

Supporting healthcare providers in addressing grief

John Fitzgerald, PhD, LPC, CAS
Developer of the 5-Actions Program™
Digital Therapeutics Group, LLC

The wound is the place where the Light enters you.

Rumi

Agenda:

- Discuss the nature of grief
- Explore five gates or types of grief
- Review various tools to help address grief in your own life and in clients
- Questions and discussion



What is the 5-Actions Program™?

- **Self-guided roadmap** to understanding and addressing addiction (substance and behavioral)
- Launched **November 2020**
- **Free to all citizens** in New Mexico, paid for the Behavioral Health Services Division
- **24/7 phone support** from the New Mexico Crisis and Access Line and Peer Recovery Support



Understanding Grief

No one escapes suffering in this life. None of us is exempt from loss, pain, illness, and death. **How is it that we have so little understanding of these essential experiences?** How is it that we have attempted to keep grief separated from our lives and only begrudgingly acknowledge its presence at the most obvious of times, such as at a funeral?

Francis Weller
The Wild Edge of Sorrow



Grief: Latin word *gravis* – meaning heavy

German poet Rilke said in 1904...

I don't have much knowledge of grief, so this massive darkness makes me small.

Where there is sorrow, there is holy ground.

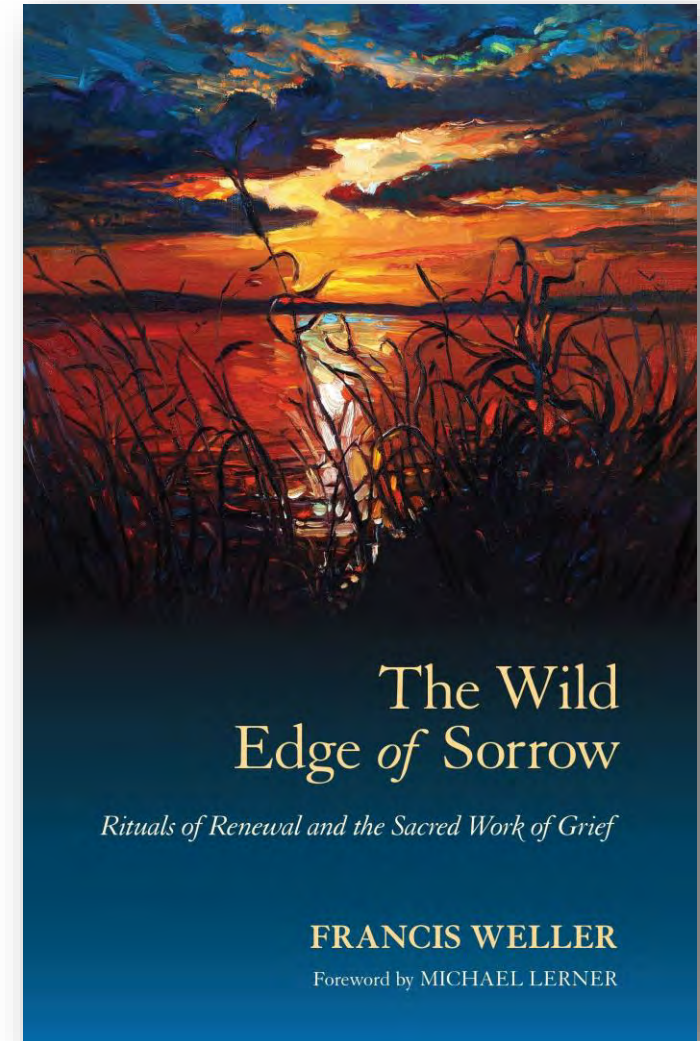
Oscar Wilde



Five Gates of Grief

1. Everything we love we will lose
2. The places that have not known love
3. The sorrows of the world
4. What we expected and did not receive
5. Ancestral grief

<https://www.francisweller.net>



Everything we love we will lose



Impermanence

COVID-19



“What can you say? **I know the depth of grief I would feel** if I couldn’t be with my loved one as they died, so I take the responsibility very seriously to love that person as if they were my own family member. I provide them with a death that is dignified and honorable as possible in the ICU that is sterile and cold and unforgiving.”

Source: COVID overruns ICU at OHSU as exhausted doctors, nurses struggle to keep up (msn.com)

From COVID-19 to a Grief Pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic will be outlasted by the grief pandemic – and no one is preparing for it

The "third wave" of coronavirus may very well be its emotional toll. In the absence of a comforter in chief, it's up to all of us to fill the vacuum.



