PESI – THE GRIEF SUMMIT
"ANXIETY IN THE WAKE OF LOSS: STRATEGIES FOR WORKING WITH THE MISSING STAGE OF GRIEF"
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>> ZACH TAYLOR: Good morning, everyone, and when I say everyone, I mean -- (Silence).

>> KATE: Good morning, everyone, we apologize for the technical difficulties. Good morning, we have so many people on. 15,000. Good morning, everyone. Thank you so much for being here. We apologize for these technical difficulties. We have so many people that are on. We're trying to make all of this work. Thank you so much for being -- (Silence).

>> ZACH TAYLOR: Okay. How are we doing? Did I come back? All right. I'm not sure if we're still live, but we just had a little bit of a glitch. I'm going to do my best to recover. Thank you all for being patient. I'm sure someone will tell me that I'm live. I'm on my backup camera down here. The important thing is that Claire Bidwell Smith is still here this morning and we're going to get her to you in a moment.

Claire is going to take questions throughout her presentation. So if you have questions related to something that Claire has said, please put those in the Q&A, and thank you so much for your patience. About 16,000 of you joined at once. We froze for a couple of minutes. So I hope we're back with

you. Thank you so much for your patience. And if you have come to The Grief Summit, you are in the right place.

We really want to welcome the community of clinicians who have taken time to join this morning. I do understand how frustrating technical issues can be, and it looks like we're back with you again. So welcome, again, to this community of clinicians to talk about one of the most important topics that many of us are facing right now, which is this fear around grieving and grief. What actually is grieving? Is it helpful? Can grieving actually transform us?

So every once in a while, a clinician, a person comes along who helps us grapple with these questions, who helps us create a new conversation around these questions. And this meeting's keynote speaker is one of those people.

After losing both her parents at a young age, she went on to become a hospice counselor herself and then going on to writing three books that have now been released in over 19 countries, and her work has caught the attention of notables such as Maria Shriver and Cheryl Strayed. She is truly one of the world's best experts on this concept and experience of grief. And today, she has come to be with all of us. Please welcome to The Grief Summit stage Claire Bidwell Smith. Thank you. There she is.

>> CLAIRE BIDWELL SMITH: Thank you so much, Zach.

>> ZACH TAYLOR: Hi there, Claire. We made it. It only took a few minutes. I'll be in the background, Claire, when you need me for questions. Others, we look forward to you. Thank you.

>> CLAIRE BIDWELL SMITH: Hi, everybody, welcome. I am so incredibly humbled to be here with you today. I can't believe how many of you have joined this summit. As I understand, there have been 60,000 registrations and tens of thousands of you on now. It's a real testament to, I think, our changing and growing understanding of grief, of everything we've been going through in the last year particularly. I'm so grateful to organizations like PESI for hosting this and providing us space for all of us to talk about this. I'm excited to dive into it all with you.

As Zach told you, I'll share my screen, and we will start this PowerPoint presentation. There are people around the world, Boston, Chicago, London, Portugal. Welcome, you guys. This is amazing. I'm Claire Bidwell Smith, like Zach told you. I'm a therapist specializing in grief. I've been in private practice over a decade, and I have written these three books about grief and anxiety. I never would have dreamed my most recent book on grief and anxiety would come out during a pandemic when the world was going through grief and anxiety, so the last year has been interesting for me professionally to step

into everything that I have been working on for so many years. I feel like I've been shouting from the rooftops about grief for the last decade and not everybody wants to talk about it. People have trouble talking about grief, life, deaths, how we move through it. But in this last year in the pandemic, I think we have come to believe how important it is to make space about grief, to talk about grief, to help each other through it, and also, to talk about how do we become better prepared for end of life. These are such important things that we need to be paying attention to all along. And many of us have. But in this last year, I think we have seen, more than ever, as frontline health workers have had to confront death and grief and anxiety in ways they were never prepared to for trained to. All of us, as citizens of the world, have confronted all of this.

I know there are people dying, everywhere, every day. People are grieving everywhere, every day. We are seeing light at the end of the tunnel, but we are still working through this together and there's a lot of grief to come. At clinicians, our job is to rise up and meet this. When I was in grad school getting my master's in clinical psychology, so many of my fellow students, when we talked about grief and death, they were all like, no, don't want to do that when I become a therapist. Oh, no. If so many people don't want to work in this area, I'd better do it, because I feel comfortable with it.

And I feel comfortable with it because -- let me see, I was looking for the picture of my parents. There it is. This is my parents, Sally and Jerry. I was 14 years old when they both got cancer at the same time. I'm an only child, and my mom died when I was 18. My dad died seven years later when I was 25. I was very much alone in the world then. Both of their deaths were very different. The experience of their end of life, the experience of my grief for them, my relationships with them, very different, but also, intertwined as completely informs the work I do today.

I can't imagine what they would think of me today as a grief counselor. I was always a writer. I planned on becoming a writer and writing books, but I never thought I would be writing about grief and death and end of life. But I'm glad I'm here to do it. I think it's such an important way for others to move through it and understand it.

When I was going through my own losses, I wasn't sure where to turn. This was over 20 years ago. And thankfully, the culture of the clinical world around grief and loss has changed so much. There are so many more resources, so many more books, so many more amazing people sharing about grief. But 20 years ago, there wasn't as much. When I went through my own losses, I didn't know where to turn. I didn't know what books to read. I

didn't know who to talk to. I didn't know how to grieve. So I didn't for a long time. I tried to push away my grief and it bubbled out in depression, anxiety, in relationship troubles. I really struggled to just find a place in my life for my grief. I kept pushing forward, moving through school, trying to figure out who to be and my grief kept spilling out in different places.

One of the biggest places my grief appeared was in the form of anxiety, which I didn't understand at the time. I started having panic attacks shortly after my mother died. I ended up in the ER, heart racing, tingling, light-headedness, so many of my clients have come to me saying they went through similar experiences with. For a long time, I just struggled with my anxiety, not linking it at all to the loss of my parents.

It was not until some classes in my undergrad and later in my master's program when I started to learn about trauma and grief that I started to have these light bulbs go on in my head, that anxiety was linked to going through so much loss at such a young age.

