked for accuracy.

Once the transcripts have been prepared, the next step will be to immerse oneself in the data. This will involve reading and re-reading the transcripts multiple times to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences with grief. The researcher will also take notes and develop memos to aid in the analysis process.

The next step in the analysis will be to use open coding to identify and categorize concepts and themes that emerge from the data. This will involve a process of line-by-line coding, with codes being developed from the text and then grouped into categories. The categories will then be refined and revised as additional data is collected and analyzed. The researcher will use their own insights and expertise to identify relevant themes and patterns that emerge from the data.

After the initial coding process, axial coding will be used to develop relationships between the categories and to identify themes and sub-themes. This will involve linking codes together to create larger categories and identifying the relationships between them. This will help to identify the overarching themes and patterns that emerge from the data.

Finally, selective coding will be used to identify the most important themes and sub-themes that emerge from the data. This will involve focusing on the most salient and relevant themes that relate to the research questions and hypotheses of the study. The identified themes and sub-themes will be organized and presented in a clear and concise manner. The proposed analysis will be iterative and ongoing, with the researcher continually revisiting the data to identify new themes and patterns as they emerge. The identified themes and sub-themes will help to inform the development of interventions and support services for individuals who have experienced loss and grief.

In terms of statistical analysis, the proposed study does not involve the use of inferential statistics. Instead, the analysis will be qualitative in nature, with a focus on developing a rich and nuanced understanding of the participants' experiences. The analysis will be guided by the research questions and hypotheses of the study, with the goal of generating insights that can inform clinical practice and future research in this area.

The analysis will be iterative, with multiple rounds of coding and interpretation to ensure the accuracy and validity of the findings. The results will be presented in a comprehensive report that outlines the key themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data, including quotes from participants to illustrate their experiences.

The logic behind the selected statistical significance level is that the study uses a qualitative approach that aims to understand the participants' experiences, rather than testing a specific hypothesis. As such, statistical significance is not relevant to this study. The expected effect size is qualitative in nature, with the aim of developing a detailed and comprehensive understanding of the impact of grief on psychological and physical wellbeing.

Conclusion

The study conducted by experts in the field of psychology suggests that social support, self-care, and meaning making play an important role in coping with grief and maintaining psychological and physical well-being. To provide detailed insight, social support pertains to the network of family, friends, and colleagues that provide assistance during the grieving process. Self-care, on the other hand, involves taking care of oneself through activities such as exercise, meditation, and a healthy diet. Lastly, meaning-making is the process of finding meaning or purpose in life after the loss of a loved one. The findings of the study highlight the importance of providing adequate resources and support to individuals who are experiencing grief. These resources and support may include counseling, therapy, support groups, and other interventions that can help individuals cope with the loss of a loved one.

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