



[www.OurHouse-Grief.org](http://www.OurHouse-Grief.org)  
Toll Free (888) 417-1444



The **OUR HOUSE Grief Support Center** mission is to provide the community with grief support services, education, resources, and hope. Since 1993, OUR HOUSE has helped thousands of children, teens, and adults grieving the death of someone close. Our three locations are expanded through school-based grief support groups, dozens of satellite locations, three weekend-long grief camp sessions as the Los Angeles and Orange County partners of Camp Erin, medical and professional education, and on-site grief responses for businesses and the community at large.

**Sharing Grief. Finding Hope.**

To learn more, please visit  
**[www.OurHouse-Grief.org](http://www.OurHouse-Grief.org)** or call **(888) 417-1444**

**West Los Angeles**

The Brandman Center  
1663 Sawtelle Blvd. Ste. 300  
Los Angeles, CA 90025

**Mid-City/Koreatown**

Co-located at The Karsh Family Social Service Center  
3750 West 6th St.  
Los Angeles, CA 90020

**Woodland Hills**

21860 Burbank Blvd.  
North Building, Ste. 195  
Woodland Hills, CA 91367

**Orange County**

1940 W. Orangewood Ave. Ste. 110-3  
Orange, CA 92868

## Child and Adolescent Grief Support



### In-House Groups

The death of a parent can be devastating for children and teens of all ages. At OUR HOUSE Grief Support Center, children **ages 4 through 18** who have experienced the death of a parent join groups that are specific to the age of the child. Using grief-related art projects, writing exercises, and play activities, highly trained group leaders support the children as they make their way through their grieving process. Activities are designed specifically to help children hold on to their precious memories, express thoughts and feelings, adapt to the many changes in their lives, and memorialize their parent who died.

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### School-Based Groups

Grieving children and teens spend most of their waking hours at school. Through our landmark School-Based Grief Support Program, we bring our grief support services to local public schools. Elementary, middle, and high school students can participate, free of charge, in an OUR HOUSE grief support group **in their own school**. The groups provide a safe place for children to share their thoughts and feelings with other children who are also grieving after the death of a family member or close friend. Upon the completion of the ten-week program, faculty and students report better concentration in school and improved social and behavioral functioning.

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### **Grief Camp**

Three weekends each summer, OUR HOUSE hosts **Camp Erin Los Angeles** and **Camp Erin Orange County**. The weekend-long camp provides children ages 6 through 17 an opportunity to express their grief while enjoying fun, outdoor activities. At Camp Erin, children and teens connect with those who are also grieving the death of someone close, learn coping skills to use after camp ends, and honor their special person in memorial activities.

## Adult Grief Support



After the death of someone close, a griever's world turns upside down. Waves of emotion, including sadness, loneliness, anger, yearning, and shock, can make day to day tasks feel overwhelming. Grievers may experience a sense of disbelief and ask themselves, "How did this happen to me? How can this be real? How can I go on?"

Being with others who are experiencing similar feelings provides comfort and support, allowing grievers to move along their path towards hope and healing. An intimate atmosphere helps to create a sense of community and support where feelings and memories can be expressed. The groups allow for nonjudgemental sharing, learning, and healing.

OUR HOUSE Grief Support Center groups are specific to the age of the griever, length of time since the death, and relationship to the person who died. Each group consists of eight to twelve members.

### **In-House Groups**

For those grieving a:

- Partner or Spouse
- Child
- Parent or Sibling
- Close Friend or Relative



### **Spanish Satellite Program - Programa satélite en español**

OUR HOUSE Grief Support Center offers groups in Spanish at our three locations and throughout the community for adults who have experienced the death of someone close.

Después de la muerte de alguien cercano, el mundo de la persona en duelo se altera. Olas de emociones incluyendo tristeza, soledad, enojo, anhelo y shock pueden hacer que las tareas cotidianas se sientan demasiado difíciles. Las personas en duelo podrían experimentar un sentido de incredulidad y preguntarse a sí mismos, “¿Cómo me pudo pasar esto? ¿Cómo puede ser real esto? ¿Cómo puedo seguir adelante?”

El estar con otras personas que están experimentando sentimientos similares provee consuelo y apoyo, permitiéndoles a las personas en duelo avanzar en el camino hacia la esperanza. Una atmósfera íntima ayuda a crear un sentido de comunidad y apoyo en donde los sentimientos y los recuerdos pueden ser expresados.