The “third wave” of coronavirus may very well be its emotional toll, which will continue to inform our inner lives and life choices. And it may be further complicated by so many people not having been able to tap into the communal supports that help in normal times; virtual wakes and Zoom Shivas were not necessarily how people wanted to honor their loved ones. In addition, the sheer scale of Covid-19 destruction may make some feel that their own losses and pain have been obscured — that their person has disappeared into the reported number of deaths that is growing by the minute.

Oct. 11, 2020

By Gabrielle Birkner and Rebecca Soffer, cofounders of Modern Loss

The places that have not known love

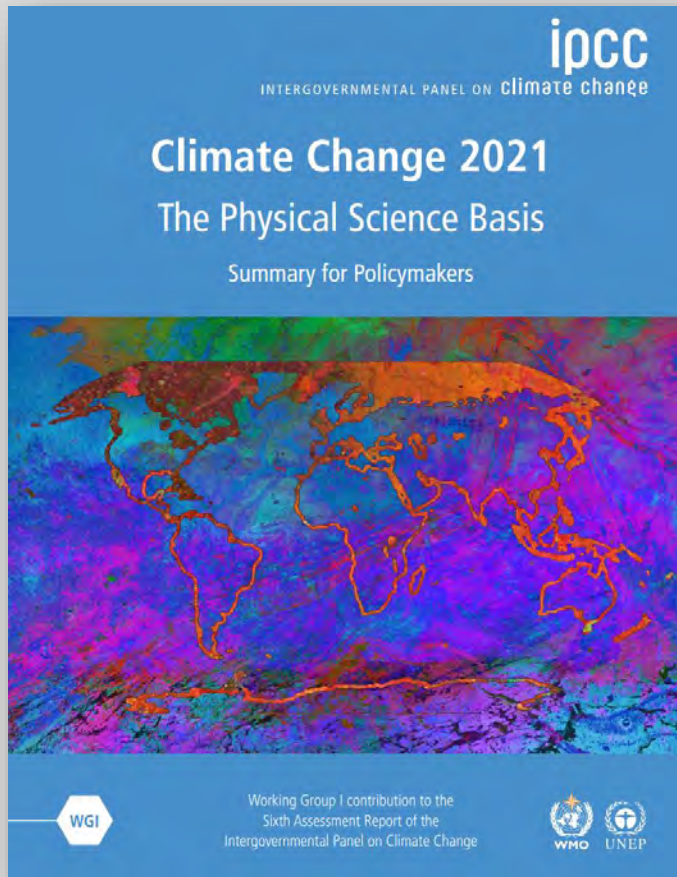


These are the places within us that have been **wrapped in shame** and banished to the farthest shores of our lives.

Whenever any portion of who we are is denied, we live in a condition of loss. The proper response to any loss is grief, but we cannot grieve for something that we feel is outside the circle of worth. That is our predicament – we chronically sense the presence of sorrow, but we are unable to truly grieve, because we feel in our body that **this piece of who we are is unworthy of grief.**

The Wild Edge of Sorrow, Francis Weller

Sorrows of the World: Climate Change



Approved by 195 governments, based on more than 14,000 studies



Climate Change



Last week, some of the world's leading climate change scientists confirmed that humans are making irreversible changes to our planet and extreme weather will only become more severe. This news is a “**code red for humanity**,” said the United Nations secretary general.

It is — but young people like us have been sounding this alarm for years. **You just haven't listened.**

Greta Thunberg, Adriana Calderón, Farzana Faruk Jhumu and Eric Njuguna

What we expected and did not receive



Hidden within the losses of this gate lies our diminished experience of **who we truly are.**

At the core of this grief is our **longing to belong.**

The Wild Edge of Sorrow, Francis Weller

CIGNA Study: May 1, 2018



Reveals epidemic loneliness in America

- 20,000 adults aged 18 years or older
- Nearly half reported sometimes or always feeling alone (46%) or left out (47%)
- Only 53% have meaningful in-person social interactions
- **Generation Z (adults 18-22) is the loneliest generation**

Ancestral Grief

The New York Times

How Thousands of Indigenous Children Vanished in Canada

The discovery of the remains of hundreds of children at the sites of defunct schools in British Columbia and southern Saskatchewan has rekindled discussion of a sinister time in Canada's history.



