

Grieving Between the Lines: Expanding Family Communication Patterns Theory Through  
Parental Bereavement

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## ACADEMIC ABSTRACT

The literature connecting the Family Communication Patterns Theory (FCPT) to parental death is scarce. This thesis argues that FCPT is a viable theory to measure the uniqueness of parental death grief compared to other types of relational loss. The hypotheses and research questions of this study explore the impact of family styles, culture and ethnicity, low conversation and conformity orientation, and the length of grief on parentally bereaved individuals compared to other relationally bereaved people. A convenience sample of 210 ( $N=210$ ) individuals was analyzed quantitatively using SPSS statistical software (Version #27). Results revealed significant differences in complicated grief for parentally bereaved individuals whose families are consensual compared to protective. Results also showed that parentally bereaved participants who were low in conversation and conformity orientations were more likely to internalize their grief and choose to independently work through their complicated grief. Finally, parentally bereaved individuals are more likely to experience complicated grief symptoms at higher rates for as long as 16+ years after the death when compared to other types of relationally bereaved persons. A discussion that includes theoretical and practical implications provides suggestions for grief counselors and therapists. The discussion also provides future directions for this research, which provides the possibility of using FCPT as a framework to expand Kübler-Ross' (1969) grief model specifically for the parentally bereaved.

# Grieving Between the Lines: Expanding Family Communication Patterns Theory Through Parental Bereavement

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## GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

Bereavement is known as the experience of losing a loved one. After experiencing bereavement, it is normal to experience high levels of grief. Although it is typical for people to experience grief following the death of a loved one, it is unknown whether parental bereavement has a unique grieving experience than people who have lost other types of relationships. This study looked at different aspects of people's grief response, such as their willingness to communicate and conform with their family about the death, specific grieving tactics, how long it has been since the death of their loved one, and if they are still grieving that loss. A survey was distributed to people who have experienced the loss of a loved one to see how their experiences impacted their grieving patterns. This project found that parentally bereaved individuals are more likely to suppress their grief and want to deal with the loss of their parent alone rather than with their family. Additionally, results show that family communication and conformity will impact the extent of complicated grief. Finally, it was found that people who have lost a parent are more likely to suffer from complicated grief longer than people who have lost other types of relationships. A discussion follows with suggestions for those grieving, their families, and clinical workers treating them.

### **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to my late father, Todd Alan Frick Sr. Your death changed the trajectory of my life. This entire thesis and line of research exists because of the pain I felt after losing you. The confusing years following your death motivate me daily to continue pursuing and producing research to find answers for people in similar positions. While this work is primarily academic, it will always be extremely personal.

I wish you could read this. I wish you were here, but even though you are not, you have been with me through every sentence in this thesis. I love you more.

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To my mom, there are no words big or meaningful enough to represent everything that you have done for me and our family. You managed to hold everything together when it felt like our lives were crumbling. Through everything that you have struggled with, you still somehow found a way to show up with love, strength, and courage like I have never seen anyone else do. While my degree and this thesis may have my name written on them, just know that they are just as much yours, because I would not have had the ability to complete them without you. You taught

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

According to the National Alliance for Children's Grief (2023), approximately 1 in 14 people experience the death of a loved one by the age of 18, leading to significant levels of grief. Bereavement, or the experience of losing a loved one, is often seen as "a complex, multidimensional process that involves the physical, spiritual, and sociological domains of the human experience" (Morris & Block, 2012, p. 271). While each type of relational bereavement has different implications, the loss of a parent is often one of the most challenging losses an individual can experience, especially when the loss is during the adolescent years (Harris, 1991). Nearly 2.5 million, or about 3.5% of American children under the age of 18, experience parental death (Social Security Administration, 2000). Although bereavement and grief are not rare, a family's communicative processes may be damaging to the grieving process.

The Family Communication Patterns theory (*FCPT*), redeveloped and pioneered by Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002a), is used widely in literature to predict communication patterns within a family unit to navigate various life events, such as grief (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). *FCPT* has served the field of communication by allowing scholars to better understand the blend of intrapersonal and interpersonal processes that a family may encounter based on conversation and conformity orientations (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). Additionally, the theory creates a typology for the family's orientation measurements (i.e., pluralistic, consensual, etc.). While the theory is foundational to family communication studies, it is uncertain about its applicability to grief models.

