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Black Woman Grief: How to Find Hope and Wholeness

ivp

Why This Workshop?

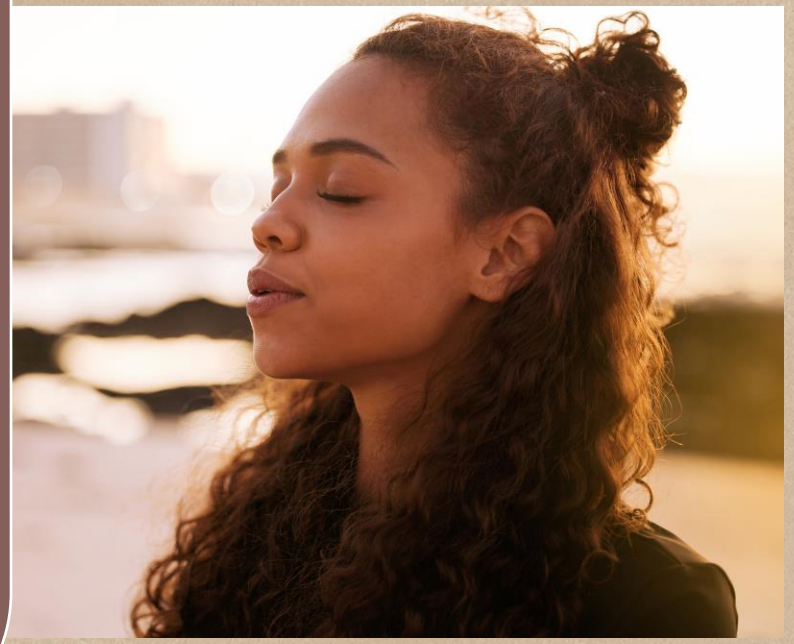
This space honors our humanity, not just our strength. I pray that this workshop will be an exhale for Black women, as well as those who come alongside Black women. Black women need hope and affirmation that healing and wholeness are possible.



What is Black Woman Grief?

Grief is grief.

However, the types of loss Black women experience often differ, making our grief uniquely layered and complex.



Why Does It Matter?



- Black adults in the U.S. are more likely to report sadness and hopelessness than white adults, yet are less likely to receive care.

- Unaddressed grief can contribute to depression, anxiety, PTSD, and health issues.

- Many Black women carry generational grief without support.

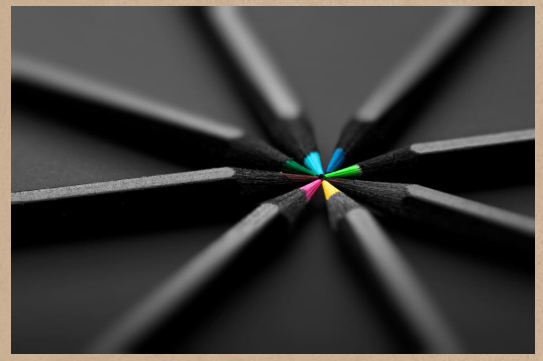
(Source: NAMI, Mental Health America)

Types of Black Woman Grief

Anticipatory



Being Othered



Disenfranchised



Generational/ Communal



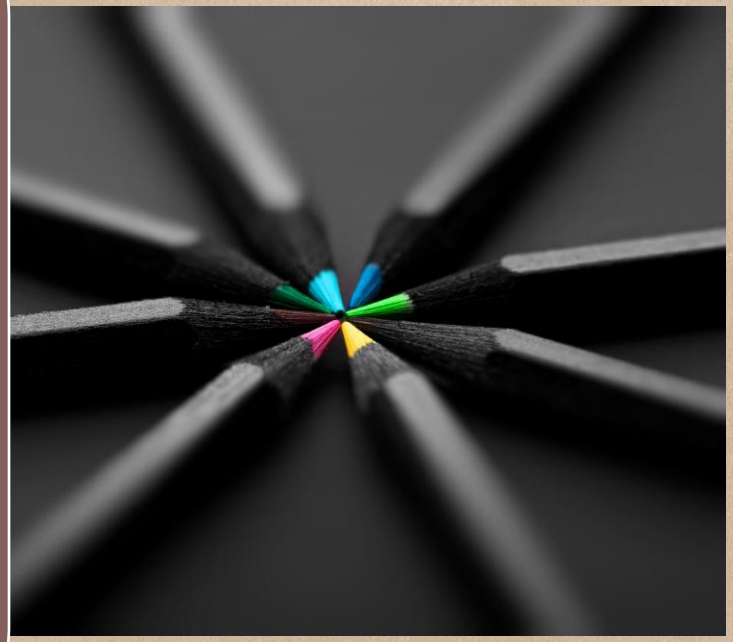
Anticipatory Grief



Anticipatory Grief – the process of grieving that starts before a loved one passes. It is the realization on a conscious or unconscious level that a loss is coming.

