



WESTERCOVE™ RESEARCH AND PRINCIPLES

The Guiding Principles

The beliefs at the guiding principles of Westercove™, grounded in research

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Here for you when the world goes quiet.

ABOUT WESTERCOVE

What Westercove™ is

Westercove™ is an interactive digital grief wellness companion combining grief education, guided journaling, and personalized support to help adults understand what they are experiencing and to put language around that which they may not yet know how to explain.

Education. Reflection. Language for what hurts.

Support for grief after death and for losses that may remain unseen.

Westercove™ supports four types of grief: death of someone you love, caring for someone slipping away, the death of a beloved animal, or losing part of your own life through health, marriage, career, identity, or role.

Westercove™ is designed on guiding principles grounded in research. The eighteen that follow are those principles, each one paired with the evidence behind it.

Westercove™ does not replace therapy or medical care. It fills the hours around them.



VISION AND MISSION

What we built

VISION

A world where every griever has access to safe, trustworthy, and compassionate support, every loss is recognized, and people are empowered to carry grief while continuing to live with connection, meaning, and agency.

MISSION

Westercove™ helps adults understand, express, and adjust to loss through credible grief education, guided reflection, and responsive, private support. Westercove™ honors every form and pattern of grief, remains available whenever grief arises, and works alongside professional and community care.

Here for you when the world goes quiet.

PURPOSE AND EVIDENCE STANDARD

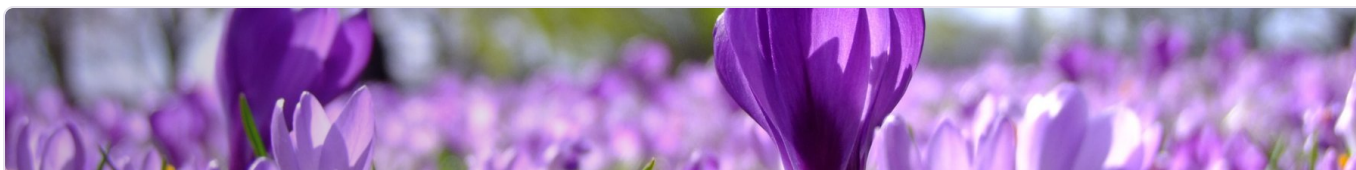
What this document is

Westercove™ rests on eighteen guiding principles. Each one is something we hold true. Each one came from published research rather than preference. And each one changes something a griever can point to inside the product.

Every principle is stated in three parts: the belief we hold, Supporting Research, and Westercove™ Principle in Practice. APA formatted in text citations connect every research statement to the complete source listed on the same page.

Westercove™ is a companion that works alongside human care. It does not diagnose, and it replaces neither a therapist, physician, nor grief counselor. The service is for adults.

Eighteen beliefs. Current research. Visible product decisions.



AT A GLANCE

The eighteen principles

Each principle connects a belief about grief with current research and a visible decision inside Westercove™.

- | | | | |
|----|--|----|--|
| 01 | Learning about grief helps a person carry it. | 02 | Finding words for an experience helps bring it into focus. |
| 03 | Being received matters as much as expression. | 04 | Grief can change the world a person thought they knew. |
| 05 | Connection can continue after death. | 06 | Grief unfolds a rhythm unique to each griever. |
| 07 | Grief does not require permission. | 08 | Grief can be expressed through thought, feeling, or action. |
| 09 | Grief can begin long before the death. | 10 | Grief can begin while a loss is still taking shape. |
| 11 | A hard date met in advance lands differently. | 12 | A mind carrying grief deserves clarity. |
| 13 | Safety must shape every grief support experience. | 14 | Grief support and clinical care can work together. |
| 15 | Grief support keeps office hours, grief does not. | 16 | Trust in privacy supports honest expression. |
| 17 | A shareable grief summary helps grievers bring their experience into care conversations. | 18 | Credible grief education should be available to everyone who needs it. |



01

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 01

Learning about grief helps a person carry it.**SUPPORTING RESEARCH**

Grief literacy gives people the knowledge and skills to understand their own grief and respond compassionately to grief in others. Meaning making also helps grievers integrate loss into their lives rather than simply endure it (Breen et al., 2022; Valentine, 2019).

