

CATEGORY: POPULATIONS/PROGRAMS

Grief and Bereaved Populations and Programs

There is limited content on grief and bereavement where plant-based, nature-based or horticultural therapy is available. Though plants, particularly flowers have long been used in rituals and as symbols involved in these stages of life, research and programming is sparse. Care farming, more evident in Europe, is being used for grief support, with research on this intervention appearing in journals. A 2018 article on therapeutic gardening for grief and bereaved populations examines this type of modality (Machado & Swank). Program examples, with several from the UK, have been implemented for loss of babies or children using therapeutic horticulture. Memory gardens exist in the US and UK, some of these listed below.

For related resources refer to category: Populations/Horticulture Programs in Specific Settings – Mental Health and Trauma Recovery; category: Horticultural Therapy & Health Services – all sections; and category: Landscapes for Health – therapeutic gardens and restorative gardens.

Key Organizations

Books, journals & epublications on grieving and bereaved populations and plant-based programs

[Death Studies](#) journal.

Harris, DL., & Winokuer, HR. (2019). *Principles and practice of grief counseling*, 3rd Edition.

Chapter 7: Working with bereaved individuals in the grief counseling setting.

Chapter 11: [The clinician's toolbox: Therapeutic modalities and techniques in the context of grief.](#)

[Journal of Death and Dying.](#)

[Journal of Loss & Trauma.](#)

Neimeyer, RA. (Ed.). (2012). *Techniques of grief therapy (Series in death, dying, and bereavement)*. 1st Edition. Routledge.

Thompson, BE., & Neimeyer, RA. (2014). *Grief and the expressive arts: Practices for creating meaning*. Routledge.

Research & articles on grieving and bereaved populations and plant-based programs

Recently published selected research & articles:

Bodin, K., & Cassidy, R. (2019). Learning from teaching: Creating curricula for end-of-life therapies courses. *AHTA Magazine*, 47(1), 4-8.

Cacciatore, J., Gorman, R., & Thieleman, K. (2020). Evaluating care farming as a means to care for those in trauma and grief. *Health Place*, 62,102281.

Cleary, A., Dean, J., Pollock, D. et al. (2022) Nature-based interventions for bereavement care. A scoping review protocol. *JBIEvidence Synthesis*, 20(5), 1344-1352

de Los Santos, A., Daiz, B.G., & Rosales, E.L. (2022). Coronaphobia and coping among the bereaved: The mediating role of gardening during the Covid-19 pandemic. *Nurse Media Journal of Nursing*, 12(1), 13-23.

Gorman, R., & Cacciatore, J. (2020). Care-farming as a catalyst for healthy and sustainable lifestyle choices in those affected by traumatic grief. *NJAS: wageningen Journal of Life Science*, 92(00339).

Gorman, R. & Cacciatore, J. (2017). Cultivating our humanity: A systematic review of care farming &

traumatic grief. *Health Place*, 47,12-21.

Machado, M.M., & Swank, J.M. (2018). Therapeutic gardening: A counseling approach for bereavement from suicide. *Death Studies*, 43(2), 1-5.

Marsh, P., & Spinaze, A. (2016). Community gardens as sites of solace and end-of-life support: A literature review. *Int J Palliat Nurs.*, 22(5), 214-9.

Ng, KST., Sia, A., Ng, MKW., Tan. CTY., et al. (2018). Effects of horticultural therapy on Asian older adults: A randomized controlled trial. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 15 (8), 1705.

Patterson, P., McDonald, F.E.J., Kelly-Dalgety, E. et al. (2021). Development and evaluation of the Good Grief program for young people bereaved by familial cancer. *BMC Palliative Care*, 20(1), 64.

Psychology Tools. (2024). [Psychological assessment tools for mental health: Grief, loss & bereavement.](#)

Stanko, MC. (2023). Therapeutic horticulture for adults experiencing grief from the loss of a loved one. University of Florida: ORH 4905 coursework, Certificate of Horticultural Therapy.

Thieleman, K., Cacciatore, J., & Gorman, R. (2021). 'Perhaps something of beauty can grow:' Experiences of care farming for grief. *Death Studies Advance Online publications.*

Examples of grieving and bereaved populations and plant-based programs

AIDS Memorial Grove San Francisco memorializes those who died of the disease in a nature-inspired setting.

<https://www.aidsmemorial.org/>

Angel's Garden at Virtua Hospital – Voorhees, NJ is an outdoor sanctuary garden for parents who have lost a baby, a place to honor their short lives.

<https://designforgenerations.com/case-studies/angels-garden-at-virtua-hospital-voorhees-nj/>

BloomBox Floral Studio, Florida, in conjunction with a local therapeutic horticulture practitioner deliver workshops for people attending to or grieving for a loved one, creating a unique floral design in their honor/memory.

<https://letsreimagine.org/about/mission>

Children's Memorial Parks in Tucson Arizona has several sites where engraved names of children appear on granite walls at Children's Memorial Park, & on metal walls of the Children's Memorial Garden in Michael Perry Park in Spanish & English.

<https://tucsoncleanandbeautiful.org/adopt-a-park-public-areas/other-programs/childrens-memorial-parks/>

Hope Springs Gardening offers in person and online gardening workshops to organizations delivering services for baby and child loss.

www.hopespringsgardening.org.uk

Sage Mountain Botanical Sanctuary's (New England) course "[Creating an Herbal Toolkit for End of Life Care](#)" in Florida includes herb knowledge, nervous system and plant interactions with a focus on this stage, family and care partners who would be involved.

<https://sagemountain.com/>

The SUDC UK offers bereavement support weekend retreats to parents who have lost a child or a baby in conjunction with *Hope Springs Gardening* that delivers therapeutic gardening workshops.

www.sudc.org.uk

Teddys Wish demonstrates how gardening can be a helpful, healing activity for those in deep grief in their bereavement support weekend retreats to parents who have lost a child or a baby in conjunction with *Hope Springs Gardening*.

www.teddyswish.org

The Worst Girl Gang Ever is a large online membership platform and community supporting people who have experienced baby loss or miscarriage. *Hope Springs Gardening* delivers an online “sowing the seeds of hope” workshop in partnership with this organization.

<https://theworstgirlgangever.co.uk>

Twigs Community Gardens in Swindon, UK. has a new “Garden of Hope”. Plans for an 8-10 week program for a bereavement support group at TWIGS in this space and using TWIGS resources for nature-based and HT activities in conjunction with *Hope Springs Gardening* should be realized in 2024.

www.twigscommunitygardens.org.uk

Videos, websites & webinars on grief and programming for bereaved populations

Gardening Through Grief - A Conversation with Practitioners in the Field video with Carrie McCann and Eleanor Moriarty Wroath offers therapeutic goals related to gardening, along with program ideas.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-TGhOZWWQM>

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (n.d.). Resources on traumatic grief.

<https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/trauma-types/traumatic-grief>

THAD (Therapeutic Horticulture Activity Database) offers TH activities across populations including bereaved (activities: nature artwork, poem + nature walk, commemorative seed packets).

<https://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/therapeutic-horticulture-activities-database/>

Related organizations

[ReImagine](#)

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