



**ACTIVELY
MOVING
FORWARD**

Connecting and Empowering Grieving College Students

The Grief Sensitive Campus Initiative



AMF, a HealGrief program



**20.4 million students
are expected to attend
American colleges and
universities each year.**

Source: National Center for Educational Statistics



It's a silent epidemic...

**More than
1 in 3 young adults will be
grieving during their
college years!**



**22-30% of college undergraduates are in the first 12 months
of grieving the death of a family member or friend;**

35-48% are in the first 24 months.

(Balk, 1997; Bemelmans, 1999; Hair, 1998; Wettemann, 1999; Wrenn, 1999)

**These consistent findings make clear that a significant
population of college students are grieving the recent death
of a loved one.**



Grieving students have more significant academic challenges.



STUDENT
COUNSELING
SERVICE

"I struggled with deciding whether
to return home or stay at school."
~ David



Research studies have identified a correlation between grieving students and poor academic performance.

One study of 227 grieving college students found that those grieving a death had consistently lower GPA's than their non-bereaved counterparts.

Servaty-Seib & Hamilton, 2006

Grieving students are at greater risk than their peers to encounter a host of issues:

- **Physical - Lack of energy**
- **Academic - Inability to focus**
- **Social - Feeling of isolation**
- **Developmental - A sense of being stuck or inability to move forward**
- **Emotional - Depression**



In a mixed methods study conducted among 950 students at two universities, participants expressed academic difficulties including a change in study habits, lower test performance, a need for additional time to complete work, inability to concentrate in class, and lack of participation in class.



There are several factors unique to young adults which can make grief during college particularly difficult including:



- Geographical distance from home
- Lack of usual support systems
- Academic pressures
- Inadequate peer support and empathy
- Limited resources for grief support on many college campuses



"My roommates and friends were focused on schoolwork, parties, and their latest crush. I, on the other hand, was worrying about my family that I left back home to grieve."

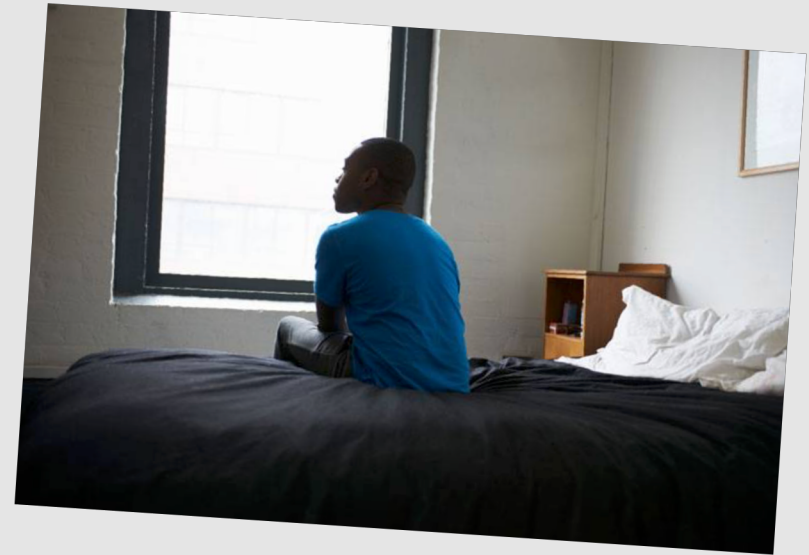
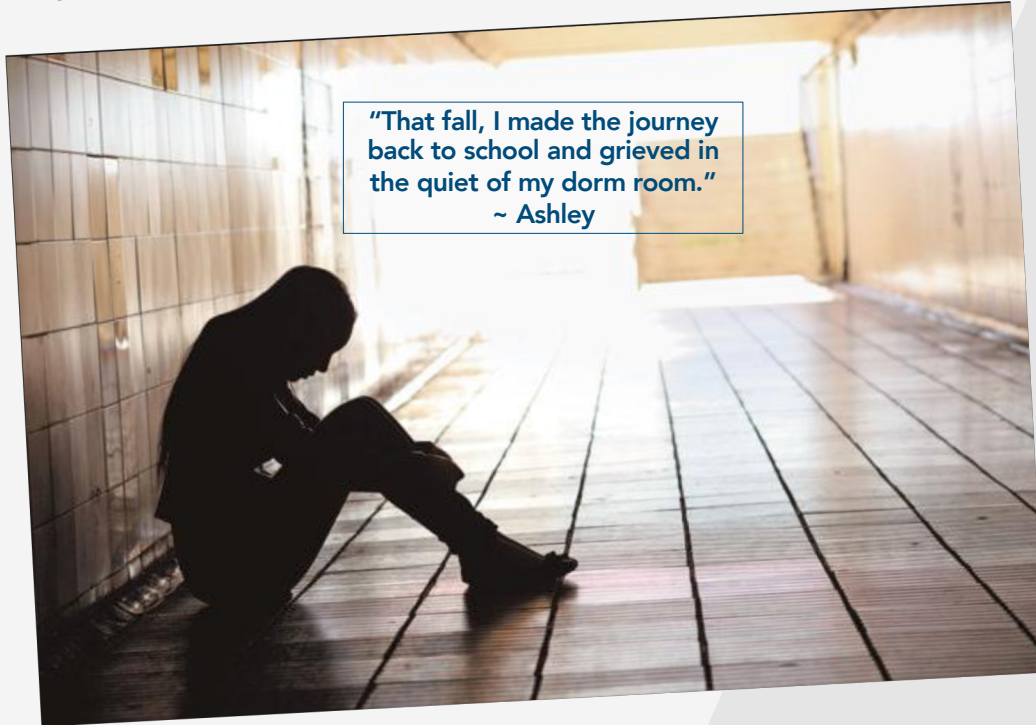
~ Ashley

