

GRIEF ADVOCACY

Grief Inclusivity

A Necessity in the Modern Workplace

What is Grief Inclusivity?

Grief inclusivity is an important part of any organization. It's often fallen under the EAP service umbrella or seen as a "nice to have.". However, in today's world, it's becoming more and more important to have grief inclusivity policies and procedures in place.

It means dusting off our antiquates bereavement leave policies and processes and determining how best the organization can serve it employees while they are on bereavement leave, how to help their team rally around them in helpful ways and how to make a return into the workplace more accomodating.

Grief Advocacy has accumulated important research, combined it with their experiences of assisting organizations across North America to deliver this report on practical steps that will improve your bereavement processes and having you hit your HR goals.



"People don't come back to work when they have healed. They come back to work because they have too."

Grief Advocacy, Inc.

Our mission is to help organizations revolutionize what it means to belong by creating working environments that support the emotional wellbeing of their grieving employees.

We have had the honour of supporting healthcare workers through the pandemic, teams that have lost colleagues and Human Resource Departments looking to upskill and train not only themselves, but leaders inside their organizations.

We start first by meeting people where they are. We offer in person, online and workshops to ensure your teams can make the most of this learning as quickly and as richly as possible.

We look forward to support you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Hines".

Sarah Hines
www.griefadvocacy.com

Sarah Hines, our Founder with over 25 years of executive communication and coaching skills combined her passions in life to help companies create trust and belonging through adversity.



HR Transformation Goals

In a recent Study by Mercer: Global Talent Trends 2023 Highlights, they listed out the defining transformations that HR will face in 2023. And while each of these deserve a spotlight, how do we prioritize these so that they have the biggest impact across our organizations?

It is my belief that intersectionality becomes extremely important as we look to make big changes here. What initiatives can we take on that will help across all five of these priorities?

I would like to make the case for grief inclusivity and how it can drastically changes each of these initiatives, what to think about if you decide to launch into action on grief inclusivity and most importantly the most impactful ways you can do this easily!

1 Upholding diversity, equity and inclusion

2 Focusing on company culture development

3 Impacting total well-being outcomes

4 Enabling new ways of working (remote, hybrid and gig)

5 Enabling a skills-based organization

1 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

When we decide to build better policies and processes to take care of our bereaved employees, we are systematically creating more inclusive workplaces. This doesn't mean developing a process that includes a hand off to EAP. I'm talking about what your organization, their leader and their team practices to become more inclusive of employees who experience loss. There are so many layers to this but we can start simply with a few inclusive considerations:

- The death of my mother may not be felt as significantly as the death of my cousin. Consider removing the familial bonds to the amount of bereavement leave offered.
- More often than ever before, people have to travel home to get to a funeral. Do you policies allow and support the additional time and expense for travel?
- Spiritual Considerations are important. How can you also ensure that your employees have the amount of time available to them in order to observe their families traditional funeral rites?



The answer to these questions, should not be solved solely with mental health days. There are multiple ways of ensuring that your employees bereavement can be accommodated.

2 Company Culture Development

If there was every a way to show your employees how important they are to your organization, or to actively live your corporate values and culture, it would be in the emotionally hard times.

Great Places to Work posted The 6 Elements of Great Company Culture. At Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For®, employees express a sense of winning together when times are good—and sticking together when times are tough. and that Community was one of the most important elements to creating a great corporate culture.. So it's a great priority for 2023, so how can you refresh your bereavement policies to reflect this idea of coming together when times are tough?



Grief Recovery Institute: The Hidden Costs of Grief in the Workplace Study

When an employee announces and goes on bereavement leave, the only way your team moves forward on deliverables, is teamwork through uncertainty. How can we make their experience more thorough and inclusive?

- Proper Communication with the Bereaved to fully understand how the team can support them.
- Leadership Communication with their teams, what the bereaved has requested and how to ensure their still part of the process.
- Perhaps recording all meetings via conference calls for the bereaved to watch?

There is no community inside a policy discussion with an EAP flyer attached. There is no community inside the idea "of cutting them off work to deal with more important matters." that is not what community does.

So how does your team rally and how can you live your corporate values in your care for this community?

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"I travelled to my mothers funeral in India and it was so wonderful to get a chance to view these meetings while I was there. I stayed up to date while lying on my bed with my eyes closed, just listening, like I was still important. The best was when Fiona said "If you are listening Meera, we miss you and love you! I am so very grateful for this amazing team..."