Being Othered

Othered – a social process of marginalization through which a person highly values their group while denigrating and excluding anyone from a group different than theirs.



Disenfranchised Grief



Disenfranchised – grief we have silenced because a loss is not deemed worthy by society to be grieved.

Generational/Communal Grief

Generational/Communal - grief rooted in our collective experiences of loss passed down through families or shared within a community.



Grief Mapping Activity

Use this exercise to visually name and acknowledge the grief you may be carrying.

1. Draw a circle in the center of your paper and write "ME."

2. Around it, create four sections labeled:
   - Anticipatory Grief
   - Othered
   - Disenfranchised Grief
   - Generational/Communal Grief

3. In each section, write out what you've experienced or are experiencing in that category.

4. Use words, phrases, or symbols, whatever helps you externalize and name your grief.

- **Anticipatory Grief**: Grief for what's coming or expected (e.g., a diagnosis, decline, major life change).
- **Othered**: a social process of marginalization through which a person highly values their group while denigrating and excluding anyone from a group different than theirs.
- **Disenfranchised Grief**: Grief that society doesn't acknowledge or validate (e.g., miscarriage, estrangement, incarceration).
- **Generational/Communal Grief**: Grief carried through family history, culture, or collective trauma (e.g., racism, systemic injustice).

Common Coping Strategies

- Sojourner Syndrome
- Strong Black Woman
- Superwoman Scheme
- Sisterella Complex



Hope and Wholeness

“I won’t even lie - sometimes hope seems fleeting. But what I’ve come to know is that hope is real. And if and when we grab on to hope, it really can change the trajectory of our lives. Hope matters. So, hold on to hope and don’t let it go.” – Black Woman Grief

Black Women and the Bible

Stories of Grief and Resilience

- Esther
- Eve
- Tamar
- The Samaritan woman
- Naomi



Hope Through Faith

6 Stages of Faith for Black Women

1. Awareness of constant grief
2. Embody spiritual growth through hardship
3. Serving through pain
4. Experiencing a crisis of faith
5. Resisting the culture
6. Inspiring/empowering the next generation

Coping Strategies

Mourning as Rebellion



Rest as Resistance



The Softer Life



Mourning as Rebellion

To grieve well, we must allow ourselves to grieve.



