Grief Recovery & Support

For Human Rights Activists Serving War-Zone Refugees

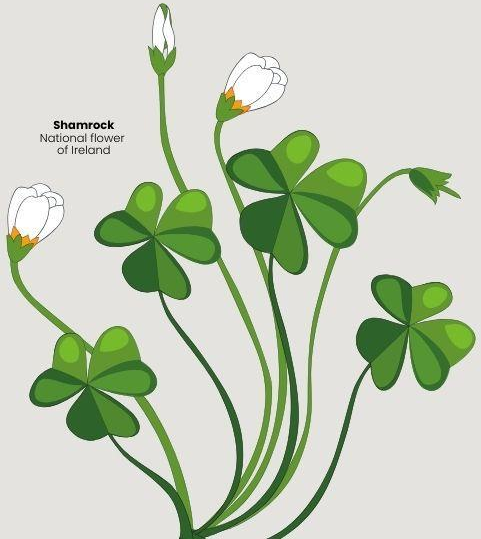
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CNL-520: Group Counseling
Dr. Daniel Latham
August 28th, 2024



About The Group Program

Grief Recovery and Support For Humanitarian Activists

Grief recovery and support is a quintessential subject for group counseling in this context, highlighting a commitment to a therapeutic intervention rooted in social justice and ethical practice. The vicarious trauma experienced by activists engaged in various war-zone conflict makes the need for structured, communal therapeutic spaces that cater to their unique psychological needs essential.



On each slide of this presentation, a flower from a country experiencing genocide or the lingering effects of genocide appear as a small gesture of recognition and rememberance.

Who This Group is For

Human rights activists who have been watching the many genocides live streamed as they have been working to support persons and families. The program must honor the intersectionality of the trauma experienced, both direct and vicarious. The subject of group counseling, particularly concerning those who bear witness to systemic oppression and violence, necessitates a deep understanding of the activists' empathetic engagement, their unyielding commitment to equality, and their sense of solidarity.



Red Poppy
National flower
of Palestine

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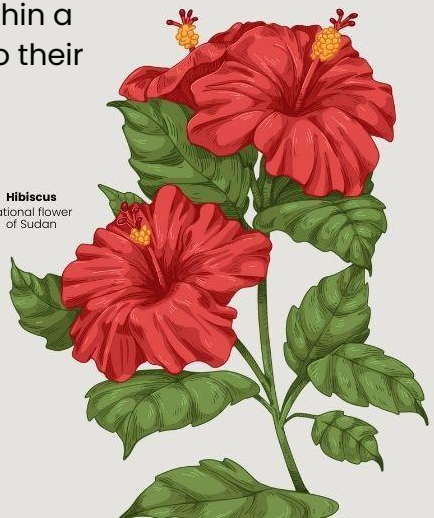
Program Format and Structure

The program will run for 8 weeks, 2 hours three times weekly.

The group size will be 15-20 group participants.

This timeframe allows for the unfolding of group dynamics essential to the therapeutic process—safety, cohesion, and mutual aid, which are foundational to the efficacy of group interventions.

This size supports the Jungian method of engaging with symbols, archetypes, and dreams within a collective therapeutic milieu, enabling participants to explore and integrate these aspects into their conscious awareness



Hibiscus
National flower
of Sudan

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Group Counseling Goals

1. Development of Coping Strategies – To equip activists with coping mechanisms that enable them not only to process their grief but also to continue their vital work sustainably, without succumbing to burnout or compassion fatigue.

a. **Objectives**
   i. **Safe and Affirmative Space –** The program must strive to build a secure environment where activists can express their feelings without judgment. This is fundamental in fostering trust and openness.
   ii. **Witnessing and Validation of Experiences –** Bearing witness to suffering must be acknowledged as an empathetic and human response to profound injustice.
   iii. **Culturally Sensitive Grief Processing –** Recognizing that grief does not exist in a cultural vacuum, the program will aim to integrate culturally respectful and sensitive methods in therapy.