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HR Transformation Goals

3 Impacting Total Well-Being Outcomes

This, while it feels cold to do say, however it is a truth of Short Term and Long Term Disability - it is costly. With tight budgets and employees already burning it on both ends, having an employee go on short term disability is not ideal. And while grief is not considered an illness, most STD claims are triggered when an employee slips into complex grief or into depression. It behooves organizations to consider a few things:

- Remote Work Accommodation
- internal Role shifts (taking on a lighter work load)
- Hour shifting (when working remotely in different time zones.)



The goal is to keep employees at work and as health as possible but that doesn't mean getting back to normal. If someone close has died, there is no normal to go back too. This really means that your employee, while still maintaining all of the skills they had before their loss, in many ways has changed.

That means Return to Work Planning is beyond important to their overall well being. Please consider a few different options here:

- Check in's while they are off.
- Allowing them to take a few days to work from home
- Preparing them to answer emotional questions with the stories they want to share and with whom.
- Preparing a Plan B and communicating that if needed with the team.

As you know with your other initiatives, this is a grassroots initiative and it cannot be done perfectly by everyone but initiating the conversation and the check ins are key.

4 Enabling New Ways to Work

Perhaps this goes without saying for much of the corporate world. Remote work can be easily accommodated now but perhaps your workforce is required onsite like healthcare, many industrial organizations or Emergency Services.

Giving small work from home projects might be exactly what your employee needs to get back on their feet. This could be something that their leader needs assistance with, maybe its one of those initiatives you haven't had time to focus on?



Another consideration could be allowing them to work out of country for a while so they can work through all the bureaucracy of estate settlements. If you have gone through it, you know it's the worst experience ever and can take up to 18 months for this to be settled in total. Those initial months are critical in some regions of the world and being there, in person, can save you a world of pain.

HR Transformation Goals

5 Enabling a Skills-based Organization

This is where your efforts often multiply. You need leaders who can swirl in the emotional mire of grief without becoming therapist and without taking it all home. So as you look to people leaders inside your organizations skill set - what would it mean to improve their collection of emotional wellness skills with helping griever stay at work in a healthy way?

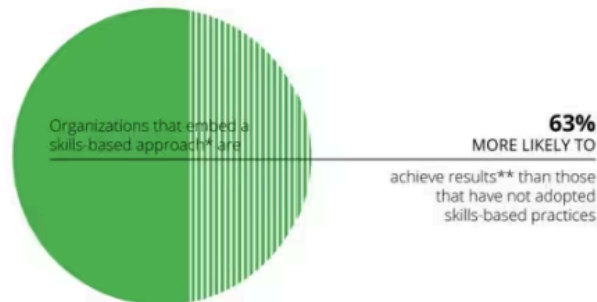
- Perhaps there is an internal advocate role that supports employees with their return to work journey?
- Maybe it's just a skill set that people leaders need to embrace?
- Perhaps it's the role of People and Culture to help those griever navigate a sense of belonging or,
- perhaps its a community of griever like what we hear about in this podcast with [Sam Lillemoen at Expedia](#).

When you hear Sam's story, you will be so glad to hear that some leaders have the emotional awareness to shift in the moment but I am imagining that board room story, without it.

Perhaps there are people in your organization today that can help guide you, advocate for your bereaved employees or have been through your current process and help guide what your company needs.

In this [latest report by Deloitte](#), they found that Skills-based organizations are:

Skills-based organizations see results



SKILLS-BASED ORGANIZATIONS ARE...

107%
MORE LIKELY TO
place talent effectively

79%
MORE LIKELY TO HAVE
a positive workforce experience

49%
MORE LIKELY TO
improve processes to maximize efficiency

98%
MORE LIKELY TO HAVE
a reputation as a great place to grow and develop

57%
MORE LIKELY TO
anticipate change and respond effectively and efficiently

47%
MORE LIKELY TO
provide an inclusive environment

98%
MORE LIKELY TO
retain high performers

52%
MORE LIKELY TO
innovate

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Resources Included:

[When does Grief become a Disability?](#)
[Corporate Culture Matters Says New Study](#)
[Deloitte: The skills-based organization](#)
[Mercer: Future of Work with Global HR Trends](#)
[The Grief Recovery Institute](#)

To Learn more about
building a Grief
Inclusive Workplace, or
should your team
require support, please
reach out.



griefadvocacy.com