WESTERCOVE™ PRINCIPLE IN PRACTICE

Westercove™ builds grief literacy by helping grievers understand what they are experiencing and develop language for what may be difficult to explain. Its Grief Library provides thoughtfully selected resources, explains why each resource or practice is offered, and identifies books and authors for those who wish to continue learning about the grief experience.

SOURCES AND PERMANENT LINKS

Breen, L. J., Kawashima, D., Joy, K., Cadell, S., Roth, D., Chow, A., & Macdonald, M. E. (2022). Grief literacy: A call to action for compassionate communities. *Death Studies*, 46(2), 425-433. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2020.1739780>

Valentine, C. (2019). Meaning-making in bereavement and grief. *Bereavement Care*, 38(1), 42-45. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02682621.2019.1587850>

02

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 02

Finding words for an experience helps bring it into focus.**SUPPORTING RESEARCH**

Expressive writing can reduce grief related distress, and structured online writing can support grieving adults through a screen. These findings support writing as a meaningful avenue for processing disrupted identity and loss (Yao et al., 2025; Zheng et al., 2026).

WESTERCOVE™ PRINCIPLE IN PRACTICE

Westercove™ helps grievers put language around what they may not yet be able to articulate for themselves. Through guided writing, spoken reflection, personalized responses, and content grounded in documented grief research, Westercove™ validates the grief experience without scoring, judging, or measuring expression against a prescribed way of grieving.

SOURCES AND PERMANENT LINKS

Yao, D., Xu, S., Liu, J., Gai, Y., & Li, J. (2025). Expressive writing for grief: A meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *Research on Social Work Practice*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10497315251371566>

Zheng, J., Yao, D., & Li, J. (2026). Writing about the disrupted self: A randomized controlled trial of a structured online expressive writing intervention for bereaved Chinese adults. *BMC Palliative Care*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12904-026-02210-0>



03

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 03

Being received matters as much as expression.**SUPPORTING RESEARCH**

Sharing an emotional experience becomes meaningful through the response it receives. Perceived listener reactions influence the value of emotional sharing, including when grief support is sought online (Buehler & Youngvorst, 2022; Reynolds Kueny & Shoss, 2021; Rimé, 2018).

WESTERCOVE™ PRINCIPLE IN PRACTICE

Westercove™ recognizes being received as an essential part of expression. It holds a responsive conversation with the griever by acknowledging and reflecting what they shared, asking thoughtful questions, and inviting them to explore what feels most important rather than merely recording and storing their words.

SOURCES AND PERMANENT LINKS

Buehler, E. M., & Youngvorst, L. J. (2022). Online support-seeking in the context of grief: How support-seeking message content and communication channels shape support providers' impressions of the bereaved. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 137, 107428. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2022.107428>

Reynolds-Kueny, C., & Shoss, M. K. (2021). Sensemaking and negative emotion sharing: Perceived listener reactions as interpersonal cues driving workplace outcomes. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 36(3), 461-478. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-020-09686-4>

Rimé, B. (2018). Social integration and health: Contributions of the social sharing of emotion at the individual, interpersonal, and collective level. *Emotion Review*, 10(1), 67-70. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073917719330>

04

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 04

Grief can change the world a person thought they knew.**SUPPORTING RESEARCH**

Research on the assumptive world concept examines how people's fundamental beliefs about safety, meaning, and their own worth help life feel predictable. A death can disrupt those beliefs, and a weaker belief in a meaningful world is associated with greater grief and distress. The effects differ by the circumstances of the death, so not every loss touches every assumption in the same way (Currier et al., 2009; Matthews & Marwit, 2004; Schwartzberg & Janoff Bulman, 1991).

WESTERCOVE™ PRINCIPLE IN PRACTICE

Westercove™ provides guided reflection and grief education for griever whose loss has unsettled their sense of self, safety, trust, fairness, or the future. These features help griever name what has changed, explore what it means to them, and find ways to live with loss that support stability and well being.