I wrote an article for slate.com in maybe 2010, the same as my book, "Anxiety: The Missing Stage of Grief," and I got more emails and letters from any of the talks I've given, any of the books I've written. So many people wrote to me and said, is this real, this connection between grief and anxiety. Is this -- my father died and I've been having panic attacks and I'm having all kinds of hypochondria, all the things. And my office filled up with people suffering from grief and anxiety, and it was something I began to study from a personal standpoint. I knew it, but I was seeing it in clients across the spectrum, different losses, different kinds of people, how anxiety was coming up for them. All of them became the basis of this book that I wrote. "Anxiety: The Missing Stage of Grief." I think it's become much more widely talked about in the last year, especially since the pandemic, has come on to us.

And so I think we're going to, as clinicians, have to do a lot of work in this realm. I think a lot of you are probably seeing this already in your clients. I think that you're going to see a lot more of it. I have found that there's, you know, a few different reasons, I think, anxiety bubbles up after a loss, and some of that is kind of what I talked about, you know, not knowing how to grieve, not knowing how to find space for it, not knowing where to turn in your grief. When we don't know what to do with our grief, it becomes very overwhelming. We suppress it, push it away, turn away from it, and it often bubbles out. Anger, depression, anxiety. I think we're also going through a major loss, and so disorienting. It's similar to the pandemic in this last year. We were all going along, kind of living our

lives, thinking that everything was what it was. We could have had these dependable futures that we assumed we were headed towards, and then this pandemic came on and pulled the rug out from underneath us. None of us were prepared for this. Our medical communities weren't prepared, our government infrastructure was not prepared, the homes and families. And when you go through that, it feels like the regular has been pulled out. It reminds you of our mortality. It reminds us that nothing is ever quite safe, and we can't quite depend on anything. And this is true all the time. This is always true in life. This is life, it is unexpected, and we're never exactly safe all the time, but I think we operate under the illusion that we know what is happening and we can plan for things and control outcomes.

So when we go through a big loss or a pandemic, we have this big reminder that things around really up to us. And that can cause an enormous amount of anxiety. I see this for people who have never gone through a loss and then go through a very significant loss -- a close family member, a close friend, a spouse. It just makes the world feel completely different than it ever did and not knowing how to navigate that new world can bring up a lot of anxiety.

So I see it come up there. Unsympathetic grief culture is a part of this. The emotions that come up, you can drop to your knees in the middle of your day, panic attacks, outbursts of anger, things that you've never experienced in your life if you haven't been through something like this. And how do you go from your regular old life to incorporating all of these emotions into your new life as someone who is grieving and going through a loss? It's really hard to figure out where to turn, and it can cause a lot of anxiety. People get anxious about going into a social situation or a workplace and am I going to have a grief attack, am I going to start crying in the middle of the presentation, am I going to have an angry outburst, and just worrying about those things can cause anxiety.

As I mentioned, this new or deepened fear of mortality is a part of it. As much as we know that life comes to an end at some point, I think we often operate as though it doesn't. We're not great, particularly in Western culture, talking about end of life, embracing it, preparing for it. How many of you out there have end-of-life plans? You know, your partners know your passwords to your bank accounts or where you even have bank accounts. Do your children know what objects you want them to have? Do you have a living will, a trust? So many of us don't have any of these things in place. Hopefully after this last year we've begun to put more of that in place. But I think not

having those things in place lends to this illusion that we're not going to die anytime soon, don't have to prepare for it.

Therefore, when someone dies unexpectedly around us, it reminds us that we are mortal and we're not going to be here forever.

I think that trauma can lend itself to grief, when there's a suicide, an accident, all of that brings anxiety.

Inadequate processing. I can't tell you how many clients who come to me years after a big loss and tried everything they can do to not process their grief and their loss and that led to them pushing down every -- not having it -- having it spill out in other places.

Broad effects of loss, understanding how much a significant loss impacts your life, all the places it does. Think about somebody who loses a spouse -- the financial impact, the housing impact, all the childcare. So many things ripple into our lives as a whole. Repressed grief that I talked about. Inadequate processing of anxiety. The important thing about anxiety, it is possible to work on it, to diminish it, to get your hands around it and get some control over it. When we don't, it becomes quite insidious. It builds and builds and becomes this big looping whole of anxiety that we get stuck in, and it can be very debilitating. And then the failure to face and embrace death. So these are points I see about where this connection is.

These are some of the symptoms between grief and anxiety that I see a lot. Panic attacks, hypervigilance, excessive worry, hypochondria, irritability, restlessness, social phobias, racing or recurrent thoughts, insomnia, grief attacks, and obsessive thoughts. I'm sure you see this in your patients.

How is grief-anxiety different from general activity? It's linked to the grief. Your client has never been anxious before or had normal amounts of anxiety that we all do, and then they go through a significant loss and all the sudden they are having panic attacks, they are experiencing hypochondria, the hypervigilance, racing thoughts or they've had a certain level of anxiety through their life and then they go through a loss and it's exacerbated. And you will see these anxious points around the loss it is. A lot of anxiety about death, excessive ruminations around the death, anxious attachments in relationships, avoidance of death and grief. This hypochondria worrying about our own death happens a lot.

So when I begin to work with an anxious client who has had a loss, the first thing I do is try to talk to them about anxiety. I think that's a really big part of it. I think a lot of my clients who come in, like my experience, where I didn't realize I had experience, I didn't realize what it was, I didn't connect

it to my own loss, a lot of my clients aren't seeing it either. So they came in, they're not sure what's happening with them. They've either had a panic attack or developed this hypochondria rumination or obsessing about the death over and over. So I sit with them and help them understand general anxiety. What is it, how does it work, talking with them about it so they can get a base understanding of it.

I did this before I talk to them about the grief. Anxiety is a symptom of the grief, and they're too caught up to begin working on the grief and loss just yet. So the first system would ask them, you know, talking with them and hearing their story about what happened, hearing their story of the anxiety, normalizing the anxiety, giving them some quick tips before they head out of what to do with anxiety.

So these are some old statistics, prepandemic about anxiety, but I think we'll see some different ones coming out in the next year. But just helping them understand that anxiety is a natural reaction to going through something scary. You know, it's our mind's expression of worry. It is fear of something real or imagined. And when we go through a big loss, that fear is both real and imagined, right? So we're imagining all the kinds of ways our life is going to change, what our life is going to be like without the person that we lost. These are kind of imagined ways. But we're also going through this real fear of having watched our person die, having to think about our mortality, our own health, our own other relationships with our children, our family members. So there's a lot of anxiety that's both real and imagined that people go through when they're grieving. So I think helping them understand that, piece it out and start to talk about it and look at it is helpful.

