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# Honoring Black Woman Grief: Creating Safety and Emotional Stewardship

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# Why This Workshop?

Black Women need spaces to simply be and to exhale from all we are carrying. This is a safe space for Black women, as well as those who come alongside Black women. This workshop is intended for Black women navigating leadership, ministry, caregiving, and community roles while carrying personal and collective grief.



# Objectives

- Identify personal and collective grief
- Explore faith-informed practices for processing grief
- Explore strategies to create safer spaces
- Integrate actionable tools for sustaining personal wholeness

# Understanding the Weight of Grief

*"The most disrespected person in America is the Black woman. The most unprotected person in America is the Black woman. The most neglected person in America is the Black woman." – **Malcolm X***

# Understanding the Weight of Grief

**Black Woman Grief**

It’s Real. It’s Complex.

Layered with personal loss, historical trauma, and societal expectations that often make it difficult to process.



# Understanding the Weight of Grief



**The Strong Black Woman**

- Research suggests the perception of the physically and psychologically strong Black woman dates to slavery.

- Described as having a strong work ethic while caregiving and sacrificing our wants and needs to support their family and community.

# Understanding the Weight of Grief

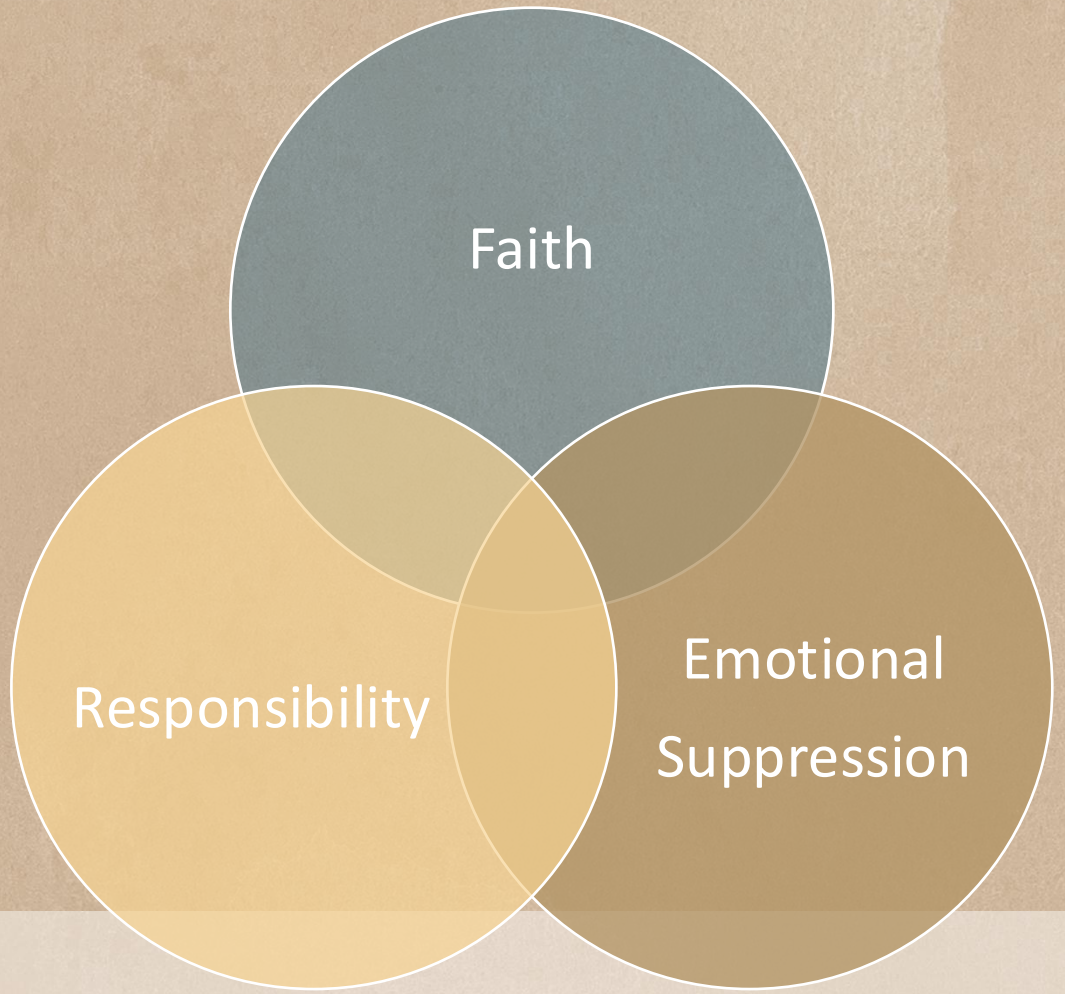


**Racialized Culture Compounds Grief**

- Personal and Collective Grief
- Systemic/Institutional Bias
- Disenfranchised/Racial Trauma
- Intergenerational Impact

# Understanding the Weight of Grief

**The intersection of faith, responsibility, and emotional suppression**



# Understanding the Weight of Grief

**The intersection of faith, responsibility, and emotional suppression**

**Faith** – The Black church and our personal relationship with God historically provide vital comfort and survival.



# Understanding the Weight of Grief

**The intersection of faith, responsibility, and emotional suppression**

Responsibility – the burden of responsibility, going back to the Strong Black Woman trope. The expectation to absorb and do everything at our own expense and demise. Self-sacrifice as duty.