SOURCES AND PERMANENT LINKS

Currier, J. M., Holland, J. M., & Neimeyer, R. A. (2009). Assumptive worldviews and problematic reactions to bereavement. *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, 14(3), 181-195. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15325020802537153>

Matthews, L. T., & Marwit, S. J. (2004). Examining the assumptive world views of parents bereaved by accident, murder, and illness. *OMEGA: Journal of Death and Dying*, 48(2), 115-136. <https://doi.org/10.2190/kcb0-nnvb-ugy6-npyr>

Schwartzberg, S. S., & Janoff-Bulman, R. (1991). Grief and the search for meaning: Exploring the assumptive worlds of bereaved college students. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 10(3), 270-288. <https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.1991.10.3.270>



05 GUIDING PRINCIPLE 05

Connection can continue after death.

SUPPORTING RESEARCH

Continuing bonds are part of the experience of griever with and without prolonged grief disorder. Remembering someone who died while maintaining that connection may also be associated with personal growth. A continuing bond, on its own, does not indicate a problem that needs to be resolved (Keser et al., 2026; Wolf et al., 2024).

WESTERCOVE™ PRINCIPLE IN PRACTICE

Westercove™ includes ways for griever to maintain a connection with a person or beloved animal who died. Grievers can write letters, revisit memories, reflect on signs, and explore what that relationship means in their lives now, at their own pace.

SOURCES AND PERMANENT LINKS

Keser, E., Karaçalık, I. B., Öztaylan, B. N., Tiryaki-Güven, S., & Türkistan, B. (2026). Perceptions of internal and external continuing bonds in bereaved individuals with and without prolonged grief disorder. *Death Studies*, 50(5), 706-714. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2025.2454486>

Wolf, T., Nusser, L., & Cappeliez, P. (2024). How reminiscing about deceased close others together with continuing bonds relates to grief severity and personal growth: A cross-sectional study with bereaved adults. *Aging & Mental Health*, 28(7), 1020-1028. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13607863.2024.2301737>

06 GUIDING PRINCIPLE 06

Grief unfolds at a rhythm unique to each griever.

SUPPORTING RESEARCH

The dual process model describes adaptation to loss as movement between attending to the loss and attending to ongoing life. Research suggests that this movement varies from one griever to another, rather than following a fixed sequence of stages (Fiore, 2021; Larsen et al., 2025).

WESTERCOVE™ PRINCIPLE IN PRACTICE

Westercove™ enables griever to choose what to explore and when, without assigning stages or timelines. They may write about anniversaries, memories, signs, emotions, struggles, gratitude, forgiveness, letters, or questions. This freedom allows each griever to move between attending to loss and attending to ongoing life in their own way, a movement Westercove™ calls the rhythm of living.

SOURCES AND PERMANENT LINKS

Fiore, J. (2021). A systematic review of the dual process model of coping with bereavement (1999-2016). *OMEGA: Journal of Death and Dying*, 84(2), 414-458. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0030222819893139>

Larsen, L. H., Hybholt, L., & O'Connor, M. (2025). Lived experience and the dual process model of coping with bereavement: A participatory research study. *Death Studies*, 49(6), 743-754. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2024.2355244>



07 GUIDING PRINCIPLE 07

Grief does not require permission.

SUPPORTING RESEARCH

Disenfranchised grief is grief that is not openly acknowledged, socially validated, or publicly mourned. Recent studies document the burden of unrecognized losses and the stigma directed toward grief that falls outside accepted social expectations (Marton et al., 2020; Sarper & Rodrigues, 2025).

WESTERCOVE™ PRINCIPLE IN PRACTICE

Westercove™ validates grief that families, workplaces, institutions, or communities may minimize or fail to recognize. This includes grief connected to the death of a beloved animal, caregiving for someone who is slipping away, and losses involving health, marriage, career, identity, or role. Grievors are welcome to seek support without having to justify the significance of their loss.