Current literature offers several grief models that scholars and psychiatric doctors refer to following the death of a parent (Kübler-Ross, 1969; Lindemann, 1944; Stroebe & Schut, 1999; Worden, 1991). Of these models, the most popularized comes from Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (1969), who identified the five stages of grief (i.e., denial, anger, etc.). While the grief models

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are not necessarily always centralized around death, Tyrrell et al. (2023) suggest it is typically used as a guide to better understand how individuals deal with bereavement before and after it occurs. Kübler-Ross' model, and other grief scholars' models have extensively been used in the qualitative research realm to examine how losing a loved one may affect the bereaved through various "stages." While grief models are typically widely accepted by the public, they are not without critiques from some scholars.

The importance of researching how the loss of a family member affects the communicative patterns and grieving process of a family unit greatens. While FCPT does not have much research devoted to grief models, other researchers occasionally apply it to grief, coping, and resiliency (Baldwin, 2012; Carmon et al., 2010; Pratiwi & Mulyati, 2018).

Additionally, the literature has yet to establish whether FCPT is an applicable and plausible framework to identify differing grief experiences for different relational losses, such as parental bereavement. Although the lack of foundational literature is apparent, this allows for novel results and a contributable piece of literature to occur in the field of family communication.

This project addresses the lack of literature by providing a new lens for the theory supplement, specifically concerning parental bereavement. This project aims to use FCPT to analyze grief communication within families during the loss of a parent. The thesis will create a foundation to expand the theory to allow communication scholars to better understand the specific grief communication for families following parental bereavement. Learning more about this could also help families who experience grief and their caregivers.

To develop theory and answer these questions, an online survey of 109 ( $N=109$ ) people who have experienced the loss of a parent was used to analyze how they grieved following their parent's death. Additionally, a comparison survey of 101 ( $N=101$ ) individuals who have

experienced other types of relational loss (other than a parent) allowed for a direct comparison to be made between the different types of grief processes.

This thesis expands the grief model grounded in FCPT to develop an understanding of families who are navigating parental bereavement. Additionally, the model would allow for a practical intervention for surviving family members for those in a clinical setting to consider when attempting to treat situations like the loss of a parent. These contributions to both academia and therapeutic settings will open doors for better resiliency and coping for those who struggle with parental bereavement.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### ***Death and Grieving Processes***

While death has always been an aspect of life that an individual will eventually endure, early research on the topic was a pivotal part of understanding the grieving process during and after death/dying. Death's definition often depends on factors such as location, legal definitions, medical definitions, etc. However, Tomasini (2017) explained that the widely accepted description of death was proposed by the US President's Commission for the Study of Ethical Problems in Medicine and Biomedical and Behavioral Research, created by Ronald Reagan (1981), stated:

“An individual who has sustained either (1) irreversible cessation of circulatory and respiratory functions, or (2) irreversible cessation of all functions of the entire brain, including the brain stem, is dead” (Scarre, 2007, p.6).

Death can also often have different meanings depending upon the specific cultural settings or religions of an individual or family. South Pacific cultures often have loose terms of death. These cultures usually view death as when an individual is ill or sleeping. South Pacific cultures consider cultural members to “die” multiple times before their final death at the end of their lived (Counts & Counts, 1985; Gire, 2014). However, religions, such as Hinduism, believe

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that an individual never fully dies. Hinduism works on the basis that an individual works on a circular pattern of life, where when someone “dies,” they are thought to be reborn with a new identity, showing no concrete description of how or when someone truly meets death (Gire, 2014). Finally, Boobes and Daker (1996) explain that in Islam, death has more of a spiritual definition, describing death as: “The departure of the soul and hence, it is an event. However, the signs of this departure are unclear, and they were left to experts (physicians) to define them... medicine alone cannot formulate a concept regarding death.” (p.121).

While death clearly has concrete impacts regardless of location, niche fields, religion, culture, and legality, this creates more variety based on how individuals inevitably grieve the loss of a loved one. Specifically, grieving processes, like the definition of death itself, have no linearity to them. Therefore, reviewing differing grieving processes is necessary to explain the phenomenon of grieving.