Rest as Resistance



Rest is Holy Work

- Our bodies need rest
- Busyness is a trauma response
- Reasons for rest

The Softer Life

Softer Life vs Hustle Culture

- Managing stress
- Slowing down
- Embracing self-care
- Engaging in soul care



Practical Coping Strategies

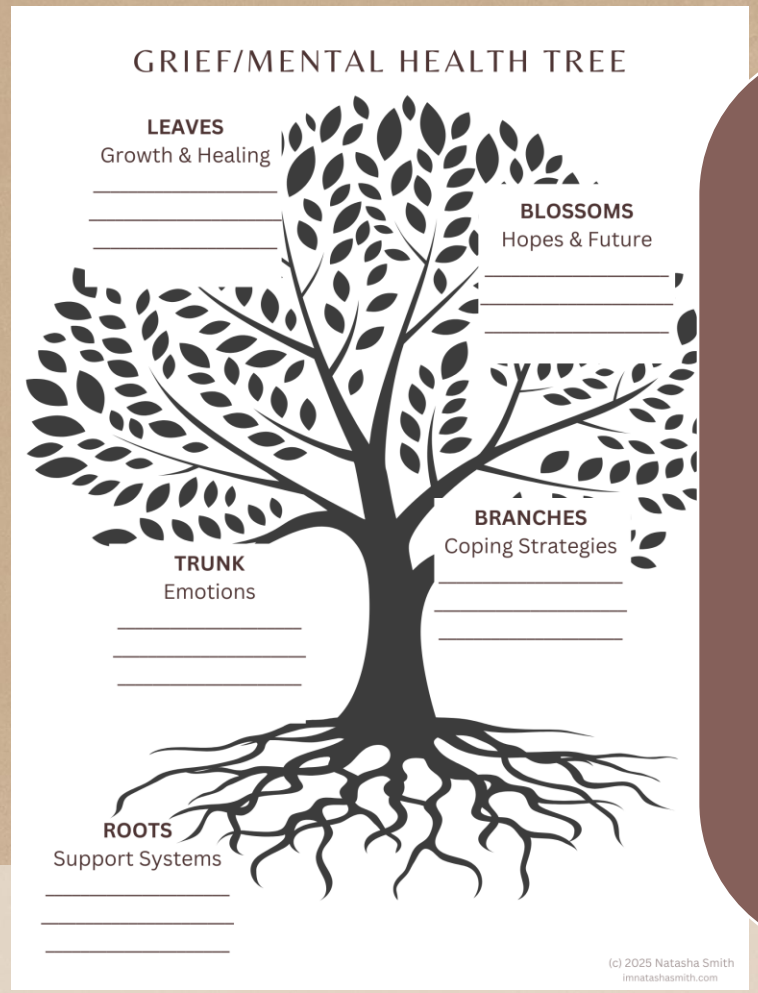


For the mind: Journaling, Engaging in a hobby, Practicing mindfulness, Talking it out with a safe person, community, or therapist/counselor

For the body: Taking a Walk, Yoga, Spa day, massage, Rebounding, Acupuncture mat

For the spirit: Reading the Bible, Prayer and meditation, Worship, Fellowship with other Believers

Grief/Mental Health Tree Activity



Descriptions:

- Roots = support systems (faith, family, therapy, journaling)
- Trunk = Emotions (what you're carrying in grief/mentally)
- Branches = Coping strategies (healthy/unhealthy)
- Leaves = Growth (lessons learned, small steps forward)
- Blossoms = Hopes & Future (honoring your loss, dreams moving forward)

Reflection Questions

1. What does *hope* look like for you in this season, even if it's small?
2. What's one practice or rhythm you can carry forward to nurture wholeness (spiritual, emotional, or physical)?
3. How can you create or lean into community that supports your healing?

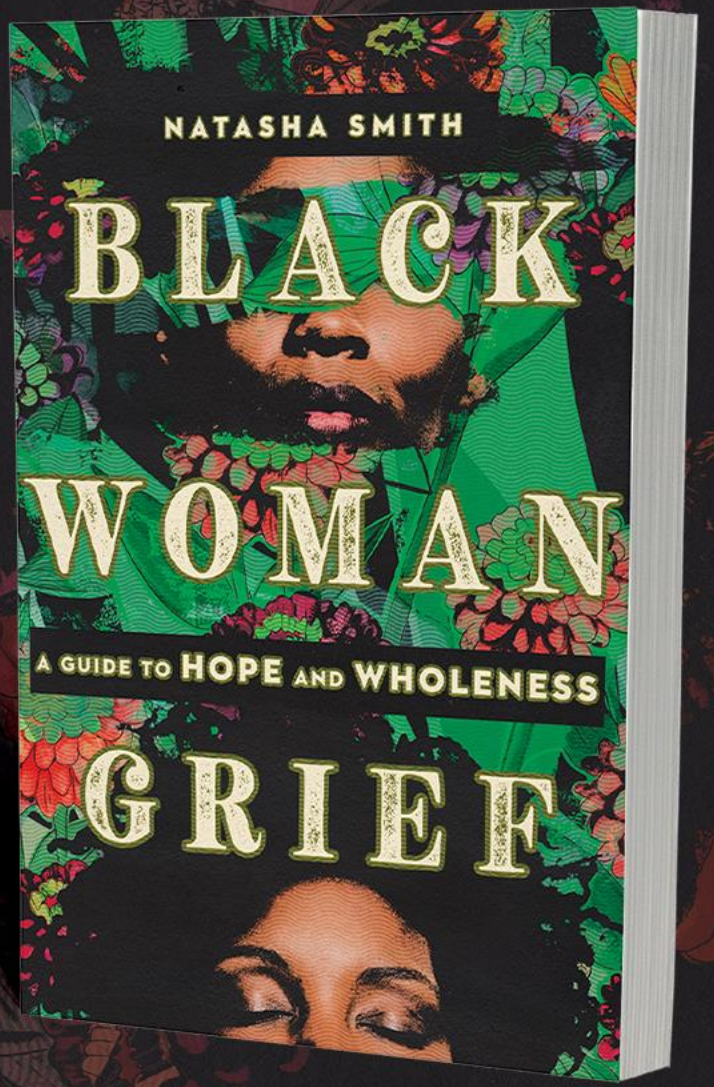


Closing

"Go in freedom, with tearstained cheeks and stability of heart. Feel deeply and honestly, without being consumed. And may God hold fast to you if the tide of despair strengthens its pull, that you could grieve with the gravity you deserve. Amen."

-Cole Arthur Riley

Dear Black Woman,
You are not alone



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