

Why does this model of grief support work across cultures?

- A multi-cultural model of grief support affirms the universality of the human suffering associated with loss, while at the same time affirms specific cultural expressions of mourning.
- The peer-group grief-support model provides opportunities for group communication that normalizes the experience of grief.
- This model offers opportunities for grieving people to tell their stories in a non-judgmental and supportive environment. Many people discover that in sharing their stories, they can better cope with their loss.
- People who are indigenous to the culture and who know the traditions around mourning are recruited to be trained in a peer-group grief-support model.
- In the aftermath of natural disasters, economic hardship often precludes access to professional grief counselors. At the same time, trained peer-group grief-support facilitators live in the affected communities and are always available.
- This model affirms that every faith group supports grief according to its theology, doctrine, culture, and tradition. Nevertheless, some expressions of spiritual support of the bereaved may not always be helpful. Training in understanding grief enhances the ability to integrate faith language in supporting the bereaved appropriately.
- In this model, faith is not a band-aid, but neither is faith discounted as a valuable resource for coping. Trained facilitators learn how to integrate faith and grief in ways that are not harmful or dysfunctional.
- This model offers long term grief support because those trained are not outsiders, but are residents of the communities they serve. Once trained, they do not move on to the next disaster area; they remain where they live and continue to provide ongoing grief support.