You know, talking about the anxiety response, going through some of these physical symptoms with our clients is really important. I think anxiety is such an interesting thing because it's so physical, you know, it's born largely out of this mental and emotional place, but it becomes so physical that people think there's something actually wrong with them. So many clients think they have some kind of heart condition or dream up all kinds of things that we might be having, and really, it's anxiety manifesting in these symptoms. When you think about it, of course it's our body's response to all of these emotions. Think about when you cry. You think about something bad and liquid comes out of our mind. So when we're going through this fear and anxiety, our body is experiencing that. Talking to your clients about this, fear response symptoms, all the different ways that we can begin to calm our bodies, too, is really important, and we'll get to that later in this today.

But talking about these big emotions that come, I think it's really important in helping people start to understand it's okay. I think half my work is giving clients permission to grieve. I can't believe the number of clients who come into my office and say, I think I'm doing this wrong. I'm stuck in this aspect of grief or I skipped this one, I'm crying too much or too long and I don't think I'm grieving yet. No one has any idea how to go about this. Our grief is as unique as we are. It's as unique as the relationship to the person we lost. So there in essence is no right way to grieve. There's no perfect way to do this. Having people find the sense of how they need to move through a loss is really important. Helping them understand, what is grief, what does it look like, what are the ways they're going to experience it and giving them permission to let it be as big as it is is really important.

Still kind of talking about anxiety with them, about how it can be addictive. This is an interesting thing to me. I think we can get stuck on our anxiety and kind of keep coming back to it over and over. You know, we feel like if we're worried about something, we're doing something about it, right? If we spend a lot of time hyperfocusing on the details about something or worried about if our kid is going to get home from the bus stop okay, we feel like we're doing something about, it we're in control of it, and we sometimes develop this fear that if we don't worry about something, something bad will happen, and we need to hyperfocus on it. So helping clients see that and think about it.

I go through these anxiety symptoms with them that we've been talking about. These are some of the physical ones that people experience. And, again, it's remarkable how much we will sometimes think that these are, you know, actual illnesses rather than the anxiety coming on.

I want to make a note about this too. Sometimes these come on after anxious thoughts and sometimes it feels like these symptoms come before the thought and these physical symptoms cause more anxious thought. So I think that is something to note.

Often, I think what happens is we're thinking about so much on an unconscious level and not even realizing the kind of anxious thoughts we're having and then their bubbling up and these set us off into a cycle a little bit.

We talked about some of this. So, you know, again, just normalizing anxiety after a loss with your clients is really important. Giving them that permission to feel the anxiety and to understand what it's all about.

So this is where I start to work on a different section with my clients. Once I've given them the space idea of what is

anxiety, how does it work, how does it manifest, what does it look like, and why has it come on after your loss. That's important to think about. And then we move on to the grief part. I see that so many people are experiencing this anxiety because they're not dealing with the grief. My dad died six months ago and they only gave me six days off work and everyone is encouraging me to go back to it, back to the school program, whatever people do and move away from their grief. But really, that only serves to push it down and have it come up in all different kinds of places.

So the next stage, I sit down, what is your grief like? How have you grieved, how would you like to grieve, what are you afraid of with your grief, what does it feel like, what does it look like. So talking to your client about what their particular grief is like. Letting them open up to the idea of it. It's so scary to people. They want to close the door on their grief. They say if they start crying, they'll never stop. If they open the door to the loss itself and see it, they may fall apart. And yes, we may fall apart for days or months, cry or days or years, but the only way to get to the other side of it is to move through it. So helping the client begin to feel comfortable in her grief and understand the place it comes and really process it is so important.

I love this quote from Elisabeth Kübler-Ross. The reality is that you will grieve forever. You will never get over the loss of a loved one. You will learn to live with it. You will heal and you will rebuild yourself around the loss you have suffered. You will be whole again but you will never be the same. Nor should you be the same nor would you want to. And this idea of getting over a big loss, we never get over it. It changes us forever.

So I go over a lot of the symptoms of grief with clients, again, trying to figure out what is their grief like. Everyone presents so differently. So helping them look at where their grief is coming up. Some people feel numb. That's normal. I didn't feel the first year after my mother died, and then I cried for two years straight. Forgetfulness. I see clients become very forgetful. They space out. They can't remember what happened an hour ago, what they ate for breakfast. I think grief takes up such a huge part of our hearts and minds it takes a lot of space.

Crying is a big symptom. Some don't cry at all. Some cry nonstop. Some people cry in between. Some people need to have permission to cry a little more. Frustration, anger, short fuses. I think we see this a lot with a lot of different kinds of people, just the irritability and they unloaded on the UPS guy that came to drop off a package, and they just go nuts. Or,

you know, getting short with your children or your partner, being aware that this is a symptom of grief. I don't think people recognize that. Lethargy, depression. I'm going to go through this and then we're going to take a few questions and see where you guys are at and how this is resonating for you.

Feelings of going crazy. I hear this one a lot. And this, I think, ties into the anxiety. People come in, I think I lost my mind. I don't feel like myself. I feel like I'm going crazy. And it's true. You know, our whole world changes when we go through this big loss. Everything is different for us, and it can just feel so unmooring and like you're a whole different world and person.

Before we get into the five stages of grief, I'd like, Zach, if we have any big questions coming up from anybody.

>> ZACH TAYLOR: Claire, you have so much questions coming in, we actually broke our Q&A. So you said some things that actually kind of blew my mind. You said -- and someone brought this up as well. You will grieve forever? What is it like when clients hear you say something like that, or they hear something like that? You will grieve forever. I think most people come in our office, come in to end their grieving or get over their grieving. Can you unpack that a little bit?

>> CLAIRE BIDWELL SMITH: Yeah, absolutely. That's a really important question. I think that can sound really scary to someone who is going through the beginning of a loss. No one wants to grieve forever. It is such a huge, difficult experience. And I think that I'm always conscious when I say that, that to assure them that it's not that they'll be in the throes of grief as they are in the first year or two, but that they will never get over the loss of this person. They'll never stop wishing that person were here. They'll never feel like it's okay that that person died. That's something you want to make sure people understand. I'm almost 25 years into the loss of my mother. She was my best friend. I'm not over it. I'm fine. I'm not grieving every day. I live an incredibly beautiful life. I have three kids, a husband. I love my work. My life is so deeply meaning and fulfilling. But I still wish my mom and wish she were back and there is time when that grief gets opened up here or there. The birth of a child or a big moment and I miss my mom and have moment of sadness.

