

## Why Grief Support Groups Work

with Deanna Ramirez, MSW, LSW

**We received great feedback from the teen grief groups you've lead recently. What makes them so impactful?**

Grief in particular can be very difficult for children -and most adults- to understand. Grief is often misunderstood. Some people believe that in order to move forward from grief, you have to complete the stages of grief. This is untrue, **grief is not linear.** Grief in itself is a transformative experience. Your life is changed. And although losing a loved one is difficult, you learn to cope. Children in these groups will learn that to 'get over grief' is an unrealistic expectation, and instead we manage it. Each phase of life we go through will bring up the memories. Holidays and birthdays too. Youth in these groups will come to understand that this is normal.

During grief, it is okay for you to tell people what you need. If you need a hug or to talk; tell the person. People won't always know the right thing to say, especially if they themselves have not experienced grief. Someone experiencing grief would be much easier to support if it were something that people could visibly see. But some of us are good at masking our emotions, covering great pain on the inside.

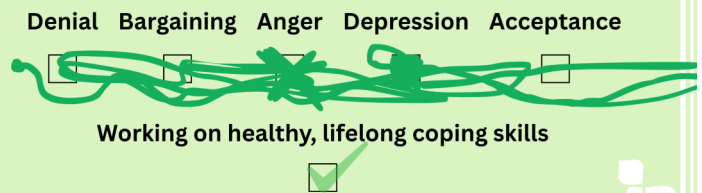
### What's different about group therapy?

Group therapy for students allows them to see and understand that they are not alone with their feelings. Students have an opportunity to build relationships with others who are experiencing similar feelings. They can often feel the weight on their shoulders, as though their experience is unique and no one would understand. This could not be further from the truth. In fact, another group member may be experiencing either the same situation or something quite similar.

### The 'linear way' we want Grief to work



### How Grief actually works



The issue that students have is: maybe this person who shares the same experience is not a part of the same social group. Then the question becomes 'How do we connect these students?'

One way to do it is to have group therapy. Students who attend group therapy will know that what they share in group therapy will remain confidential. By doing so, this protects the privacy of the students who share their experience. Together, students gain knowledge on how to cope with their experiences and identify underlying feelings they may have had. Students gain validation, empowerment, and support through the group.



Deanna Ramirez, MSW, LSW  
Crown Point Office



## Celebration Dinners in Dyer & DeMotte

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Each year, New Leaf Resources hosts a 'Celebration Dinner' to join as a community and celebrate the impact God continues to make through our organization. The last several years, we've hosted our guests at Illiana. And over that time we've noticed an ever growing number of supporters driving out from Jasper County. So this year, we stepped out in faith that a second dinner in DeMotte could eventually grow to support itself.

With the help of 7 new Jasper County business sponsors, local board members (old and new), and over 100 attendees, we found the evening to be a great success! Between the Illiana dinner on June 17th and the June 24th dinner hosted at Sandy Pines Pavillion, we had over 250 guests. We recognized the restorative work of 11 therapists, 17 staff members in total. And we heard testimonies from clients, board members and our therapists.

As always, these Celebration Dinners were free to attend, underwritten by business sponsors, and proceeds (including both raffles!) went to our Marty Doot Client Assistance Fund.

Thank you to all who made the nights special, and we'll hope to see YOU at a dinner in 2026! (Tentatively Dyer on June 16th & DeMotte June 23rd)



## Our Mission:

To promote healthy relationships, personal growth and healing through professional counseling, education, and consultation from a Christian perspective.

## A New Resource: On-Site Clinical Therapists



**New Leaf Resources is excited to be growing in the ways we provide resources to our community.**

We have begun reaching out to schools in the regions we serve, and offering an on-site partnership. This program will provide a licensed clinical therapist for a set number of hours on a weekly basis.

New Leaf worked closely with some fantastic school guidance counselors throughout the area, and have leaned on several of them to help set up exactly how this program will function. The benefits are unquestionable. Besides showing clear support for the mental health needs of these developing minds, the program also reduces several major barriers to mental healthcare:

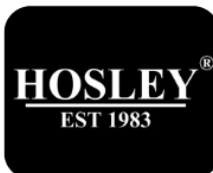


- ♥ Time with a therapist is **scheduled into the school day**, and considers the student's curriculum
- ♥ Stigma around mental health care (for both the student and their parents) is reduced by incorporating this beneficial care into **the structure of the familiar school setting**
- ♥ **Trust is built faster** when a student sees their therapist around the school, even outside of appointments.

If you would like to support this program at your child's school, contact us at [info@newleafresources.org](mailto:info@newleafresources.org)

## A Growing Community of Support

We enjoyed two 2025 'Celebration Dinners' this year, and we're looking back with gratitude. We were blessed to be able to celebrate our staff, introduce new supporters to our mission, and start new relationships with many individual and business sponsors. Business sponsors underwrote two dinners this year! We'd like to thank those sponsors below. We also want our readers to see the growing, broad support for licensed mental healthcare from a Christian perspective. God is blessing our mission through so many hands.



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**Have a story to share about  
New Leaf Resources?**

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reach out for support as well!**