Collective Trauma

Refugees

Slavery

Genocide

Holocaust

New Generation Born with Unmetabolized Historical Trauma
Gets Added to Present-Day Trauma

New Generation Inherits Past Generations + New Trauma,
Cumulates over generations

Ancestral Grief



When the people of a particular culture or tradition have been torn from their homes and lands, when their libraries, burial places, religious centers, or sacred sites have been desecrated or denied them, when their language, rituals, or customs have been banned, forbidden, or forgotten, when they and their people have been separated, humiliated, brutalized, tortured, or murdered, a traumatic wound cleaves the collective psyche – scarring both persecuted and persecutor – and will be carried and transmitted for many generations.

Healing Collective Trauma

THOMAS HÜBL



Deep Breath



Working with Grief

- No Timetable
- Presence
- Feeling/Body
- Solitude
- Community
- Ritual
- True Nature



Symptoms of Grief

Affects

- Separation anxiety & longing
- Sadness
- Depression
- Helplessness
- Loneliness
- Guilt & anger
- Numbness

Cognitions

- Disbelief, shock, confusion
- Meaninglessness

Perception

- Unreality, depersonalization
- Sense of 'presence' of deceased

Behavioral

- Searching behavior
- Social withdrawal
- Disorganization
- Avoidance behavior
- Absent-minded
- Restless over-activity
- Treasuring objects of deceased

Physical symptoms

- Crying & tearfulness
- Fatigue, exhaustion
- Psychomotor agitation or retardation
- Motor symptoms e.g., tension, restlessness
- Autonomic symptoms
- Hypervigilance

Presence



Grief is like the ocean, it comes in waves, ebbing and flowing. Sometimes the water is calm, and sometimes it is overwhelming. All we can do is learn to swim.

Vicki Harrison

Feel to Heal



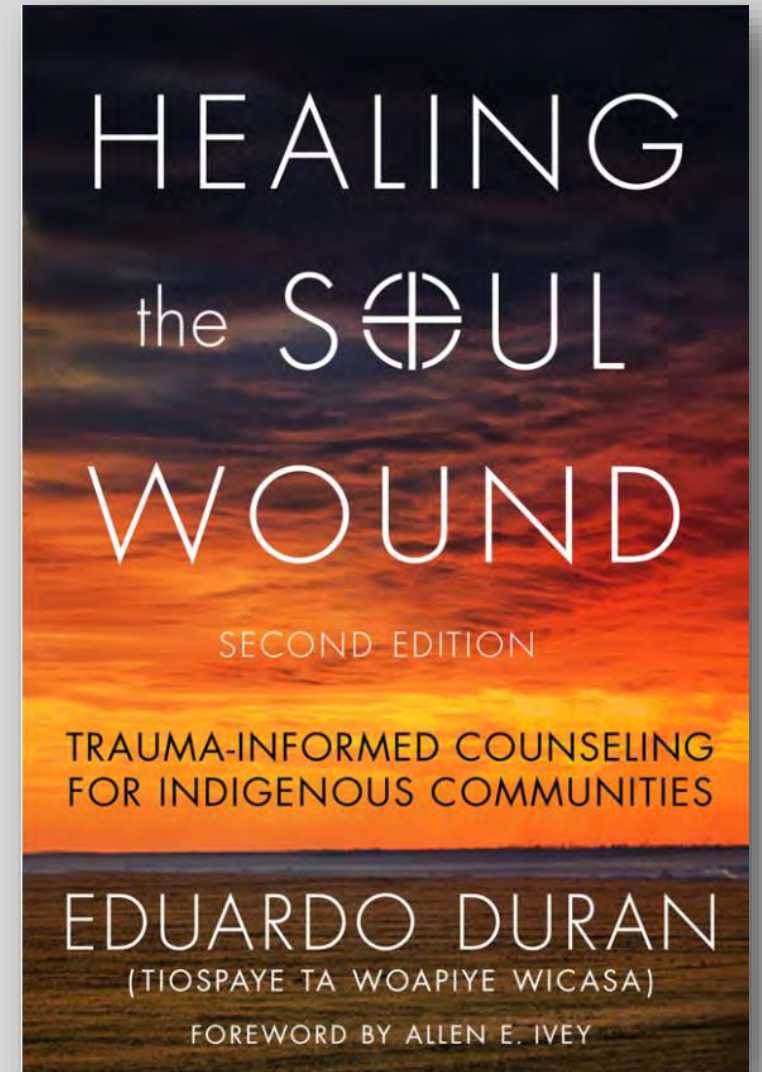
With our body, we are in the presence of a force and intelligence that is filled with wisdom, that is loving, flawlessly reliable, and, strange to say, worthy of our deepest devotion.