So helping clients understand that. I think when they feel pressured to get over the loss of the person, that can feel really incongruent. When it's the parent off a spouse or a child or a sibling, someone so integral, the idea of getting over them is so scary, I think scarier than grieving forever. Does that make sense?

>> ZACH TAYLOR: Yeah. One of the big questions that's popping up, among many people here -- and there are over 18,000 now -- thank you for those. And those who stayed through our early technical issues. A lot of people want to know, how does the grief around the death of a person differ from the loss of a relationship of a person, like a marriage or some other kind of permanent loss that doesn't involve, maybe, the death of the person? Can you help us tease apart the differences between the two, if there are any differences?

>> CLAIRE BIDWELL SMITH: Absolutely. That's such a good question, and I have heard this question more than ever this last year, which I find very heartening. We're really starting to talk about grief in new ways, starting to pay attention to it. But in the last year, more than ever, as a culture, a as a world, we realize we can grieve so many things, not just a loss. We can grieve our children being home, the loss of a world, racial injustice. We can grieve for so many things. It does look different here and there. I think we move through a lot of perceived emotions. Anger, depression, anxiety, layers of acceptance with it. I think we do need to honor those kind of disenfranchised grief, losing a pet, a marriage, a friendship. I see a lot of people ask, is this grief? Is this what I'm feeling when I go through that -- and yes, of course, it is grief, and giving ourselves permission to feel it, not just to feel it, but to recognize it and honor it, to find a way to let it change you and recognize that it is changing your life. I think we miss so much of these feelings of grief and change, you know. Loss is change. Transition. And that can be so hard. We push that away a lot. But I think if we lean into it and open up to all the different ways that we do transform when we go through these losses, that that's a helpful way to honor it.

>> ZACH TAYLOR: Yeah. Okay. I'll ask you two other questions that are sort of pressing in the chat, and then we'll move on. We'll have another Q&A, at least a couple of more Q&As with Claire before she's done here.

Two questions. One has to do with the time frame for grieving, and I think this plays off of the statement that you made that, well, actually grieve forever. But clients do come in and ask, it's been a year. Should I still feel this way? It's been two years. Should I still feel this way? So can you help -- how would you answer that question that I think a lot of the people on this session are probably being asked by their clients. Should I still feel this way after this amount of time? How would you feel that?

>> CLAIRE BIDWELL SMITH: This is really important, and I come across this a lot. The answer is that we really need to dig in as clinicians and unpack where they are, what their

relationship was, what their grief is. It's so different for everyone. Someone who loses a child. Yes, five years out, you're still grieving. Of course. That's kind of a no-brainer. Someone who is going through a big loss, two years out and they're not sure they should still be grieving -- I think looking at what other ways they grieve, and tell me about the last two years. Tell me about the points that you've feel you've grieved. What did it look like? Sometimes they are grieving and they're stuck in it for some reason. I have clients that feel if they're letting go of the grief, they're letting go of the person. So I find that staying connected in other ways is important. And some people really haven't grieved for the two years, so they got busy, put their nose to the ground and haven't gotten to it. So some losses, you know, I really think a first five years after a significant loss is a lot of kind of ups and downs of grief. I think we see it play out in many different ways. And that may sound surprising to some people, because often, we give people six months to a year to move through their losses, and that's not enough time. I think that six months to a year is about the acute grieving, and then we see how the loss plays out in their life. And that brings up so much more grief. You know, a teenage daughter going through high school after she loses her dad. Maybe the first year she's grieving but in the ensuing years she's going through all these experiences without a parent and it brings up other layers of loss and she's moving through it. And we see that in all different ways. So taking time to discern in their stuck in grief or if they're still going through it or if it's appropriate that they're grieving. Does that make sense?

>> ZACH TAYLOR: Yes. Last question before you move on to your next session. How do you work with a client who have the image of a death of a loved one in their mind? Maybe they saw something graphic. This came up several times in the Q&A. There is this one specifically about seeing a loved one after they have died by suicide. How do you specifically work with the images that are sort of trapped in our client's mind after something tragic like that?

>> CLAIRE BIDWELL SMITH: Yeah. I hear this one a lot too, and it's big. I think that many of us who go through a loss, whether it's suicide, whether it's an accident, whether it's an illness and you've got anxiety, we have those images kind of in our minds for a while. It can be very traumatic to see a loved one in that state. It's very traumatic to see someone die. I don't think the images lost forever. When they're not -- when they're not obviously traumatic, like an accident or a suicide, when it's maybe a long illness, I think we'll see a client have those images for six months, maybe a year, come back and forth,

and then they seem to give way and they kind of disappear after a while and the client now remembers them the way they used to. But traumatic can have them get stuck. The image will come up and immediately slam the door on it, right? Like it's just too much. So actually helping them through a safe space to sit with the image. The image is coming up over and over because the brain is trying to process it. When we try to shut it down, it keeps knocking on the door. So brings up intense emotions is really helpful to them get into a place where they can release it. I think things like EMDR are great for this, so I would recommend that.

Thanks, Zach. I'll see you in a bit. Great questions, everybody. I'm so glad that you are putting everything in here.

I would love to talk about the five stages for a moment. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, I'm such a huge admirer of her work and she is such a huge pioneer of everything we're working on today. She was a Swiss doctor in 1969 coined the five stages of grief. She was working in a hospital in Chicago and began to see the experiences of people who were facing end of life, receiving terminal diagnoses and headed towards their own death. And we're seeing the range of emotions that we're going through with that, and no one in the hospital paid attention to this. No one was creating space for them to process it. So she originally came one the five stages of death and dying, and they were anger, bargaining, depression, sadness, acceptance. You go into denial, then you become angry, then a bargaining where you're bargaining with your higher power, your doctor, yourself. If I can quit smoking, go home and get better, I'll never drink again, I can be a better person if I can just not die. Then when that comes to a level of depression where you feel like you recognize it's happening and then a layer of acceptance. Okay. This is what I'm headed towards. That makes sense for someone who is headed towards death.

These five stages of grief were then -- excuse me, these five stages were applied to grief and grieving. While I do think they are amazing guideposts for a lot of what we go with grief, I don't think they work in this formula. I think it's been such a great idea, like so many people cling on to this idea, the five stages, because wouldn't it be great if we just had to go through these five points and then we were done with our grief? So, so many of my clients will come in, I think I skipped this one, I don't understand this one, I'm not moving through these the right way. I think our job as clinicians is to recognize these stages, help to normalize and explain them, but to tell our clients they don't have to go through them in a particular way, they don't have to experience every single one of them, there are other stages included. I've been talking a lot about

anxiety. David Kessler has a recent book. I talked about meaning as a stage. I think having a spiritual afterlife quest is often a stage of grieving as well. So talking about these with our clients is important.