SOURCES AND PERMANENT LINKS

Marton, B., Kilbane, T., & Nelson-Becker, H. (2020). Exploring the loss and disenfranchised grief of animal care workers. *Death Studies*, 44(1), 31-41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2018.1519610>

Sarper, E., & Rodrigues, D. L. (2025). The stigmatization of prolonged grief disorder and disenfranchised grief: A vignette-based experimental study. *Death Studies*, 49(5), 535-545. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2024.2340726>

08 GUIDING PRINCIPLE 08

Grief can be expressed through feeling, thought, or action.

SUPPORTING RESEARCH

Research supports both intuitive and instrumental grief patterns. Intuitive grief is often experienced and expressed through emotion, while instrumental grief may appear through thought, physical energy, problem solving, or action. Both patterns can be adaptive and are not determined by gender (Gamino et al., 2020).

WESTERCOVE™ PRINCIPLE IN PRACTICE

Westercove™ validates grief in all its forms, including expressions others may overlook. Grief may appear through feelings and tears, or through thinking, creating, organizing, planning, problem solving, and purposeful action. Westercove™ helps grievors recognize and honor their own patterns of expression and find ways to grieve that feel natural and supportive.

SOURCES AND PERMANENT LINKS

Gamino, L. A., Sewell, K. W., Prosser-Dodds, L., & Hogan, N. S. (2020). Intuitive and instrumental grief: A study of the reliability and validity of the Grief Pattern Inventory. *OMEGA: Journal of Death and Dying*, 81(4), 532-550. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0030222818786403>



09

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 09

Grief can begin long before the death.**SUPPORTING RESEARCH**

Grief can begin while a loved one is living with cognitive or physical decline, including dementia. This grief is part of the loss itself, rather than a rehearsal for what may follow. Research among dementia caregivers suggests that grief before death can predict more intense grief after death, while support and responses from others can shape the experience (Chaudhry et al., 2025; Cheng et al., 2019; Ng et al., 2025).

WESTERCOVE™ PRINCIPLE IN PRACTICE

Westercove™ creates a warm and accepting environment for four types of grief: the death of someone loved, caring for a loved one who is slipping away, the death of a beloved animal, or the loss of part of one's own life. By including grief that begins before a death or final separation, Westercove™ provides caregivers and families a safe space to acknowledge and explore loss while it is still unfolding.

SOURCES AND PERMANENT LINKS

- Chaudhry, I., Andres, E. B., Poco, L., Balasubramanian, I., & Malhotra, C. (2025). Pre-death grief increases post-death grief among dementia caregivers. *Journal of the American Medical Directors Association*, 26(7), 105622. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jamda.2025.105622>
- Cheng, S. T., Ma, D. Y., & Lam, L. C. W. (2019). A brief measure of predeath grief in dementia caregivers: The Caregiver Grief Questionnaire. *International Psychogeriatrics*, 31(8), 1099-1107. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1041610219000309>
- Ng, Y. H., Jiao, K., Suen, M. H. P., Wang, J., & Chow, A. Y. M. (2025). The role of the social environment on dementia caregivers' pre-death grief: A mixed-methods systematic review. *Death Studies*, 49(4), 359-378. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2024.2329755>

10

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 10

Grief can begin while a loss is still taking shape.**SUPPORTING RESEARCH**

Ambiguous loss occurs when a person is physically present but psychologically absent, or physically absent but psychologically present. Without confirmation or ritual closure, grief may remain open and socially unsupported, yet it remains a genuine experience of loss (Nathanson & Rogers, 2021; Testoni et al., 2023).

WESTERCOVE™ PRINCIPLE IN PRACTICE

Westercove™ recognizes losses that do not have a clear ending, confirmed outcome, or socially recognized moment of closure. A griever does not need a death, a date, or a completed ending for the loss to count, and is never required to describe an unresolved experience as finished before receiving support.