Because everyone endures bereavement throughout their life, the grief processes following the phenomenon are everlasting. Like death, grief is difficult to define through one solidified statement. However, the broadest, generally accepted definition of grief is “the primarily emotional/affective process of reacting to the loss of a loved one through death. The focus is on the internal, intrapsychic process of the individual.” (PDQ, 2024 para. 4). While this comprehensive definition is the most recognized, it is important to understand the other types of grief that exist. For example, anticipatory grief occurs when an individual experiences the mourning process before the death of their loved one (Najafi et al., 2022). Introduced by Lindemann (1994), anticipatory grief is an intervention tactic to adopt coping skills and act as a preventative measure to lessen the effects of grief.

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The process may also be dependent on the length of grief. While not universally accurate or accepted, some people believe that grief is an instant reaction to death; however, delayed grief is a common experience for the bereaved. Delayed grief, also known as complicated grief, has been identified as a normal grief process where a bereaved individual consciously or subconsciously represses their feelings about the death to avoid the pain of the loss (Ernstmeier & Christman, 2021). Delayed grief is a negative grief process, often leading to psychological issues or delayed health concerns when the grief hits (Bonanno & Field, 2001). As for the length of grief, many bereaved individuals may endure the grieving process for an overwhelming period. Prolonged grief disorder (PGD) has recently been added as a diagnosis by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) (2022) as a specific type of grief that is a persistent phenomenon that affects a bereaved individual's everyday activities. The APA states that to be diagnosed with PGD:

“The loss of a loved one had to have occurred at least a year ago for adults, and at least 6 months ago for children and adolescents. In addition, the grieving individual must have experienced at least three of the symptoms below nearly every day for at least the last month prior to the diagnosis.” (e.g., identity disruption, difficulty with reintegration, emotional numbness, etc.) (American Psychiatric Association, 2022, para. 2).

Like death, grieving processes/mourning processes may differ depending on the cultural or religious setting. For example, the grieving processes between cultures may affect how an individual is remembered after death. Oyebode and Ownes (2013) explained that those who believe in Christianity often have a close-knit memorial service for the deceased days after the death that typically lasts a short period and is followed by a meal. In contrast, cultures and religions within New Zealand typically have a grieving/mourning process that lasts several days. Specifically, they have a three-day ritual where they wake the deceased, and on the fourth day, the body is taken and buried at their final resting place (Oyebode & Owens, 2013). Other

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religions, like those who follow the Muslim faith, often have lengthy grieving processes.

Muslims hold gatherings for 40 days where they read directly from the Quran, emphasizing the third, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 40<sup>th</sup> day. These days are critical as soul is believed to be visited on those days (Oyebode & Owens, 2013).

Just like the way different cultures and religions have different grieving rituals, there are also clear distinctions in the immediate impact that occurs following a loved one's death. Oyebode and Owens (2013) found that expectations of how the deceased should be remembered and mourned vary. Within Western societies, the grieving should be immediate and intense following bereavement, and eventually, they should move on from the death (Bonanno et al., 2002; Oyebode & Owens, 2013; Wortman & Silver, 1989). However, other cultures believe that the grieving processes following death do not need to revolve around sadness. Instead, these cultures believe that death is just an aspect of life and have an expectation that the bereaved will remain with them, ready to be celebrated, sometimes annually (Oyebode & Owens, 2013). These cultures that believe in prolonged celebrations often do not experience immediate sadness because of the belief that they will always have a connection with their deceased loved one. Regardless of how these different cultures, religions, and societies may grieve following death, the type of relationship loss may play an impactful role in the process.

Because death can have an array of definitions and rituals depending on factors such as religion, each scenario of loss may be different. Additionally, communication has a clear role in how death affects different types of groups' grieving processes. However, the death of a parent has specific implications that may differ from other types of relational losses.

### ***Parental Death Implications***

It is important to note that all types of relational losses are critical turning points in an individual's life. However, the death of a parent has specific implications that are not apparent in

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other types of relational death. Through various types of differences such as social and family dynamics, life stage and developmental impact, and identity and attachment, there are evident discrepancies in how grief evolves following the death of a parent versus other categorical losses.