When I wrote this book, my publisher asked me, where would you fit in anxiety in these five stages? And I put it around this, maybe replacing it with bargaining or having it come before or after bargaining. Bargaining is an interesting phase for grief. I think we see it as wishful thinking or magical thinking, the way that people go over and over different decisions they made leading up to the death, if I had called a different doctor, showed up that day, things would be different. We see clients go over and over this. And I think that is a form of bargaining. So I don't see bargaining as a huge stage of grief. I think much more anger, depression, anxiety, these other pieces of it. So I see anxiety coming on pretty quickly after someone goes through a big loss. Not maybe immediately, but very early on, in the first few months.

I think that how we lose someone, as I've been talking about, has a big impact on the grief process. Sudden death, long illnesses, traumatic deaths, accidents, suicides. I think that these all have a big impact on how we grieve. I think it's been interesting in this last year, what's been really hard during the pandemic is how many people weren't able to be their loved ones at the time of death. And it's still going on, but especially last year, so many stories of people who were saying good-bye to their loved ones over a FaceTime call that the nurse was facilitating. So heartbreaking that so many people were dying in the hospital and not being able to be with their loved ones. And that has a big impact on the grief process. I think that closure is a myth, but when we can be with their people when they're dying, that we can be with them and say what we need to say, there is a softer experience that they grieve. When we can't be there or this horrible thing or we drop them off at the hospital door and say, I'll see you in a couple of days and then they're gone, that leads to complicated grief, so many ways we wish we could go back and do something different, guilt and frustration, fear. I think considering how your client's person died is important.

We've been talking about this. How long grief lasts. So we kind of answered this, which is great. You know, Edelman had a beautiful book come out, "the Act of Grief," and I highly recommend it, the grief throughout our lifetime and people lost their mothers in our teen years and see how it expands out in different ways. It affects us as mothers, parents, spouses. So her book kind of explores that and I recommend that if you're willing to do some work and reading about how long grief lasts.

These are some questions that I kind of answered in this last Q&A about trying to figure out is your client grieving too long or too short. So, you know, really asking them, do you feel like you've grieved, have you grieved yet, what did it look like? Are there certain areas where you feel like you need to grieve more or less. How do you experience one emotion more than another? People who get stuck in anger or anxiety, they are not letting themselves feel their sadness. They are doing anything to cover up the sadness. And often, if you peel at the lid underneath anger or anxiety, there's a lot of sadness. So helping them get to that place is important. Is someone blocking them from their grief, a stigma around grieving or emotions? Do they need more support? What would that look like?

So a lot of this, what this next part is about kind of how to work through this grief and anxiety. I outlined all of this in my book. And these are the kinds of things that I'll kind of touch on today, but they're outlined pretty extensively in the book. These are the things I work with clients to alleviate their grief anxiety. First, having them tell the story of their loss, sitting in the office -- Zoom, these days -- and what was the story they went through. People need to tell it, to unearth it. Make amends. Are there things that you feel guilty about. That leads to a lot of anxiety.

Helping them take inventory and take charge of their lives. Again, looking at how is this loss impacting their life in a large way. Helping them write through their grief is very important. Retraining the brain through some positive behavior work is important. I think we can get stuck in the anxiety. So working to learn some concrete tools to help you get unstuck. And finding something to believe in. It's not perfectly necessary for everyone to find something to believe in, but it's an interesting stage of grief that I see. I've never met anyone who has gone through a big loss and not wondered where that person was. Some others have come in, with works to which to process that, spiritual frameworks. It's a natural kind of part of the grieving process, of figuring out, what is life about, where is my person, am I still connected with them. And death planning. This is about end of life and acknowledging death. These are the points I work through with every client. I'm just helping them to alleviate their grief and anxiety.

So the beginning part that I do, and I kind of do them in this order, tell the story of loss. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross has a great quote here. You must get it out. Grief must be witnessed to be healed. Grief shared is grief abated. Tell your tale, because it reinforces that your loss mattered. In sharing our story, we dissipate the pain little by little, giving a small

drop to those we meet to disperse it along the way. And this is so important, they don't know how to talk about it, when to talk about it. I remember after my mom died, I couldn't meet any person without wanting them to know that my mother had died. It was such a part of my identity. I didn't know how to make a friend without them wanting to know that my mom had died. So recognizing that with your clients, it become as part of their identity.

These are some storytelling outlets. Obviously, a clinician, or joining a grief loss, writing about the loss, honoring their person and telling stories, anniversary and holiday gatherings. There are so many online grief forums. I love modernloss.com. They share so many beautiful stories there about loss and grief. Finding a family or friend willing to listen, or a therapist.

This is a storytelling exercise I recommend a lot. When thinking about your loss, asking them to think about it with a beginning, a middle, and an end, and helping them consider different beginnings. I have so many different beginnings of my stories. There's the beginning of my life. There's the beginning when my parents both got sick. There's a beginning where my mother died, when my father died, when I became a mom. I could tell these stories with all these different beginnings. Having people understand their loss.

I'm going to talk about this, making amends and guilt a little bit, and then some questions that might be with this. And another Elisabeth Kübler-Ross quote, guilt is perhaps the most painful companion of death. Guilt is the number one thing I see, not every person has to feel guilty, but I see this with so many people. They come in and there's something they wish they could do differently, something they wish they could go back and say, hadn't done, a choice they wish they had made. I see people -- a lot of people didn't realize that their person was going to die. Either through mental illness, something going on in that realm or an accident that came and even with a long illness, like cancer, I think we are very unprepared for death in general. I think that even when someone has a long illness and we're seeing them decline and decline, we really can't imagine they're not going to be here and we're going to lose them. So I think I see so many people who just say, I wish I had known. I wish I understood that they were really going to die. And this really comes back for them over and over and over.

And then I think there's a lot of anxiety around this because feel like there's nothing to be done now. They can't go back and redo it. They can't go back and say the thing. And that feels so haunting to them. So it's something they return to over and over in their head. It's a way they beat themselves up

or feel anger or anxiety. These are some of the common reasons I feel for guilt, not being there at the time of death, not saying a proper good-bye, not apologizing for something, not doing something that could have prevented or suffering. Behaving poorly towards the end, having negative thoughts about the person, feeling relieved about the death, not spending more quality time with and taking the person for granted.