Isolation is a risk factor for bereaved students (Schultz, 2007)

for a number of reasons, including perceptions among bereaved students that non-bereaved peers lack understanding, and fear and misunderstanding among non-bereaved students of engaging their bereaved peers.



(Servaty-Seib & Hamilton, 2006)





Each year more than 6 million college students will be grieving.



As of 2017, students dropped out of two-year institutions at a rate of 47.1 percent and four year institutions at 23.3 percent.

Source: NSC Research Center

**"As I began settling into my new life at college, I discovered that my grief was still raw and fresh. Feeling hurt and alone, I yearned for home, my family, and my friends from high school, who knew me inside and out, but also knew my dad and what kind of person he was."
~ Michelle**

Student enrollment, academic achievement, retention, and graduation are all important to the success of colleges and universities.

Understanding the student population and factors that might impact their ability to succeed are of great importance to universities and society, as well-educated, skilled individuals are necessary for strong, healthy communities.



Experts in higher education agree that academic and social integration are key elements in student retention.



Research indicates that there is a high prevalence of college students grieving a recent death, and that they are at high risk for academic and social integration difficulties.

Tinto 1995, 1993

The Grief Sensitive Campus

An initiative developed in response to the need for academic and social integration among grieving college students.



"I know I would not be where I am professionally without having had to do a lot of personal work around my grief, and I am forever indebted to the students in my support group, faculty who understood and my therapist for being my guiding light. Thank you for understanding that grief is not something that just goes away."
~ Michelle



What does it mean to be a Grief Sensitive Campus?

As a Grief Sensitive Campus, your institution further demonstrates that caring for and supporting students is a top priority. Ensuring their emotional health is one of the least ways to retain students through graduation.

AMF has developed a Grief Sensitive Campus program that provides education to universities and assists with developing bereavement policies that set forth clear guidelines for providing extensions and flexibility that bereaved students need for academic success.

Grief has become a societal issue at an age where the trajectory of a young adult's life path can be changed forever!



Grief doesn't just go away. Yet with the proper resources, tools, and support, one's grief can transition into a healthy grief recovery.

Grief Sensitive Campus Certification

AMF provides certification to universities and colleges that provide their students with the following grief sensitive methods:

Student Bereavement Leave Policy – Most universities and colleges offer faculty and staff a Bereavement Leave Policy, yet few offer one to their students.