### ***Social and Family Dynamics Impacts***

When experiencing the death of a parent, there are both social and family dynamic implications that are not apparent with other types of relational losses. The first is parentification. This phenomenon explains the internal family dynamic that occurs following the death of a parent, where an adolescent child feels the need to take on the responsibilities of their deceased parent (Farella Guzzo & Gobbi, 2023). In a socio-cultural realm, taking on these roles essentially leads the child to attempt to assume the role of their dead parent (Farella Guzzo & Gobbi, 2023). Because the bereaved child is dealing with responsibilities larger than most peers their age, research has shown that parentified children “experience suboptimal outcomes in adulthood, including higher incidence of depression, anxiety, drug use and addiction, under- and unemployment, poor physical health, and lower educational attainment” (Dariotis et al., 2023, p. 3). This experience of parentification is unique to parental death and has clear implications for the family dynamics of a bereaved family and, in the latter, potential negative results during the transformation to adulthood.

Conversely, the death of a parent may lead to infantilization, the opposite of parentification. The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (2023) suggests that grieving children may become more infantile, meaning they may relinquish some of their roles and begin behaving more childishly. Behaviors that may follow the death that seems childish are imitating the dead person, statements mentioning wanting to be with the deceased, withdrawals from friends, decrease in school performance, etc. Moreover, the grieving child may begin to

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blame themselves for the death, believing that there was something they could have done to prevent the death (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 2023). While parentification and its opposition are experienced, other social consequences may be apparent.

Additionally, family dynamics following the death of a parent may experience heightened levels of social consequences that are not typical in other types of relational losses. A typical grief reaction that may occur following parental bereavement is inner family conflict. While research has suggested that parental death may lead to high levels of closeness between siblings, it is argued that because sibling relationships are often mediated through interactions with parents, the death may lead to the reignition of past sibling conflict and childhood power struggles (Fuller-Thomson, 1999; Scharlach & Fuller-Thomson, 1994). Moreover, the conflict that may occur between siblings post-parental death may be built up anger of caregiving tasks while their parent was alive. Researchers have suggested that the inequity of divided caregiving tasks when a parent's health is declining causes conflict due to the re-emergence of early sibling rivalries (Berezin, 1977; Cicirelli, 1985; Thomson-Fuller, 1999). Although the conflict between siblings may occur, the conflict between a surviving-parent and surviving-child may also happen.

Because the death of a parent also means that a parent is suffering the loss of a spouse, this allows for a potential conflict to arise between the surviving parent-child dyad. The grieving process of these surviving-parent's may create a conflict with their parenting role. It has been found that surviving parents have difficulty balancing their grief with prioritizing their child's needs post-death (Shankar et al., 2017). The potential of being unable to tend to a child's personal needs after the death, again, may lead to parentification, which has been shown to cause conflict between surviving parents and children (Dariotis et al., 2023). Furthermore, Dariotis et al. (2023) suggest that parentified adolescents may experience resentment toward parents who,

they feel, forced them to maintain unwanted responsibilities. The change in family dynamics is also influenced by the age of the child at the parent's death.

### ***Life Stage and Developmental Impacts***

The life stage of a child at the time of a parent's death has specific implications that are not evident in other types of relational losses. Although nearly three-quarters of children experience an adverse event throughout their childhood, only 4% of children in the United States have experienced the death of a parent (Luecken & Roubinov, 2012; Social Security Administration, 2000). While it is not rare to experience a traumatic event in childhood, the death of a parent is especially unique, threatening their sense of security and introducing a potentially uncontrollable environment (Luecken & Roubinov, 2012; Sandler, 2001). Breaking down childhood and adolescent parental bereavement is twofold, with implications for both mental health and physical health.

Though it is imperative to highlight the negative implications of parental bereavement during childhood, Luecken and Roubinov (2012) suggest that once most children experience the normal grieving process, they typically live a healthy life without too many impairments. However, short-term mental implications for parental bereavement include an array of physical distress, such as sleep problems, anger, behavior troubles, and numerous grief reactions (Luecken & Roubinov, 2012; Silverman & Worden, 1992). Moreover, adolescents who endure the loss of a parent, especially those whose parents died by suicide, accidental death, or sudden death, are more likely to experience adverse mental health effects and psychiatric disorders that could spill over to adulthood (Agid et al., 1999; Brent et al., 2009; Kendler et al., 2002; Kivela et al., 1998; Luecken, 2008; Luecken & Roubinov, 2012).