These are some questions you can ask to help your client explore the guilt. But help them understand it's not too late to work through some of these things. We can make amends, in a sense. We can forgive ourselves for things we did or didn't do. I see that's a big piece of the work I do with clients, helping them come to a place of self-forgiveness, self-compassion. None of us are good at saying good-bye to someone. None of us are good at looking death in the eye. I wasn't there my mother died. I had the choice to be and I chose not to and it wrecked me for years. It took me years for self-forgiveness, how we make different choices. And having them write letters to the person, make amends with them, develop a new internal relationship with the person we lost and begin to commune with them in any way we can.

You know, even perhaps sitting down with a spiritual or religious figure and confessing whatever it is you feel guilty about. Often, the things we feel guilty about are perceived. You know, we think we could have done something more when really we couldn't or think that whatever we did was worse than it was, actually. Unburdening it is really important. These are some ways I work with clients on releasing their guilt. Writing a letter to your loved one or yourself, visualizing saying good-bye, do something in honoring of your loved one, visualize your loved one forgiving you. Getting them to a calm place, inviting the person in, and having a conversation with them in their heads. It can be very emotional for clients but they cathartic too, replacing them with positive memories every time you find yourself ruminating in that space, finding something to talk to about the guilt.

I'm going to take questions after this, but I think we can get stuck in this place of guilt because it feels like we're connected to the person in that way, that we're honoring them in some way by feeling so guilty. I think if we were to let ourselves be over it or it's fine that I wasn't there the night she died doesn't mean we don't care anymore, and really, that's not true. What are some ways we can find to stay connected. What are different ways we can be connected rather than holding on to the guilt? Any questions about this, Zach?

>> ZACH TAYLOR: So great. Well, there's many. Something you said, releasing guilt does not mean letting go of your loved

one. What an incredible -- I feel like the world right now, we could go through a week-long grieving retreat, all of us take off from work and stop the world for a little bit.

One of the big questions coming in about something you said, getting closure is a myth. Talk about how getting -- can you unpack how getting closure is actually a myth? Are you saying we never really get closure?

>> CLAIRE BIDWELL SMITH: I think some of us can get closure, but sometimes it's not possible. Sometimes we can get closure, say enough things and the person dies and you're still not ready to let go of them. You're not ready to feel like you did everything you said and wanted to. I think there are cases where we never feel that it's okay that that person died or this idea that we're never going to be okay with it. Never okay that someone died at 20 when they didn't have to. There are times when -- my father, he was 83 when he died, and he had this amazing life, he had done so many credible things, and he had come to peace with his end of life. In some case, there's closures there. But some are not there. They lose someone to a suicide or accident or terrible illness and that's never going to happen. I think finding some level of acceptance that it happened, but that's not closure. There are going to be many deaths and many griefs where it's never okay. How we learn to incorporate that into our lives, how do we let that be a part of it and live with it. That's part of the work we do.

>> ZACH TAYLOR: There is a question about this concept of bargaining. And Marisol brought it up, there are a lot of cultures that would never bring that up, that bargaining is a colonized way of looking at this. Can you give us a bigger picture of this concept we've traditionally called bargaining?

>> CLAIRE BIDWELL SMITH: Yes, I think when Elisabeth Kübler-Ross came up with that concept, it came up with working with people who were experiencing end of life. I think in that sense it makes more sense, a normal reaction, not want to die, what can we do to not have that outcome, to not get there.

When we go through grief, it's different. I don't know that we have that experience at all or as much. I think a lot of this has to do with our lack of ability to face end of life. Western culture in particular. I think that, you know, we think we can live forever and we can beat everything and get through every illness and, you know, kind of play God to ourselves, and I think that when that doesn't work, we end up going through a kind of bargaining phase with it or thinking we can go back and change something. I wish we could.

But I think it's a kind of -- it's when it doesn't -- it doesn't quite make sense for me. It's a tricky one. I think

talking to your clients about that and helping them understand what it is and isn't is important.

>> ZACH TAYLOR: Another question was about preparing for loss. So, you know, I don't know if this exactly fits with what you were talking about today, but can you just comment on clients who may be facing an impending loss of a loved one? So much more now because of modern medicine, we know, you know, people's prognoses. How do you help clients prepare for a loss?

>> CLAIRE BIDWELL SMITH: Yes, anticipatory grief is very real and it causes anxiety, especially when we don't know how long it's going to take, how long the person will be ill, when we're going to care for them, when they'll die, and it's something that can build and feel looming and scary, and you can't, also, really grieve yet because they're not gone. So there's things you can grieve. You can grieve the idea that they're going to be gone. Experience a lot of the feelings of grief. But I think there's a whole nother level to it once the person is actually gone.

So helping a client kind of sit in that space, hold that space for themselves, feel compassion and self-compassion for themselves because it's a hard space to be in. We're caregivers, and we have a lot of caregivers in this world who are taking care of people who have long illnesses and are facing death and that's a hard job and comes with that anticipatory grief. So being kind to ourselves, looking for support and asking for support as we go through it.

But again, letting there be space for that grief and feeling. It's possible to process it with a therapist or counselor. I think there's a fear around feeling some of it before the person dies, but oftentimes, those feelings are coming up. So feeling it, experiencing it, naming it.

>> ZACH TAYLOR: We'll be back for just one more Q&A as we wrap up.

>> CLAIRE BIDWELL SMITH: Okay. Sounds good. Thanks. So there is still so much, I moved through some of these quickly to get to some of the pieces I think are important to hit on, but this is one of the things I do, helping clients take charge of their lives, which is somewhat about resilient grieving. I've always taken issue with the idea of resilient grieving because what I see in my clients is when they hear that term, resilient grieving, it again makes them feel like they're supposed to get over it, right? So they have that idea that they just need to be resilient and get back on track and be all better from something. And really, I think resilient grieving means that we enter back into our lives. We move forward, but we don't move on. We can still live a deeply meaningful, fulfilling life while we are grieving. So finding ways to be here in the world

and incorporate the loss into our lives, I think, is more about resilient grieving.

I outlined some of this in the book, and I think you all have this PowerPoint too, so you can look through some of these.

Taking an inventory is something interesting to do with clients. Going through a loss affects your whole life. So I see people making really big life decisions afterwards, like in the face of a big loss, a lot of things will become meaningless or seem shallow to do after you've gone through this big life change. So people really evaluate their lives in big ways. It's not always a bad thing, but they need to be careful not to be making impulsive decisions. I think the one thing to look out for after a loss, are they trying to run away from the grief or the experience. Otherwise, if they are sitting with their grief and making big decisions off of here they know what matters to them, then that's a different story.

