**HOPE IN SUFFERING RESOURCES**

What skills are needed and who can help with “facing and embracing the reality of the loss/es that are part of the present moment (and future!)” Honestly, this is a difficult question to answer because each situation is different and it is a process, so incremental in nature. This may be why there are so many models about change and grief. These models try to capture the essence, and yet, cannot do justice to the timeline of the process. Given this, what skills could be helpful and who can help in this process? The following points may be helpful.

Here are a few resources that may be helpful. They are workplace oriented and yet, easily translated to congregational settings (and may help in other ministry settings as well).

[How to Process Our Collective Grief](https://www.yesmagazine.org/opinion/2022/06/23/how-to-process-our-collective-grief)

[Leading through Loss](https://intheworks.helpscout.com/leading-through-loss/)

[Manage Employee Grief in the Workplace](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5d09360e9750db0001296efe/t/5f2964694f2220315021530a/1596548225063/Manage-Employee-Grief-in-the-Workplace.pdf)

As for skills and how to approach this work within our Congregations and ministerial settings, we offer the following points.

1. Open the conversation. Acknowledge that there is grief and loss. Name what you see as losses and how it impacts you. By sharing your experience and feelings about it, others are invited to do the same.
2. Create a culture that allows for grief. Provide information on grief. If you have updates or newsletters that go out, include resources or quotes, and ask a question for reflection.
3. Create a process that the entire group or congregation goes through. Use the booklet, *Hope in Suffering*, or some other document/article/book that takes the group into a process of learning more and applying it to their life – individually and collectively. Make sure this process has reflection built in so individuals go deeper into the material.
4. Ritualize losses and change.
5. Celebrate and have some fun. There is a reason that comedians are so popular. They take reality and turn it around into the absurd or point out the reality no one wants to discuss. As leaders, we are called to be the court jester, speaking to the king or queen about the things they do not want to hear or acknowledge.
6. Don’t do the work alone! As leaders, we are also in the system and grieving along with everyone else. It may be helpful to consult with a local therapist, coach, consultant, or facilitator. They can help by understanding what is happening and offering a reflection back. It may be that they can also journey with you during the various processes. As you go through it yourself, you may need the ability to be in the work rather than organizing the work.

**Linda Buck, CSJ** (she/her/hers/ella/ellos)

**Leadership Collaborative**

**Colaborativo de Liderazgo**

*listening – learning – leading*

*escuchar – aprender – liderar*

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