SOURCES AND PERMANENT LINKS

- Nathanson, A., & Rogers, M. (2021). When ambiguous loss becomes ambiguous grief: Clinical work with bereaved dementia caregivers. *Health & Social Work*, 45(4), 268-275. <https://doi.org/10.1093/hsw/hlaa026>
- Testoni, I., Biancalani, G., Ronconi, L., Pedrini, A., Romanelli, S., & Melendugno, A. (2023). Ambiguous loss and disenfranchised grief in formal caregivers of people with dementia: Effectiveness of a training intervention with psychodrama. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 85, 102037. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2023.102037>

11

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 11

A hard date met in advance lands differently.**SUPPORTING RESEARCH**

Preparing for an anticipated stressor can shape how a person experiences it when it arrives. Research also links planning ahead with greater wellbeing and fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety. Together, these findings offer a rationale for helping griever prepare for difficult dates (Raper & Brough, 2021; Serrano et al., 2021).

WESTERCOVE™ PRINCIPLE IN PRACTICE

Westercove™ helps griever prepare for anniversaries, birthdays, holidays, and other difficult dates. By looking ahead, griever have time to consider what they may need, whom they might turn to, and how they want to spend the day.

SOURCES AND PERMANENT LINKS

Raper, M. J., & Brough, P. (2021). Seeing into the future: The role of future-oriented coping and daily stress appraisal in relation to a future stressor. *Stress and Health*, 37(1), 186-197. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smi.2984>

Serrano, C., Andreu, Y., Greenglass, E., & Murgui, S. (2021). Future-oriented coping: Dispositional influence and relevance for adolescent subjective wellbeing, depression, and anxiety. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 180, 110981. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2021.110981>

12

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 12

A mind carrying grief deserves clarity.**SUPPORTING RESEARCH**

Working memory is limited and can be overwhelmed when information places too many demands on it. Instruction becomes more usable when it respects those limits, a particularly important consideration when grief has already consumed attention and concentration (Sweller et al., 2019).

WESTERCOVE™ PRINCIPLE IN PRACTICE

Westercove™ reduces cognitive demands by presenting one question at a time and providing a thoughtfully curated library instead of an open search box. Generous white space, brief passages, and calm pacing make information easier to use when grief has strained concentration, memory, or decision making.

SOURCES AND PERMANENT LINKS

Sweller, J., van Merriënboer, J. J. G., & Paas, F. (2019). Cognitive architecture and instructional design: 20 years later. *Educational Psychology Review*, 31(2), 261-292. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-019-09465-5>



13

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 13

Safety must shape every grief support experience.

SUPPORTING RESEARCH

Trauma informed care places safety, trust, choice, collaboration, and empowerment at the center of support. Research suggests these principles should guide the experience from the first interaction and remain present throughout it (Guest, 2021).

WESTERCOVE™ PRINCIPLE IN PRACTICE

Westercove™ builds safety into every part of the experience. Crisis resources remain visible on every screen, and clear boundaries keep its responses within its role. Grievors retain access to everything they write and can step away whenever they choose, without penalty.

SOURCES AND PERMANENT LINKS

Guest, H. (2021). A concept analysis of trauma-informed care. *Nursing Forum*, 56(4), 1000-1007. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nuf.12626>

14

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 14

Grief support and clinical care can work together.

SUPPORTING RESEARCH

Most grief is not a clinical disorder, while a meaningful minority of grieving adults experience prolonged grief disorder and may need clinical treatment. A responsible grief tool must support ordinary grief while helping people recognize when professional care may be warranted (Comtesse et al., 2024; Lundorff et al., 2017).

WESTERCOVE™ PRINCIPLE IN PRACTICE

Westercove™ does not replace therapy or medical care. It fills the hours around them. Westercove™ is a grief wellness companion that provides education, guided journaling, and personalized support, and it encourages grievors to connect with clinicians and support groups while also sharing guidance from books, authors, and research that may deepen their understanding or provide additional support.