“When I found out about the death I was very stressed out trying to make accommodations for school. It would be helpful to not have to ‘think’ about what to do... It should be more of an automatic response what is next.”

“It would be so much easier if faculty, staff, and students were trained on what to do when someone in their family/community circle dies and what the exact next steps should be.”

“Some professors will not allow you to reschedule quizzes because they drop the lowest grades. That is not fair. Some professors expect the homework to be done before you leave.”

“I think this policy is an example of a university recognizing that students are human beings before they are students, as well as an example of important attention to prioritizing mental and emotional well-being.”

Administrative Liaison & Advocate – Instead of students having to communicate their loved one’s death to each of their professors, a designated administrative liaison would relieve the student of that process. This advocate would also be equipped with the tools and resources the student may need during and after their initial bereavement. A streamlined system offers comfort and continuity to the bereaved student.

Grief Resources and Materials in Orientation Packages - Having this material available from the beginning helps to open the conversation and normalizes grief.

Grief Sensitive Campus Training

AMF professionals provide education and training to universities and colleges and assists with the planning and implementation of a more in-depth Grief Sensitive Campus

<u>Module 1:</u> General Grief Support	<u>Module 2:</u> Becoming a Grief Sensitive Campus	<u>Module 3:</u> Responding to Campus Crisis
Grief 101	Creating a Grief Sensitive Campus	Crisis Response
Trauma & the Brain	Proactive Planning	Aftermath of Trauma
Stigmas in Death & Grief	AMF Chapter & Becoming a Grief Advocate	Memorialization
	Bereavement Leave Policy	

Additional consultation services include:

Structure of Task Force	Evaluation of Current Services
Proactive Program Planning	Crisis Response Planning
Duties of New Programming	Education of Faculty & Staff
Education to Students	



Grief doesn't have to be a
lonely journey!

AMF is a supportive service
connecting and empowering
grieving young adults through
their college years and beyond.

"Joining a community who could empathize what it's like to live life after losing a loved one gave me so much hope. AMF taught me to positively move forward by sharing stories and doing acts of kindness."
~ *Aileen: Campbell University*



"Starting an AMF chapter at my university was incredibly rewarding both personally and for the campus community. Creating a space for a supportive group of individuals to work together through grief has been personally healing. Educating our campus and advocating for a student grief leave policy has been vital for the recognition of grief in student's lives."
~ *Angelica: Indiana University of Pennsylvania*



AMF is about providing the support a grieving young adult needs to “actively move forward”.

Additional Support Services:

Campus & Community Chapters:

All chapter leaders have access to an **AMF** program coordinator, monthly chapter leader calls, programs and tool kits on how to:

- Hold casual gatherings creating a community of support and friendships.
- Participate in community service in memory of loved ones.

Young Adult Grief Retreat:

In partnership with Experience Camp, a 3 day retreat where **AMF**ers learn leadership skills and work on their own grief journey with team building and personal growth.

Webinars:

Webinars focusing on a variety of topics including grief/loss and other challenges facing today’s grieving young adults.

Facebook Grief Support Group:

A private Facebook Support Group where grieving young adults ages 18-26 find inspiration, support and community.

The Journey Continues Blog:

Individuals from all walks of life share their grief experiences, tips they find helpful, and the different inspiration they have found along the way.

Information & Resources:

Information & resources specific to the needs of grieving young adults.

To name a few!





Grief is normal;
Grief is not depression;
Suicide is never an option;
A healthy grief recovery
does exist.



AMF is a supportive service for grieving young adults
who seek local connections with others who understand.

Actively Moving Forward
provides campus chapters, coast-to-coast.



Actively Moving Forward,
is a



HealGrief.org/Actively-Moving-Forward

A 501(c)3 Non-Profit

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The hummingbird, a small delicate creature, is often taken to be a symbol of resurrection.

The hummer becomes lifeless and seems to die as its body is chilled on cold nights.

But as the sun brings warmth back to its body, miraculously it appears to come back to life, taking flight again.