# Understanding the Weight of Grief

**The intersection of faith, responsibility, and emotional suppression**

Emotional Suppression – we often silence our pain. Research has shown we are the highest group least likely to seek support. Partly due to the stigma around therapy. Seeking secular mental healthcare has been faced with condemnation and skepticism.



# Grief Mapping – Where is Your Grief?

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

1. Name
2. Pause and Notice
3. Invite God in

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

- **Personal Grief**: Grief connected to your own experiences, losses, relationships, body, identity, dreams, or seasons of life.
- **Collective**: Grief connected to what your community, family, culture, or people have experienced together.
- **Systemic/Institutional**: Grief connected to injustice, racism, discrimination, exclusion, church hurt, systems that have failed or harmed you or people you love.
- **Intergenerational**: Grief that has been passed through generations—losses, wounds, patterns, stories, or experiences that shape how you carry life today.

# Pause & Reflect

**Where do I feel safest telling the truth about what I'm experiencing, and where do I feel like I have to perform strength?**

# Faith Informed Processing Without Losing Yourself



**Biblical Lament/**

**Permission to Feel**

Lament is a prayer that begins in pain yet ends in hope.

"Jesus wept." –John 11:35

# Faith Informed Processing Without Losing Yourself

**Differentiating**

**Calling From Capacity**

- Calling is the what we believe God has purposed for us to do here on earth for his purpose and for his kingdom. Capacity is our limits.



# Faith Informed Processing Without Losing Yourself



## Boundaries as Spiritual Stewardship

These boundaries are the intentional limits we set to protect and responsibly manage the physical, emotional, and spiritual resources entrusted to us.