SOURCES AND PERMANENT LINKS

Comtesse, H., Smid, G. E., Rummel, A., Spreeuwenberg, P., Lundorff, M., & Dückers, M. L. A. (2024). Cross-national analysis of the prevalence of prolonged grief disorder. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 350, 359-365. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2024.01.094>

Lundorff, M., Holmgren, H., Zachariae, R., Farver-Vestergaard, I., & O'Connor, M. (2017). Prevalence of prolonged grief disorder in adult bereavement: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 212, 138-149. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2017.01.030>



15

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 15

Grief support keeps office hours, grief does not.**SUPPORTING RESEARCH**

Grieving people use digital tools when grief arises, often outside service hours, and value choosing when and how to engage. Many people experiencing substantial grief related distress never reach formal support, making accessibility beyond office hours consequential (Cook, 2025; Tureluren et al., 2022).

WESTERCOVE™ PRINCIPLE IN PRACTICE

Westercove™ is available 24 hours a day because grief does not follow a schedule. Wherever and whenever support is needed, including at three in the morning, a griever can turn to Westercove™ without scheduling an appointment, navigating a waiting list, or explaining and justifying the loss before beginning.

SOURCES AND PERMANENT LINKS

Cook, S. (2025). Grief, choice and digital technology use: How bereaved people use digital technologies to support their grief. *Mortality*, 30(2), 510-526. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13576275.2025.2451093>

Tureluren, E., Claes, L., & Andriessen, K. (2022). Help-seeking behavior in bereaved university and college students: Associations with grief, mental health distress, and personal growth. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 963839. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.963839>

16

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 16

Trust in privacy supports honest expression.**SUPPORTING RESEARCH**

Privacy concerns are a significant barrier to using digital mental health tools, especially when an employer is involved. Studies also document gaps between what digital applications disclose in privacy policies and what they actually transmit to third parties (Carolan & de Visser, 2018; Huckvale et al., 2019; Parker et al., 2019).

WESTERCOVE™ PRINCIPLE IN PRACTICE

Westercove™ protects the privacy necessary for honest reflection through carefully implemented encryption, security safeguards, and safety protocols. A griever's journal belongs to the griever, and an employer, hospice, faith community, or other organization providing access cannot read what the griever writes. Journal content is not sold, used for advertising, or shared without the griever's direction, and privacy practices are explained in language intended to be understood.

SOURCES AND PERMANENT LINKS

Carolan, S., & de Visser, R. O. (2018). Employees' perspectives on the facilitators and barriers to engaging with digital mental health interventions in the workplace: Qualitative study. *JMIR Mental Health*, 5(1), e8. <https://doi.org/10.2196/mental.9146>

Huckvale, K., Torous, J., & Larsen, M. E. (2019). Assessment of the data sharing and privacy practices of smartphone apps for depression and smoking cessation. *JAMA Network Open*, 2(4), e192542. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2019.2542>

Parker, L., Halter, V., Karliychuk, T., & Grundy, Q. (2019). How private is your mental health app data? An empirical study of mental health app privacy policies and practices. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 64, 198-204. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijlp.2019.04.002>



17

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 17

A shareable grief summary helps griever bring their experiences into care conversations.

SUPPORTING RESEARCH

Structured information reported by patients can improve clinical conversations by surfacing experiences that might otherwise remain unasked. Clinicians find this information most useful when it is summarized and interpretable rather than presented as raw data (Greenhalgh et al., 2018; Jim et al., 2020; Nghiem et al., 2023).

WESTERCOVE™ PRINCIPLE IN PRACTICE

Westercove™ enables a griever to create and download a summary of their grief experience for a therapist, physician, or other member of their care team. The griever remains in control, deciding when to generate the summary and whether to share it. Rather than reducing grief to a score, the summary communicates meaningful experiences and patterns so that more of the appointment can be devoted to care instead of reconstructing what has happened.