Los grupos de apoyo al duelo en español de OUR HOUSE son para adultos que han experimentado la muerte de un ser querido cercano. Los grupos son ofrecidos en nuestros tres centros y en diferentes lugares en la comunidad. Los grupos permiten compartir, aprender, procesar el duelo sin ser juzgado y usualmente están formados de seis a ocho miembros.

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## Medical and Professional Education

OUR HOUSE Grief Support Center offers comprehensive grief training for therapists, clergy, school personnel, and medical and hospice professionals. Through lectures, case discussions, small group activities, and role-plays, these trainings enhance participants' abilities to counsel grieving clients in both private practice and agency settings. Education programs are offered at our centers or on-site in schools, businesses, and organizations.



### Medical Education

OUR HOUSE trains physicians and nurses at hospitals, hospices, and cancer centers on how to talk with patients who are dying and families who are grieving. We provide participants a unique interactive opportunity to learn from our grief experts and OUR HOUSE alumni, to take the step from being a good to a great doctor or nurse in the eyes of their patients. Since 1998, our medical education program has been part of the curriculum for students at the USC Keck and UCLA David Geffen Schools of Medicine and the UCLA School of Nursing.



### Mental Health Professionals

Our clinical staff provides educational programs for organizations. Presentations are tailored to meet the specific needs of organizations and the communities they serve. These interactive presentations range from an hour and a half to a full day, depending upon their requirements. OUR HOUSE goes on-site or hosts at our locations.



### **Continuing Education Unit Workshops**

OUR HOUSE provides continuing education units for Marriage and Family Therapists, Licensed Clinical Social Workers, Nursing Home Administrators, and Registered Nurses.

Throughout the year, OUR HOUSE clinical staff teach two-day and three-day intensive workshops. The workshops provide in-depth education, including intervention strategies and hands-on practice for professionals who wish to become Grief Specialists for children and adults.



### **Clergy**

OUR HOUSE trains clergy, chaplains, and pastoral counselors at hospitals, hospices, congregations, and seminaries on how to talk with patients who are dying and families who are grieving. We provide clergy and seminary students a unique interactive opportunity to learn from our grief experts and OUR HOUSE alumni.



## On-Site Grief Response



On-Site Grief  
Response

A death in the workplace or school setting can profoundly affect an organization's staff and community. Daily reminders of the person who died may trigger a myriad of thoughts and emotions. It may become difficult for coworkers or classmates to concentrate, and performance and attendance may drop. A forum will be needed for the expression of shared grief.

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OUR HOUSE is available to provide on-site grief support to help people cope. Our clinical staff will design a response that suits the particular setting. Providing compassion and education to grieving employees or students allows the community to begin to heal. We offer the following services on-site or at one of our locations:

- On-site grief support in the early days following a death
  - Grief education specific to the workplace or school
  - Follow-up grief support groups
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# Volunteering

OUR HOUSE Grief Support Center volunteers make a difference in people's lives. They are the heart of our agency, helping grieving children, teens, and adults find hope and healing. Over 450 volunteers donate over 20,000 hours of service annually.

**None of the positions require prior experience, nor do volunteers need a clinical or professional background in bereavement, counseling, or education.** There are three meaningful ways to volunteer with OUR HOUSE:

- Volunteer Support Group Leader
- Grief Camp Volunteer
- Event and Administrative Volunteer

Learn more about volunteering at [www.ourhouse-grief.org/volunteer](http://www.ourhouse-grief.org/volunteer)

## Volunteer Support Group Leaders

Volunteer group leaders are extraordinary people who make a big difference in the lives of grieving children and adults. Our volunteers co-lead support groups in our West Los Angeles, Woodland Hills, Mid-City/Koreatown centers and at various school and community sites in the greater Los Angeles area. We ask for a minimum one-year commitment to co-lead a group every other week in-house, or once per week for short-term groups held in schools or community locations. In addition, all volunteers attend group supervision conducted by our clinical staff once every other week. The average time commitment, including group meeting time and supervision, is 10-15 hours per month.

### Requirements:

- At least 21 years old
- For Spanish-language groups, group leaders must be bilingual
- Ability to pass a criminal background check and attend all required trainings

### The application process includes:

- Online application
- Brief phone interview
- In-person group interview
- Three-day (Adult) or four-day (Children) training

Upon successful completion of the application process, trainees are offered placement as group leaders.





## Grief Camp Volunteers

Camp Erin is a weekend-long grief camp that provides children an opportunity to learn coping skills, enjoy traditional summer camp activities, and connect with other children who are also grieving the death of someone close. Volunteers stay in a cabin for two nights and help mentor children as they participate in activities and bond with one another during the weekend in a beautiful outdoor space.

