

Disenfranchised Grief

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A Gentle Guide from The Good Grief Healing Center

What is Disenfranchised Grief?

Disenfranchised grief is grief that is not acknowledged, validated, or supported by society. It occurs when your loss is not publicly recognized, mourned, or considered worthy of grief.

This kind of grief can feel incredibly isolating. You may wonder if you're allowed to grieve, or feel ashamed of your pain because others dismiss it.

Examples of Disenfranchised Grief:

- Loss of an ex-spouse, estranged family member, or secret relationship
- Miscarriage, stillbirth, or abortion
- Loss of a pet
- Loss related to incarceration, addiction, or mental illness
- Losing a job, home, or immigration status
- Non-death losses like estrangement or divorce

You may hear messages like:

- You weren't even that close.
- It's not like they died.
- That's not something to cry over.

These comments hurt. They silence real pain.

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Why This Type of Grief Hurts Deeply:

- You may not receive support or rituals like funerals
- People may judge you for grieving
- You might feel guilt, shame, or like your pain is invisible

You deserve to grieve what you've lost even if others don't understand it.

How to Support Yourself:

- Acknowledge your grief: say it out loud or write it down
- Create your own rituals: light a candle, journal, speak their name
- Seek community: even one person who sees your grief matters
- Don't minimize your pain if it matters to you, it matters

Reflection Prompt:

What part of your grief feels invisible or unspoken?

How can you gently make space for it today?

You are not alone. Your grief is real.

And you are worthy of healing.

The Good Grief Healing Center