



## The Grief Sensitive Campus Initiative

Supporting, Connecting and Empowering Grieving Young Adults



**ACTIVELY MOVING FORWARD**

AMF, a HealGrief program

# 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





Supporting, Connecting and Empowering Grieving Young Adults



## What is AMF?

**ACTIVELY MOVING FORWARD**

AMF, an acronym for Actively Moving Forward®, is a national network providing supportive services for grieving young adults.

## Why is AMF important?

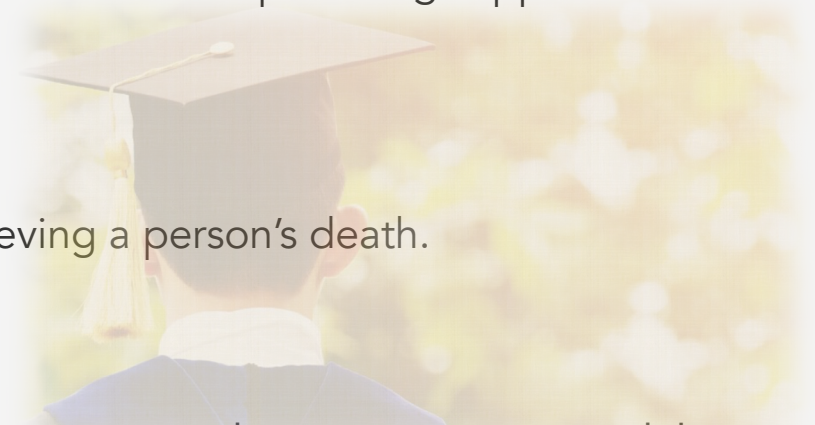
Research confirms that 1 in every 3 college student is grieving a person's death.

## What is an AMF chapter?

Campus chapters are created by grieving young adults to support other grieving young adults.

## What is an AMF Grief Sensitive Campus Initiative?

The Initiative helps educational institutions ensure that all grieving students are met with understanding and compassion. That students feel supported during a time when a traumatic event, a death, often interferes with the trajectory of a young adult's life path.





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

Source: National Center for Educational Statistics





Each year more than six 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

**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.**

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



## Grieving students have more significant academic challenges.



"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.**

Cupit, Servaty-Seib, et al, 2016



**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 that fear and misunderstanding among non-bereaved students of engaging their bereaved peers. (Servaty-Seib & Hamilton, 2006)



"That fall, I made the journey back to school and grieved in the quiet of my dorm room."  
~ Ashley



"Sharing a room with others doesn't lend itself to silently crying yourself to sleep, so I would run away to empty corners of the campus just to cry."  
~ Tiffany



# 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.

**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.

Things our students tell us:

"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."

"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."

"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."

# Grief Sensitive Campus Training

**AMF** provides education and training to university and college faculty and staff and we assist 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** campus chapters are created by grieving young adults to support other grieving young adults.



**AMF** supports them, connects them and empowers them to be "actively moving forward" in their college years and beyond.

"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**



"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**



Where grief is normal,  
grief is not depression,  
and a healthy personal  
growth after a death  
does exist.



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

**AMF**, with campus chapters coast-to-coast.

**AMF**, partnering with colleges and universities to address a societal issue and silent epidemic, grief.



**J A D E**  
R E C O V E R Y



**Jade Recovery Center** recognizes that a death is a traumatic life event.

**Jade Recovery Center** recognizes that unsupported grief may lead to poor coping skills and to an addictive behavior.

**Jade Recovery Center** recognizes that grief support is crucial after a traumatic event.

**Jade Recovery Center** recognizes that young adults are developmentally most vulnerable to addiction.

**Jade Recovery Center** in partnership with **AMF**, to support young adult's during their grief journey and to help them achieve a healthy personal growth.



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.