Reginald Ray

When Grief Becomes Soul Wound

“An important point here is the understanding that healing does not imply curing or getting rid of all suffering. Healing has to do with being able to **harmonize with all that life has to offer**.

Traditional Healing in most Aboriginal cultures is based on the belief that **illness itself has a consciousness** that relates to the psyche and/or body of the individual.”



Dreams



I use a spiritual framework for understanding dreams. I tell patients that at times, to understand the deeper issue causing them discomfort, we need to access their spirit for insight. In order to do this, we need to consult the dream process.

My reasoning for the initial dream intervention is so that the patient can realize fairly quickly that the intervention resides in her and that therapy facilitates the relationship to her inner process.

Healing the Soul Wound 2nd Ed.
Eduardo Duran

Extemporaneous Writing



Write for 5-10 minutes, non-stop, starting with a writing shuttle such as:

- I miss...
- I wish someone would ask me...
- I survived...
- Now that you're gone...
- I can't feel...
- My real grief...
- I never said...
- My tears...

Solitude



one small thing
I've learned these years,

how to be alone,
And at the edge of aloneness
How to be found by the world.

David Whyte

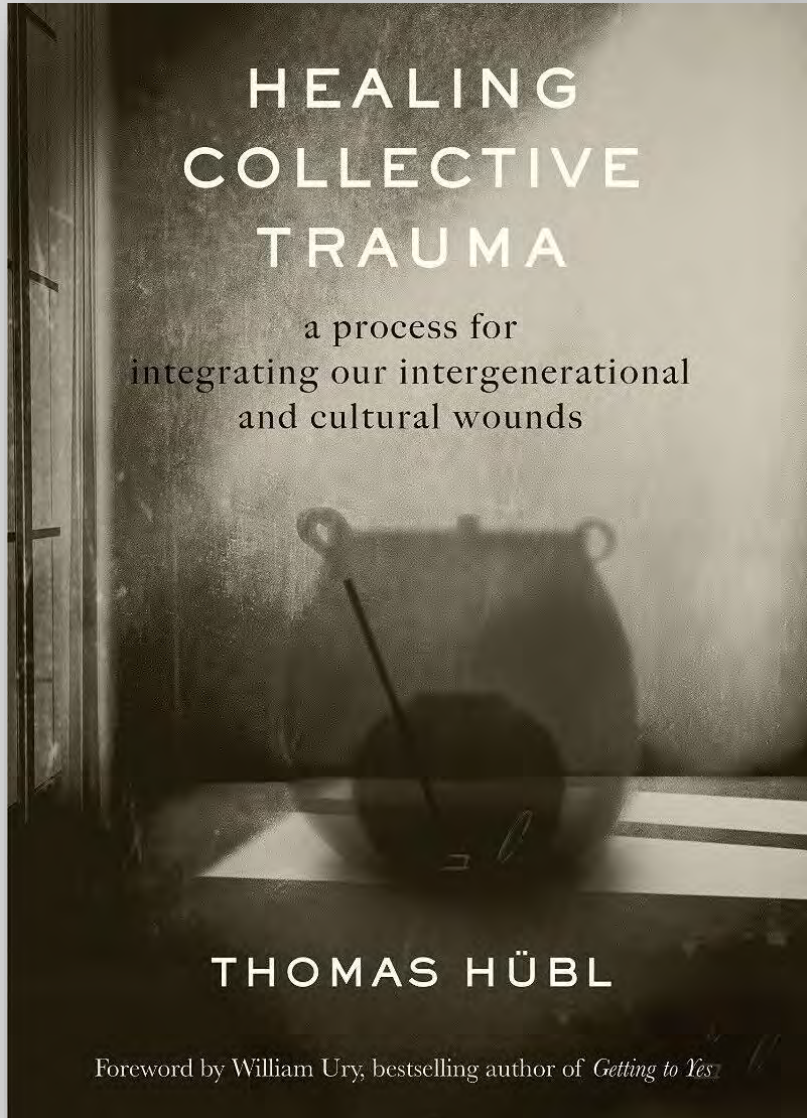
Community: Power of Groups



Grief has *never* been private; it has always been communal. Subconsciously, we are awaiting the presence of others, before we can feel safe enough to drop to our knees on the holy ground of sorrow.

