

Activity 1: Metaphor Mapping – “Grief is like ___ because ___”

Purpose:

To help participants explore the **personal and diverse experiences of grief** through metaphor, deepening emotional awareness and language around grief.

Instructions (for slide or handout):

1. Write the Sentence Starter:

- On your paper or worksheet, complete this sentence:

“Grief is like ___ because ___.”

2. Expand the Metaphor (Optional Prompts):

After writing your metaphor, reflect on or sketch:

- What does this metaphor **look or feel** like?
- What are its **textures, colors, sounds, or movements**?
- Where do **mind, body, and spirit** show up in this metaphor?

3. (Optional) Share with a partner or small group:

- If comfortable, invite participants to share their metaphor and what it means to them.
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Time: 10 minutes

(5 mins for metaphor creation, 5 min for group reflection)

Examples to Spark Ideas:

- *Grief is like a fog because it makes everything feel unclear and heavy.*
- *Grief is like ocean waves because it comes and goes in powerful surges.*
- *Grief is like carrying a backpack of stones—some days heavier than others.*
- *Grief is like a wildfire because it changes the landscape forever.*
- *Grief is like a song stuck in your head because it follows you everywhere, even when you're silent.*

Debrief Option (for group facilitation):

"What surprised you about your metaphor?"

"Did it show you anything new about how you carry or express grief?"

"How might this metaphor help you explain grief to a client, friend, or child?"

Activity 2: “What’s the Difference?” — Exploring Grief Through Comparison (Break Out Group)

Purpose:

To help participants explore the complex, layered nature of grief by unpacking commonly used terms or experiences that are often assumed to be the same—but carry important differences in meaning, emotion, and impact.

Materials Needed:

Pen & Paper

Whiteboard

Preferred Note Taking Method

Time: 10–20minutes

(10 mins for discussion, 10 min for group reflection)

Instructions:

Step 1: Choose a Question (5 minutes)

What’s the difference between a funeral and a celebration of life?”

What’s the difference between mourning and grieving?

What’s the difference between a breakup and growing apart?

What’s the difference between healing and moving on?

What’s the difference between closure and acceptance?

What’s the difference between missing someone and needing someone?

“What do you think the difference is between these two? What comes up for you emotionally or culturally?”

Step 2: Share & Discuss (10–15 minutes)

Invite volunteers to share their reflections
Use prompting questions to deepen the dialogue:

- “Do others in the group see it differently?”
- “How might a client define these two differently from you?”
- “How does culture or context shape our answers?”

Step 3: Connect to Practice (5 minutes)

“Think about how these distinctions could influence your work with clients. How does your understanding of terms like ‘moving on’ vs. ‘moving forward’ shape your interventions, or the expectations you might hold?”

Activity: Mind-Body-Spirit Mini Treatment Plan

Purpose:

To practice applying the **mind-body-spirit model** in grief or trauma-informed care—first from a clinical lens, then through personal reflection and self-care.

Time: 15–20 minutes

(5 min for client plan, 5 min for self-plan, 10 min for group reflection)

Materials:

- Printable worksheet (can be folded in half: Client on one side, Self on the other)
- Pens or markers
- Optional: soothing music, grounding objects, or calming visuals for comfort

Instructions

Part 1: Create a Plan for a Client (15 min)

Scenario 1

Client: *Clara*, a 60-year-old woman from El Salvador, has recently lost her older sister. Since they immigrated to the U.S. together 30 years ago, Clara feels this loss as both familial and cultural—her sister was the keeper of family traditions, stories, and prayer rituals. Clara has been praying a private **Novenario** alone, but feels something is “missing” and describes “a tightness in my chest that doesn’t go away.”

Scenario 2:

Client: *Ade*, a 39-year-old Nigerian man, recently lost his position as a respected community advisor after a disagreement with elders in his faith circle. Though he still lives nearby, he feels exiled and says, “It’s like I died to them.” He reports headaches, restlessness, and shame. Ade has avoided community drumming events, saying, “Without my role, I don’t belong in the rhythm anymore.”




Scenario 3:

Client: *Heather*, a 45-year-old white American woman, recently ended a 20-year friendship after a painful falling out. She describes it as “worse than any breakup” and says she’s been having trouble eating, sleeping, and focusing. Friends have told her to “move on” or “find new people,” but Heather says, “She was the person who knew everything about me—now it’s just silence.” She hasn’t found a way to mark or process the loss.

Or

"Imagine a client who is experiencing grief. This could be a real or fictional client who has recently experienced loss—death, relationship change, identity shift, etc."

On the worksheet, answer:

- Mind**  **What thoughts, beliefs, or emotional patterns does the client need support with? What interventions might help? (e.g., narrative therapy, reframing, mindfulness)**
 - Body**  How is the grief showing up physically? What somatic or grounding practices could support regulation and embodiment? (e.g., breathwork, movement, sensory work)
 - Spirit**  What gives this client a sense of meaning, connection, or hope? What rituals, values, or practices can support them spiritually? (e.g., legacy work, nature, ritual)
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Part 2: Create a Plan for Yourself (10 min)

"Now bring that same compassionate framework to yourself. How are you caring for your own mind, body, and spirit—especially in the work of holding space for others?"

Use the same format, but personalize it:

Mind 🧠 **What thoughts or beliefs need tending? How do you calm or care for your inner voice?**

Body 🧑 **What does your body need more of right now? What movement, rest, or nourishment helps you feel grounded?**

Spirit 🌿 **What restores your sense of meaning or awe? Where do you find connection, peace, or purpose?**

Group Debrief (5–10 min):

Prompt reflection with:

- “What surprised you in this exercise?”
- “Was it easier to create a plan for a client or for yourself?”
- “How can we hold space for both—our clients and ourselves—in this work?”