



GROWING THROUGH CHANGE: GRIEF RESOURCES

Grief is the response to a loss or separation from someone or something that held great meaning for you. Significant change, including the loss of place, is unique and it's important to understand how people might respond to that grief. Often, one of the trickiest things is that change is not always perceived as a loss, even to the person who is going through it. Therefore, the responses tend to be varied and sometimes shrouded in an additional layer of shame or guilt over having such a response. Fear and anxiety over the unknown, or anticipatory grief, is a common experience of change. Below are tips and resources for coping with grief, helping to manage fear, and providing leadership.

COPING WITH GRIEF

Tips for listening with heart to those who are experiencing grief:

- Avoid pitfalls such as: defensiveness, shaming, faking fine, spinning their response to something positive ("At least..."), or making it about yourself.
- Remember the basics of listening and caring skills: reflecting back what they say to you, check-in to make sure you understand correctly, validate emotions, and affirm that any way they are feeling is accepted (create psychological safety by assuring them it's safe to feel that way).

Resources:

- [Priya Parker](#) gives practical suggestions and additional resources for working with collective grief.
- [Whats your Grief - A Grief Website for the Rest of Us](#)
- Healing Grounds: One-on-One Grief support for all types of loss (320-493-8472).
- Local resources, such as [Center for Life Transitions](#) in St. Cloud, offer regular grief share events.

If St. Cloud is out of reach for your community, you're encouraged to look for more local

resources. Please reach out if you need help finding them.

- The Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers offers a grief support page: <https://catholicmhm.org/grief-support>
- Many parishes have grief support or accompaniment ministries, such as Stephen Ministries, Redbird Ministries or other bereavement groups. Reach out!



MANAGING FEAR

Tips for coping with fear and anxiety:

- Recognize symptoms of anxiety: excessive worry, edginess, fatigue, sleep difficulty, etc.
- Accept that you cannot control everything; identify the things that you can control.

- Encourage attention to physical needs (exercise, a healthy diet, and good sleep practices).
- Make connections with your closest relationships and talk about your experience.

Resources:

- This [short video](#) discusses empathy around the fear of change.



LEADING THROUGH CHANGE

Tips for Leading Through Change:

- Focus on reducing uncertainty by being a clear, honest, and timely communicator. When people hear no news, they assume the worst. Be accessible to people as much as possible. Provide direction, encouraging an optimistic focus on solutions rather than problems.
- Utilize rituals to help create a sense of structure and safety.
- Bring in outside support persons if needed to help.

Resources:

- [Managing Transition](#) with Patrick Lencioni clarifies how change is not what's challenging, it's the internal psychological process that people go through during times of transition that is hard.
- Recognize the [Six Central Needs of Mourning](#), and assess if and how your faith community is making space for these needs around parish changes.
- This [Our Sunday Visitor](#) article shares 6 helpful tips for healing after parish mergers or closures, based on other dioceses' experiences with substantial change.
- The [Kubler-Ross Change Curve](#) is a framework for understanding the emotional journey people experience during times of change.