The Wild Edge of Sorrow
Francis Weller

Healing Collective Trauma and Grief



Stage 1: Cohering the Group

- Relational exercises
- Subtle attunement practices
- Movement exercises
- Group witnessing exercises

Stage 2: Inducing the Collective Waves

- First wave: Processing group denial
- Second wave: Group eruption
- Third wave: Discerning the collective voice
- Fourth wave: Group clearing and integration

Stage 3: Meta-Reflection

- Reflect on the process
- New felt awareness

Ritual: Power of Cold Dips

Event Shared the 'Power of Cold Dips' with the Sealaska Community



Sealaska's most recent virtual event invited panelists to share their experiences with cold water dips, an ancient ritual among our people that was designed to fortify the body and spirit against a wide range of difficulties, from weather to warfare.



The live virtual event, moderated by Sealaska Board Chair Joe Nelson, featured Richard Peterson, Sarah Dybdahl, Barbara Blake, Konrad Frank and Monna Evan as panelists. The event was part of a month-long campaign hosted by Sealaska in March that focused on holistic well-being across dimensions like physical, mental, cultural and community wellness.

<https://www.sealaska.com/community/event-shared-the-power-of-cold-dips-with-the-sealaska-community/>

“(The dips) allowed me to be fearless in that moment,” Blake said, “to dip and to know that the strength of our ancestors was there with me and know I didn’t have to worry about the judgement of speaking wrong or singing wrong or dancing wrong or drawing wrong or doing artwork wrong or harvesting wrong – dipping is the one connection I knew I could make to our ancestors and to our way of being that was just me.”

Mourning Rituals



- Burn a candle at meaningful times
- Carry a remembrance item
- Create a piece of art
- Write a poem, song, or letter
- Spend time in their favorite nature spot
- Cook and savor their favorite meal
- Create an alter in their memory
- Burn sage

Grief and True Nature



The greatest discovery in life is to discover that our essential nature does not share the limits nor the destiny of the body and mind.

Rupert Spira

24/7: 5-Actions & NM Crisis And Access Line

Grief

module 4: video 8



Rate this video:



SUBMIT

- Download this video's worksheet
- Read Transcript
- Video of Francis Weller talking about grief and his book *The Wild Edge of Sorrow*
- Video – BJ Miller's TED Talk *What Really Matters at the End of Life*
- Video – Nora McNerny's TED Talk *We Don't Move On From Grief – We Move Forward With It*
- Video – Jason Rosenthal's TED Talk *The Journey Through Loss and Grief*

Mark as Completed

« Previous Video Next Video »

Grief Work

module 9: video 6



Rate this video:



SUBMIT

- Read Transcript
- Video of Francis Weller talking about grief and his book *The Wild Edge of Sorrow*
- Video – BJ Miller's TED Talk *What Really Matters at the End of Life*
- Video – Nora McNerny's TED Talk *We Don't Move On From Grief – We Move Forward With It*
- Video – Jason Rosenthal's TED Talk *The Journey Through Loss and Grief*

Mark as Completed

« Previous Video Next Video »

[Home](#) [Who We Are](#) [Resources](#) [News & Events](#) [Careers](#) [Contact Us](#)

New Mexico Crisis And Access Line

Call toll free anytime 24/7/365 1-855-NMCRISIS (662-7474)
If you are having a life threatening emergency, call 911 immediately.



If you or a loved one is experiencing any kind of emotional crisis, mental health or substance use concern, you can find help 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by calling the New Mexico Crisis and Access Line or Peer to Peer Warmline.



Crisis And Access Line

Call for support and resources
1-855-NMCRISIS (662-7474)
Toll Free 24/7/365



Peer to Peer Warmline

Call or text to connect with a peer
1-855-4NM-7100 (466-7100)
call 3:30pm – 11:30pm / text 6pm – 11pm



NMConnect App

Call, text and access mental health resources



Healthcare Worker and First Responder Support Line

1-855-507-5509



NM 5 Actions

Self-guided road map to understanding and addressing substance use and addictive behaviors



Path to Wellness

Mental Health Awareness Messages

Questions and Discussion

