



**Shared-Experience Companionship  
Journey through the 5 Stages  
Coping Skills  
Wellness Tool-box  
Honoring the Memories**

Lighthouse Beacon Church Beacon Institute  
is a 501(c)3 Foundation # 27-3721969 dba  
Beacon Institute: Veteran Pathways Home  
At the Warrior Way Wellness Center  
469 McLaws Circle Williamsburg VA 23185  
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**Coping with Traumatic Loss Support  
Group**

**Service Member, Veteran, & Families (SMVF) /  
Law Enforcement & First Responders (LEFR)**

Guidance through the 5 stages of Grief

**MONDAY EVENING 5:00-6:00PM  
AT Warrior Way Wellness Center  
[www.veteranpathwayshome.org](http://www.veteranpathwayshome.org)**

**IN PERSON OR DIGITAL ONLINE**

## **Introduction**

All of us connected to the military or law enforcement community accept, at some level, the risk we may be separated from those we most dearly cherish; if temporary, then we can anticipate and prepare, but it may become permanent with no one prepared.

We may have built our life with them & they with us. Perhaps they depended upon us and were older or younger than ourselves. Deep connections, like intertwining root systems, anchored you to them and you nourished one another. It felt as right as it could in a world with no guarantees and all was as it should be.

## **The Worst Word**

Perhaps that morning just felt wrong somehow or it was shaping up to be another run-of-the-mill day then the news of a major event broke or your phone rings with a relative hesitantly speaking . . .

The awful truth overwhelms your thinking and all your emotions. Never will you hear their living voice again . . . There will be no next warm hug unique to their height, width and unspoken compassion. The loss is so deep there is no doubt you will never be the same again. Your deep knowing is correct . . . you won't.

## **Is the Pain Permanent?**

The questions dawn: Will I always feel this much pain? How long till it recedes to a dull ache, weeks or years? Can I last that long?

You may begin querying local friends or distant family for answers, seeking life lessons right for you. Are you blind and alone on this rocky road of grief and pain? Or are there fellow travelers on this path and wise advisors who have ventured ahead, returning with good news to share? The road is always shorter with good company. This one is no different.

## **The Road Well Travelled**

The vast array of human experience is like the terrain of a continent, explored, settled and mapped with signposts and smiling guides. Even in grief and bereavement there is a map of knowledge with a wealth of notes left by advance scouts, preparing you for the climb ahead.

The way forward for us is roughly mapped out, a journey through 5 regions:

- Denial
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Depression
- Acceptance

Your path will be your own, forward and back, more time in one region while less in another, until you and the past have agreed on a truce. You can allow yourself to feel again; even dare to experience optimism, perchance pure fun is foreseeable.

## **Stories with a Purpose**

There is strength in numbers as well as value in stories told and insights won – your story told and the stories of others received. Perhaps the stories will feature betrayal and the need for forgiveness. Or the exploration of what trauma has done to you and acceptance of the healing journey out of grief.

Join those like you who hear with their ears but listen with their hearts. It is ultimately a journey of your spirit from brokenness to wholeness. Let us travel forward together.