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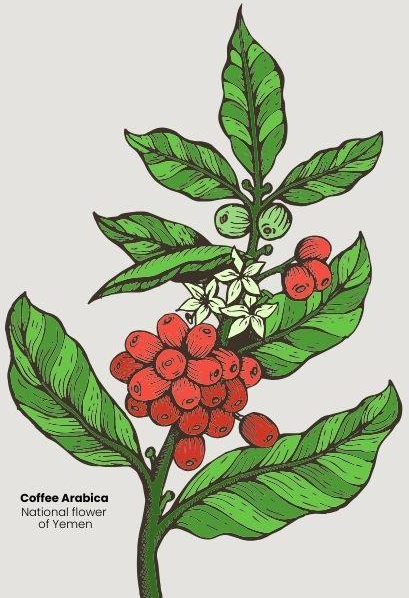


Cyclamen
National flower
of Lebanon

Group Counseling Goals

2. Preparation for Reintegration or Continuation of Activism – Addressing the integration of their experience of grief with their ongoing commitment to human rights and exploring pathways for continued activism that are psychologically sustainable and ethically grounded.

a. **Objectives**
   i. **Constructing a Collective Narrative –** Enabling participants to co-create a narrative that not only speaks to loss and despair but also to resilience and solidarity.
   ii. **Advancing Post-Traumatic Growth –** Fostering an environment where activists can collectively and individually identify areas of growth and transformation stemming from their traumatic exposure that emphasizes empowerment and positive change.
   iii. **Supporting Activism as a Healthy Response to Grief –** Affirming activism and advocacy not merely as professional commitments but as legitimate and meaningful responses to grief and loss, reinforcing participants' sense of agency and purpose.



Coffee Arabica
National flower of Yemen

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Theoretical Approaches

Feminist therapy, person-centered therapy, and jungian therapy.

Feminist, person-centered, and Jungian therapy approaches are highly effective for grief recovery in activist contexts, addressing both personal and sociopolitical dimensions of grief. These three theoretical approaches integrate the personal with the political, growth with resilience, and strengthen an understanding of personal suffering to universal archetypes working to deepen activists' connection to self, community, and those they are working to serve.

Central Philosophical Themes:

- Integrating the personal with the political
- Foster an environment of empathy and affirmation, supporting activists in their personal growth and resilience
- Enhance each approach by linking personal suffering to universal archetypes



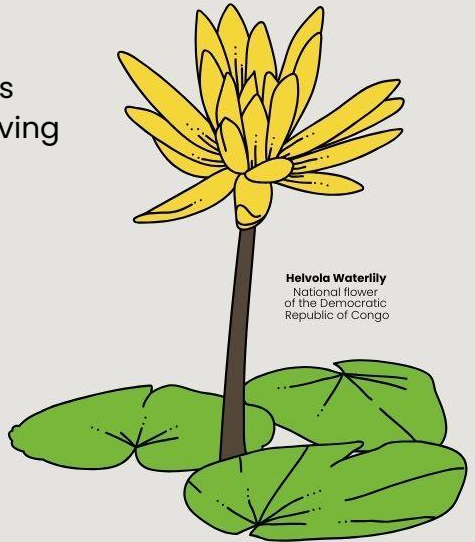
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Vital Ethics Considerations

Secondary trauma, cultural humility for Palestinian people and how they are perceived by humanitarian workers and activists, transference issues may arise.

The imperative of confidentiality underpins the therapeutic alliance, ensuring a safe space for vulnerably sharing personal experiences.

- Navigating the intricacies of group dynamics, with a critical focus on equity and respect for diverse perspectives
- Mirror the broader societal commitment to justice and equality.
- Recognize the unique confluence of personal and collective grief within activist circles
- Approach with cultural humility, acknowledging how diverse identities shape the grieving process.



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Screening Questions & Interview Approach

These questions serve to not only evaluate the readiness and compatibility of potential members but also forge a preliminary understanding and an acknowledgment of the deeply ingrained social structures that influence individual pain and recovery processes.