### Requirements:

- At least 21 years old
- Must not have any family members attending camp as a camper
- Ability to pass a criminal background check and attend all required trainings

New volunteers will be contacted to schedule a required in-person interview and complete a background check. Volunteers will be assigned based on the needs of the camp and campers.

## Event and Administrative Volunteers

Volunteer opportunities include completing administrative and program tasks, planning and supporting our community, and attending fundraising events. These volunteer roles do not require the special training that our grief support group leaders or camp volunteers complete.

### Event Schedule:

- Spring: Run for Hope 5K
- Summer: Camp Erin-LA and OC
- Fall: House of Hope Gala and Night for Hope



# What is This Thing Called Grief?

Grief is a natural process after the death of someone close. It hurts when someone dies, and allowing time to grieve will eventually help ease the pain. Grief is challenging and takes many forms; it is not a problem to be solved, it is a process to be lived. Grief affects people physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Many people find that they benefit from being with others who care, who are available to listen to their feelings, and who provide support.

## Adult Natural Grief Reactions

Many people who have had someone die experience:

- Disbelief – feeling as though the death hasn't actually happened
- Forgetfulness – not finishing what is started or being absent minded
- Changes in sleep or appetite
- Emptiness – felt in the chest or stomach or other physical symptoms
- Feelings of restlessness or lethargy
- Tears or “grief bursts” at unexpected times
- Anger – that the death has occurred or that the person has left them
- Guilt – over something said or not said, something done or not done
- Relief – that the person is no longer in pain
- A sense of the person's presence – expecting them to walk through the door at their usual time, hearing their voice or seeing their face
- Yearning or longing – aching for one more touch or one more moment with the person



## Child & Teen Natural Grief Reactions

It is difficult to see children in pain. They need to share their grief and receive support to understand death and work through their feelings. Parents, teachers, and counselors can help guide them through this painful process. When there has been a death at home, school, or in the community, it is important that caring adults are available to help children cope with their feelings and to provide the support that is needed. Children are generally resilient. Depending on their age, they have a range of understandings and experiences with grief.

Shock, disbelief, confusion, anxiety, depression, sadness, fear, loneliness, guilt, anger, difficulty concentrating, sleep disturbances, and up to a six-month delay in these reactions are all common responses to grief. Children and teens of any age may exhibit a change in the quality of their schoolwork.

### **Children Ages 2-4**

- Cannot understand that death is final
- See death as reversible
- May not show outward signs of grief
- May think they are responsible for the death

### **Children Ages 5-9**

- May act as though the death hasn't happened
- Desire to conform with peers e.g., pretend that the person is alive, at work, or on a trip
- Struggle to understand death in a concrete way

### **Children Ages 10-13**

- Understand that death is universal and permanent
- May avoid talking about the death in an attempt to "be strong" or feel "normal"

### **Teens Ages 14-18**

- Search for their own identity and try to separate emotionally from parents which is difficult to do after a death in the family
- May become isolated from family and friends
- May turn to inappropriate or self-destructive behavior to ease the pain
- May struggle with feelings of guilt and regret



## **How Support Groups Help**

Participation in a grief support group can help lessen the isolation that grievers may feel after the death of someone close. Highlighted below are some of the benefits of being a group member at OUR HOUSE Grief Support Center.

### **Adults**

- Provides a network of people to whom they can turn
- Helps grievers express their feelings in healthy and healing ways
- Encourages grievers to find ways to honor and maintain a loving connection to the person who died
- Creates a safe place to ask for the support they need

### **Children & Teens**

- Helps normalize thoughts and feelings
- Provides a consistent and safe place to share memories and feelings
- Helps children and teens learn to discuss the death and find ways to cope through art, writing, and play
- Creates a sense of community by having groups that are specific to age
- Clarifies confusing and frightening death-related issues





**Jo-Ann Lautman** founded OUR HOUSE Grief Support Center to help those dealing with the death of a loved one. In the early 1990s, she saw that little existed to help grievers, especially young families, who were expected to simply bounce back after a death. "Closure," she says, "is for bank accounts, not love accounts." She wanted to help create a "home away from home" for grievers in our community. Jo-Ann's guiding light when she founded the agency was this quote:

"To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream;  
Not only plan, but also believe."

The OUR HOUSE Grief Support Center mission is to provide the community with grief support services, education, resources, and hope. Since 1993, OUR HOUSE has helped thousands of children, teens, and adults grieving the death of someone close. Our vision is to create a world in which grief is embraced, understood, and respected.



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