Writing. I talk about this with every single client. Writing is such an invaluable tool to use with your clients who are grieving. Whether they're writing letters to their person that they miss, which I invite all my clients to do. When we lose someone who we were with our whole lives, it seems so abrupt, so incongruous to not write to them. To write letters to child, spouse, dear mom, this is what my year was like. I had a baby or I got this job, really continuing to share. I think our clients felt an internal relationship when we as people build internal relationships with the people we love. Not something we do right away. Not something we want to see in the first year or two. We just want our person back. So as things go on, we develop an internal relationship with them and one of the ways to foster that is writing.

I think journaling, getting up in the world and doing some daily writing. Writing about grief is a way to get things out of our systems and chests. Writing letters to ourselves. Lots of different writing exercises. Memory writing. People are afraid they're going to forget things. So having them write them down.

This is something I want to talk about for a minute. This is one of the pieces I work on with a lot of my clients is this cognitive behavior therapy. When we go through a loss, we begin to see the world in a more fearful place, often. We start to worry that other people are going to die. We worry that we are going to get sick and unexpected things can happen and when you get stuck in this space and loosen it over and over. With the pandemic, there will be more illnesses, more deaths, and beginning to retrain our brain in a way and stop having some of these thoughts.

I outlined the cognitive behavioral, the things that happen, the thought, and symptom that comes, the different ways that we experience emotions after. Here it is. So we'll have the anxious thought, there will be a physical symptom from it, a cognitive symptom, and a behavioral symptom. So having people figure out what are those and how do we begin to move out of them.

Often it begins with recognizing how those thoughts are coming up and how can we shift them. A lot of people aren't aware they're having them until it's too late. They'll get a pain in their side and immediately think they have colon cancer. Then they're picturing themselves in the hospital bed saying goodbye to their loved ones. And then they're experiencing physical symptoms of anxiety. They're having an emotional response to that, and then they're having a behavioral reaction.

That whole system that happens, it's really important to get in in the beginning, recognize when they have the thought initially. If you can have the pain in the side, have the thought, oh, my God, is it cancer? Stop there. No, pivot my thoughts away, be compassionate, let go of this triggering list of things that happens. Catastrophic thinking is one of the things I see in my anxious clients. They see the whole world through this catastrophic lens. Husband coming home late from work, he's dead in a car crash. Pain in my side, cancer. Everything is catastrophic. So helping them reverse those thoughts. There's a whole chapter I have on this, different ways to go through it.

So again, I think that helping your clients really start to pinpoint when their anxiety comes up, how it manifests, what are the actual thoughts they're having. I like to do some reverse thinking, so when they have that thought, when they're getting to the hospital bed, when they're dying, having them do opposite thoughts where they've been -- they recognize they've gotten that negative thought and then they begin to picture something positive like being at their child's wedding 20 years from now instead so balance out and move away from the negative thoughts. Do this in tandem with all the other grief work, with exploring who they are and stories of their loss, but having them get a handle on these anxious thoughts.

Being present, this is the mindfulness and meditation of the work and we're spending a lot of time in the past and a lot of time in the future. We are so rarely in the present moment. We're ruminating about what they should have done and how our lives are going to be without this person and afraid of things that are coming, so we're existing in these two fear-based thought process. Helping clients develop some mindfulness and meditation, because those two other places cause so much

anxiety, so helping them recognize when they're spinning out in the future or the past, to meditate none of us will be present all the time but when we find ourselves becoming anxious from these places we move into, bringing ourselves back to the present is really important.

So this is all about mindfulness. Making meaning of loss is a stage of grief. David Kessler has a neat book about that, "The Sixth Stage of Grief," I think, is what it's called. How do we incorporate this into our life, how do we honor the people we love, how do we honor this experience and make meaning of it? This is not something we can do in the first year or two. There's so much pain, so much grief, so many other things that we have to work through. I see this stage coming much later. Sometimes a decade out, you know, sometimes three, five years later. We can't do this one right away. But I think it's something that is possible to talk about with a client who is grieving in the early stages of grief.

Helping people find ways to stay connected, and I talked about this throughout the talk today. I think this is so important. I think for a long time we gained, as a clinical world, as a culture, we gave the message that someone needed to get over the loss of a loved one, get rid of the clothes, move on, build a new life, have another child, whatever it was. And I think what we realized 20, 30 years, the answer isn't moving on and letting go. It's staying connected and how do we incorporate the loss and person into our lives. Again, we never get over the loss of the person that we loved. So how do we build a new relationship with them? How do we talk with them in our families? How do we make meanings of their deaths? These are pieces that come later in the grief work, but they are important for even an early griever to be thinking about. These are some of the ways we do this with anniversaries and holidays and talking with them.

And then death planning. Again, this is about kind of facing some anxiety, I this I, really starting to talk about end of life and death. People have a lot of fear around death, as we know. So much fear. But let's talk more about it. Let's explore it. Let's talk about what the fears are. Are you afraid of suffering? Are you afraid of pain? Are you afraid of the afterlife? Are you afraid of what will happen to your loved ones if you die? We have all those questions and fears and then we slam the door on them and they don't get looked at, don't get talked about, and I think that's where a lot of anxiety comes up.

So incorporating these talks into your grief work is important. Talking about life and death is really vital.

So I, you know, want to go back to questions, but I just want to say, you know, how honored I am to do that all of you showed up. I think there's 19,000 of you on this call right now, and I think that we are going to be doing so much work in the next year, the next ten years, and, you know, just in the future, going forward, around grief and helping people feel commissioned to grieve, let their lives be transformed by it, sometimes positively. I think we can see the last year in the pandemic, we all recognize there has been positives. There's fascinating things we've learned to do and changes we've made that are sometimes beneficial to us as a society, healthcare. Loss is a phase. Sometimes when we go through a big loss, we change in ways that we couldn't anticipate that are beautiful and we become compassionate and wiser. These things don't always happen right away, but I think ultimately loss has the ability to transform us in beautiful ways and the work we do as clinicians is helping individuals get there.

It's hard work. It's honorable work. I think it can be scary for a lot of us. Finding support as a clinician is important. Having someone you can talk to about your own things that come up. People ask me all the time if what I do is sad. Yeah, it is sad sometimes, but what I see is quite beautiful. When I listen to these stories of loss, I see connection. I see relationship. I see all the ways that we get to be in relation with each other as humans in the world. And that's beautiful and complex and incredible. So I see a lot of beauty in the work that I do.