Demographic Questions

Age, gender, ethnicity, cultural background, educational background, employment status, relationship status, current presenting issue(s), current medications, current medical diagnosis and current mental health diagnosis.



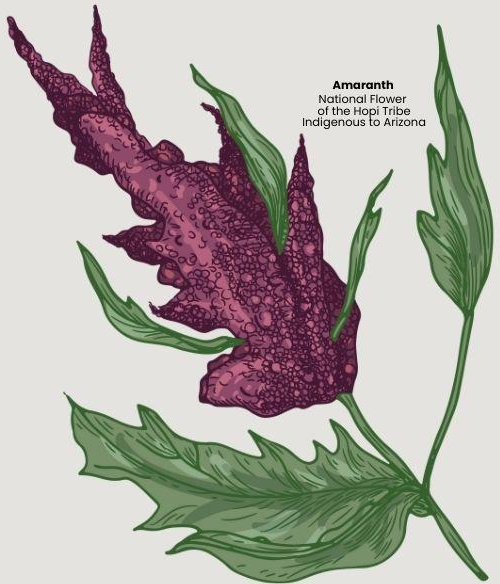
Jasmine
National Flower of Syria

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Screening Questions & Interview Approach

Group Relevant Questions

1. Can you share what draws you to this particular grief recovery group, and how you perceive it aligning with your journey as an activist?
2. This question may be triggering, please take it slow. Have you experienced any first or second hand accounts from families who have experienced the death, loss, dismemberment, or decapitation of a child or loved one?
3. On a scale of 0-10, with 0 being “not at all” and 10 “being it’s the most disturbing thing I’ve experienced,” how would you rate your current state of grief?
4. In what ways do you feel your activism intersects with your personal experiences of grief or loss?
5. How comfortable are you with engaging in deep, symbolic exploration of your experiences in a group setting?
6. Could you reflect on the importance of confidentiality and how it pertains to creating a trusting environment within the group?
7. In consideration of the diverse backgrounds of activists, how do you approach discussions around cultural, racial, or identity differences?
8. Given the potentially triggering nature of sharing and discussing grief, how do you currently manage your emotional and psychological wellness?
9. Do you have an individual therapist you’re seeing currently? If so, how frequently are you in session with your therapist?
10. Do you have any expectations of the group, and how do you envision contributing to the collective healing experience?



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Screening Questions & Interview Approach

Approach to Interviewing Group Participants

In interviewing for grief groups, we prioritize a balanced, empathetic method recognizing the depth of each person's loss, while fostering a space that respects their narratives within a context of broader social injustices. This sensitive, intentional process cultivates trust, safety, and communally embraces healing.

- Establish a Respectful Tone
- Demonstrate Authentic Empathy
- Validate Experiences and Provide a Counter Balance
- Mindful Emotional Awareness

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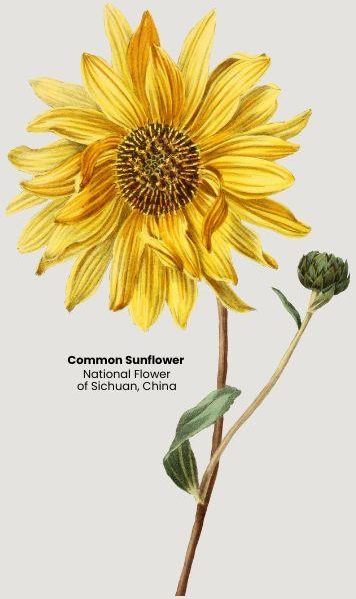


White Nun Orchid
National Flower
of Guatemala

Selecting Group Participants

Criteria Group Participants Must Meet

- Demonstrate a readiness and capacity to engage in introspective and group healing processes.
- Ability to articulate self-awareness and one's experiences and emotional landscapes.
- Exhibit not only an openness to navigate their own journey of grief and solidarity with others' experiences.
- Willingness to confront systems of oppression, investing in modalities that are both effective and empathetically enacted.



Common Sunflower
National Flower
of Sichuan, China

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Resources

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Hydrangea
Flower Native to the area of Tigray, in Ethiopia