SOURCES AND PERMANENT LINKS

- Greenhalgh, J., Gooding, K., Gibbons, E., Dalkin, S., Wright, J., Valderas, J., & Black, N. (2018). How do patient reported outcome measures (PROMs) support clinician-patient communication and patient care? A realist synthesis. *Journal of Patient Reported Outcomes*, 2(1), 42. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41687-018-0061-6>
- Jim, H. S. L., Hoogland, A. I., Brownstein, N. C., Barata, A., Dicker, A. P., Knoop, H., Gonzalez, B. D., Perkins, R., Rollison, D., Gilbert, S. M., Nanda, R., Berglund, A., Mitchell, R., & Johnstone, P. A. S. (2020). Innovations in research and clinical care using patient-generated health data. *CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians*, 70(3), 182-199. <https://doi.org/10.3322/caac.21608>
- Nghiem, J., Adler, D. A., Estrin, D., Livesey, C., & Choudhury, T. (2023). Understanding mental health clinicians' perceptions and concerns regarding using passive patient-generated health data for clinical decision-making: Qualitative semistructured interview study. *JMIR Formative Research*, 7, e47380. <https://doi.org/10.2196/47380>

18

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 18

Credible grief education should be available to everyone who needs it.

SUPPORTING RESEARCH

Grief literacy can be taught and strengthened, yet access to grief knowledge and support is not equally distributed. Racial disparities in exposure to family deaths compound broader social disadvantage, while accessible instructional design helps people use information when cognitive capacity is strained (Breen et al., 2022; Sweller et al., 2019; Umberson et al., 2017).

WESTERCOVE™ PRINCIPLE IN PRACTICE

Westercove™ advances informational equity by making credible grief education understandable, accessible, culturally responsive, and relevant to many forms of loss. Information is presented in calm, manageable portions so that griever can use it even when concentration, memory, and decision making are strained.

SOURCES AND PERMANENT LINKS

- Breen, L. J., Kawashima, D., Joy, K., Cadell, S., Roth, D., Chow, A., & Macdonald, M. E. (2022). Grief literacy: A call to action for compassionate communities. *Death Studies*, 46(2), 425-433. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2020.1739780>
- Sweller, J., van Merriënboer, J. J. G., & Paas, F. (2019). Cognitive architecture and instructional design: 20 years later. *Educational Psychology Review*, 31(2), 261-292. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-019-09465-5>
- Umberson, D., Olson, J. S., Crosnoe, R., Liu, H., Pudrovskaya, T., & Donnelly, R. (2017). Death of family members as an overlooked source of racial disadvantage in the United States. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 114(5), 915-920. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1605599114>



SOURCE RECORD

Foundational Works

These works founded the ideas carried throughout the principles. They are recorded separately because they include books, handbook chapters, and agency guidance rather than only recent peer reviewed journal articles.

Aspinwall, L. G., & Taylor, S. E. (1997). A stitch in time: Self-regulation and proactive coping. *Psychological Bulletin*, 121(3), 417-436.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.121.3.417>

Boss, P. (1999). *Ambiguous loss: Learning to live with unresolved grief*. Harvard University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674028586>

Doka, K. J. (1989). *Disenfranchised grief: Recognizing hidden sorrow*. Lexington Books.

Doka, K. J. (2008). Disenfranchised grief in historical and cultural perspective. In M. S. Stroebe, R. O. Hansson, H. Schut, & W. Stroebe (Eds.), *Handbook of bereavement research and practice* (pp. 223-240). American Psychological Association.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/14498-011>

Doka, K. J., & Martin, T. L. (2024). *Grieving beyond gender: Understanding diverse grieving styles*. Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003368359>

Klass, D., Silverman, P. R., & Nickman, S. L. (Eds.). (1996). *Continuing bonds: New understandings of grief*. Taylor & Francis.
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About Dr. Wesley Carter

Dr. Carter is a technology leader with more than twenty years in enterprise technology, including IBM and Cisco. She holds a Doctor of Management in Organizational Leadership and an MBA, and she is a Lean Six Sigma Black Belt. She is the author of *AI Powered Leadership for Modern Families* (2025).

Dr. Carter's work centers on understanding complex problems, identifying solutions, and improving systems. She founded Westercove™ after the death of her son Justin, a United States Army veteran. The research recorded here was chosen because it describes grief as it is actually lived.

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