# Faith Informed Processing Without Losing Yourself

## Boundaries as Spiritual Stewardship

1. Identify your limits
2. Learn to say no
3. Set consequences
4. Regularly reevaluate
5. Seek Support

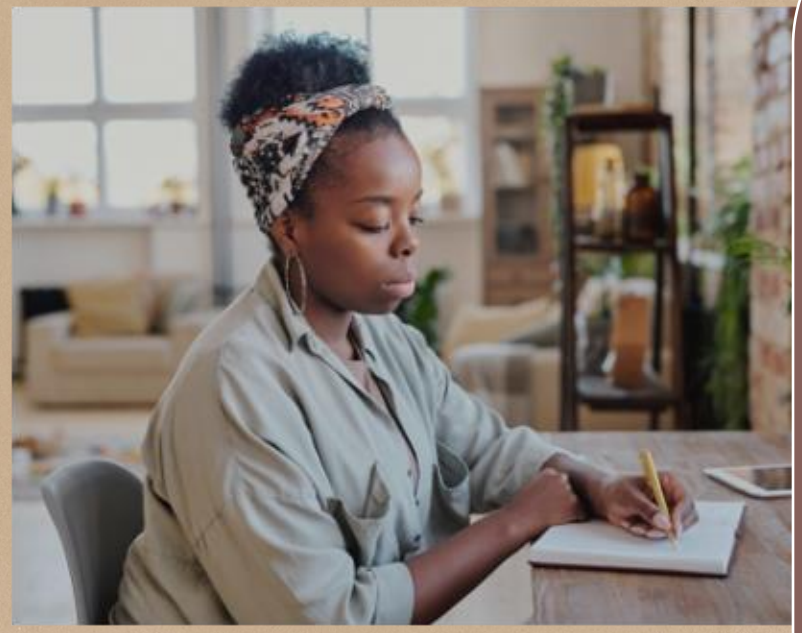


# Creating Safer Spaces



1. Make room for the whole person.
2. Allow honesty about needs.
3. Listen without fixing.
4. Honor boundaries.

# Write a Lament



Lament is the language of grief spoken honestly to God.

- **God, I see…**What are you noticing? What has happened? What hurts?
- **God, I feel…**What emotions are present? What have you been afraid, angry, disappointed, confused, or heartbroken about?
- **God, I wish…**What do you wish were different? What do you wish God would change, repair, restore, or make right?
- **God, I need…**What are you asking for today? What do you need from God as you navigate this grief?

# Sustaining Personal Wholeness

*Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.*

- Isaiah 43:19 ESV

# Sustaining Personal Wholeness

## Behold in Grief

When my soul was in the dumps I remember everything I know of you.

-Psalm 42:6 (MSG)



# Sustaining Personal Wholeness



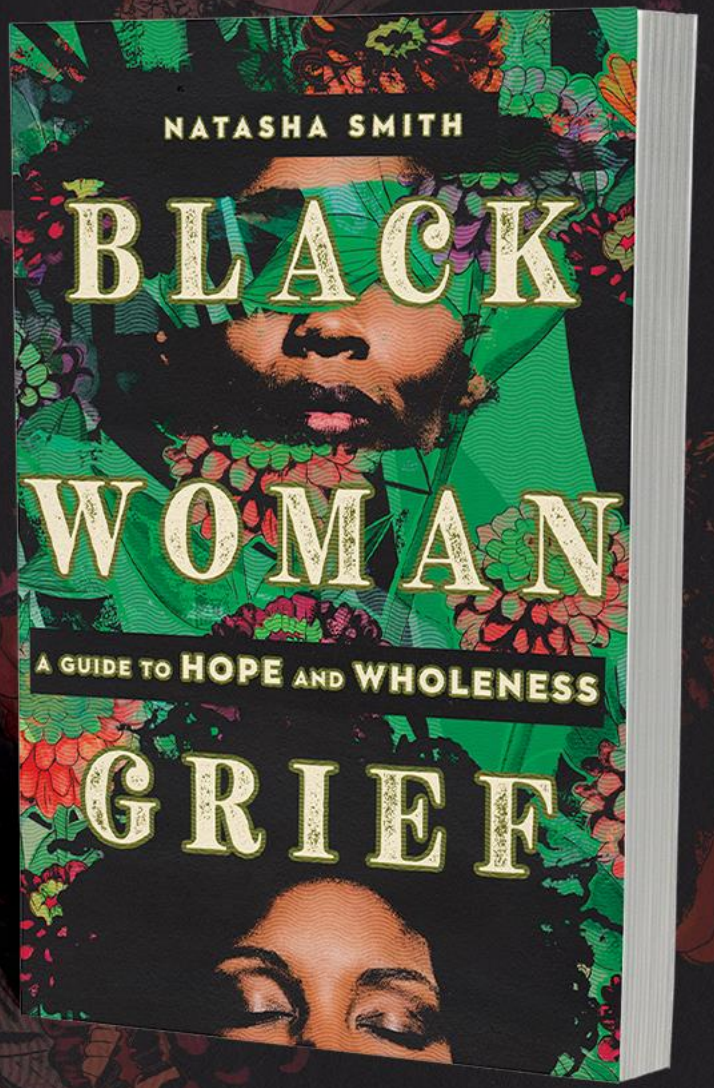
## Next Steps:

- What shifts for me now?
- Name one boundary, one practice, one conversation.

# Closing

"Let me learn, pang-by-pang, O Lord how these hurts – while they will never in this life completely cease – might serve like stitchings, binding me ever tighter to eternal hope." -Every Moment Holy, Vol II

Dear Black Woman,
You are not alone

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