But then other times, too, when I walk out of a session and I need to sit and cry for a moment. Some people's stories of loss are really big and unwieldy and sad and there's not always ways to make sense of them. But I think there's ways to make space for them and hold these things in our lives. So I really commend all of you for showing up for this work and moving forward with it and I can't impress upon you enough how much your work is needed, especially in the next year when people try to process all that's happening and all the losses they're going through. I hope you will lean into all the support that PESI is offering from just really find as much knowledge as you can in the work that you do. I'll answer some more questions, Zach. I just wanted to make sure I said all of those things.

>> ZACH TAYLOR: No, beautiful. Much better than I could have said it. We've got about ten minutes left. So those of you still with us and want to continue, we're going to get to a few questions. Claire, there's a lot of questions around resources.

How do I find grief counselors, how do I find groups or kids and adults? Maybe we can get to some of those practical

questions. For those who stayed with us, again, an overwhelming number of people showed up for this. We knew it was going to be big. We didn't know it was going to be quite this big. So congratulations, everyone. You broke our system this morning for the first few minutes, but it looks like we've got it fixed, and we're up and running for the rest of the day. Let's hope. Because we know you took time off from seeing your clients, from your lives, and you actually -- you took time to be here, so we want to look at that as best we can. If you want Claire's handouts, those are next to the launch session button where you launched this session, so you can get those PDFs for every session that has handouts. A few don't have handouts, so if you don't see that link, that means there's no handouts there.

You will also be getting a copy of this entire conference in about three to four weeks after the conference is over. If you do want to go back, any sessions you missed, at that time, you'll be able to watch them for self-study credit. Not live credit, but self-study credit.

Okay, Claire, let's get to those questions about grief counselors, the best places to find grief groups for kids and adults.

>> CLAIRE BIDWELL SMITH: Yeah, there are so many out there, and I think I've seen in the clinical world so many of these trying to step up and become virtual the last year. And it's taken a minute for some of us and some of us were up there faster. But I think, honestly, just Google, grief counselors for kids, they pop up for people. They're not that hard to find. There isn't, to date, one big giant resource. I'm sure that PESI has certain ones. There is an organization called End Well that's wonderful, modernloss.com, reimagine is an incredible organization that works around end of life. You can hear talks and meet authors. Instagram has a wild wealth of grief resources. There are so many people in grief on Instagram, just under the hashtag of grief, there are so many people sharing stories around grief. I love that as a resource. But doing simple searches, especially around your particular loss. So if your client has gone through -- they lost someone to suicide or they lost a mom or they lost a child, really just doing some searches on those specific losses because the resources are out there for them.

>> ZACH TAYLOR: An interesting question that I saw kind of fly through the Q&A that has stuck in my mind from a while, and I'm sorry, I can't remember who asked it, but when we lose loved ones, particularly a spouse or a close family member, very often we are wrapped in estate issues, legal issues, financial issues. And help -- when clients come in and say, I just got all of these things to do and they're navigating and making decisions

that they don't really know how to make. How do you guide them, number one, to find the proper advice? And number two, how do you help them navigate those issues alongside the grieving issues?

>> CLAIRE BIDWELL SMITH: Yeah, that's such a good question. And this, again, is one of those that comes with a big loss, right? Some people become saddled with some giant estate situation. There's often a lot of tension within family members. I see this a lot with my clients who are just a lot of family stuff will come up around some of these things. An estate, money, will, lack of it, and it can come out of the grief process. People can become very emotional, angry out of it. Helping them through the emotions of it is important, finding a balance of both grieving and working through the practical things they have to take care of. I see a lot of clients, they will live into the practical stuff as a way to avoid the grief. So they will hyperfocus on the details of the estate situation the way -- to feel like they're honoring the loss but not grieving. So kind of checking in with them about that.

You know, pointing them in the direction of estate attorneys or counselors that work in that realm. It's tricky stuff. And I spend a lot of time about end-of-life planning. A lot of this could be avoided, the more that we can talk about this before people go. And there's a great resource website called cake. I can't remember if it's cake.com, look up cake end-of-life planning, and another, lantern, that is really great for end-of-life planning, another one, good to go, it's a woman, Amy, she comes to your house and helps you sit down with family members and work out all the different ways that you can prepare for end of life. And I think after this pandemic, we need to think about this more than ever.

>> ZACH TAYLOR: One last question, and that is, helping families, helping people talk about their grief with a loved one, sometimes it can be embarrassing and sometimes people don't want to hear, I'm sorry for your loss. What can -- well, what are some of the things you could advise us to say when we are approached by someone or a friend who is grieving or a family member who is grieving. What are some of the things that we could say that you found to be generally helpful?

>> CLAIRE BIDWELL SMITH: It's hard to figure out what to say. I think everyone gets really scared about saying the right thing or the wrong thing and often sometimes people won't say anything at all, which is the only wrong thing you can do. Not saying anything, I think, can be quite hurtful and damaging. It lends to that culture of silence around grief. When we don't say anything, it gives the message to the person who is grieving

that they shouldn't be talking about it, that there isn't a space to talk about it. So acknowledging it. Often saying, I don't know what to say but I'm here is one of the simplest things to say. I don't know what to say. Tell me everything. Giving them space. Showing up for them. I'm here. I care. I acknowledge your loss. We don't have to say anything beyond that. We don't understand what it's like for someone to be through that particular loss, even if you've been through it. It's so individual. We never really know how someone is feeling. So being curious, grief curious. What are you feeling, what is your day like, do you want to talk? People will let you know. And just that acknowledgement and showing up for it is the most important thing. We need to, as a culture, keep talking about grief and loss. End of life, the more silence we put on it, the more silence people feel around it and that leads to more confusing grief. So go out and talk about this as ambassadors.

>> ZACH TAYLOR: And that's these two days, ending that culture of silence and particularly mental health professionals talk more competently will grief, and Claire, you have taken us many, many miles down that road. Thank you very much. I've seen new hospice counselors in this summit, brand new to the field, and --

>> CLAIRE BIDWELL SMITH: That gives me chills. I'm so honored. Thank you, everyone.

>> ZACH TAYLOR: All right, everyone, we'll see you in the next session. You can launch the next session exactly where you launched this session. You can come into a new room, just like if you were at a hotel or a conference. Come into the new room and I will be with you and the next speaker. So we'll see you in about 15 minutes. Good-bye, everyone.

(End of session at 10:30 a.m.)