Like mental health, there is a wide range of physical implications for childhood parental bereavement. While multiple studies have found no link between childhood parental death and

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poor physical health outcomes, biopsychosocial approaches have found potential physical effects (Luecken, 2008). Of those physical effects is the physiological stress response throughout a bereaved child's life. Normal stress responses allow them to output energy successfully, increase cardiac output and essential immune functions, and restrain inessential body functions (Luecken, 2008). Research has shown a potential link to damaging effects on stress responses in adulthood if a child has lost a parent in their adolescent life stage (Luecken & Lemery, 2004; McEwen, 2003; Repetti et al., 2002).

Additionally, parental death during childhood has additional physical implications, such as addiction concerns. Early childhood parental bereavement has been found to lead to a higher risk of alcohol and substance abuse in later life (Luecken, 2008). Moreover, the loss of a parent has been linked to a stronger chance of lifetime smoking behaviors in adulthood, which has more profound health implications (Luecken, 2008).

### ***Attachment Impacts***

Relationship attachment style and identity are the final aspects of bereavement differences between children who lose a parent and children who lose another type of relationship. Attachment theory has become a primary source for explaining and understanding the adjustment period following traumatic events such as parental bereavement in childhood (Shaver & Fraley, 2008; Stroebe, et al., 2005). Specifically, a change in attachment style is visible following the death of a parent. Although many children fully recover from the death of their parent following the grieving process, attachment styles are a prolonged issue that stays with a child throughout their life (Peleg, 2023).

Children who experience parental bereavement at a young age typically see changes in attachment styles because the death strips a sense of security from them (Peleg, 2003).

Additionally, the traumatic event automatically causes activation of their attachment system,

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which often increases emotional and behavioral implications that leave them unable to seek proximity to others properly (Peleg, 2003). Broadly, the death of a parent can lead to bereaved children developing either an insecure attachment style (avoidant or anxious). Research suggests that bereaved children often develop an anxious attachment style, which can cause anxiety, issues engaging with different types of relationships, becoming engrossed with the deceased parent, and having a difficult time accepting the loss (Bowlby, 1980). While some bereaved children can return to their pre-death attachment styles, insecurities in attachment could be prolonged into adulthood (Peleg, 2003). Walter and McCoyd (2009) have found that avoidant attachment issues in adulthood can delay seeking intimate partners and cause an increased fear of losing partners in the future. Mikulincer and Shaver (2007) note that attachment concerns in adulthood may create a fear of rejection or abandonment that inhibits personal growth in relationships.

While it is apparent that the death of a parent has many different implications not experienced with other types of relational losses, communication plays a significant role in effectively enduring the grieving process. Therefore, frameworks within communication studies may be especially helpful when creating grief models following a parent's death. Specifically, the family communication patterns theory (FCPT) may prove to be a unique way to differentiate the grief process between parental death and other types of relational loss.

### ***Family Communication Patterns Theory***

An important framework that could potentially be used in relation to parental death grieving is the family communication patterns theory (FCPT). Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2006) describe FCPT as a comprehensive theory that applies to “relational cognition and interpersonal behaviors” (p. 51). The theory is typically applied to several dimensions of family communication, such as sexual sense-making, health self-disclosure, sibling emotional and

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behavioral closeness, and much more (Hurst et al., 2022; Samek & Rueter, 2011; Thomas & Hovick, 2021). Moreover, significant developments since FCPT's origin add to framework's value in helping explain different grieving processes following parental death.

McLeod and Chaffe (1972, 1973) developed the model to exhibit different ways a family can make consistent and foreseeable interactions with one another. Additionally, the researchers strived to understand how a family can experience different social interactions together. Through the early stages, McLeod and Chaffe (1972, 1973) were particularly intrigued to study the efforts of parents to socialize their children to grasp specific information from different media outlets such as mass media. The research found that families can conform to one another to adopt specific behaviors that were evaluated, also referred to as socio-orientation. Secondly, their research found that family members can reach an agreement by discussing specific events to reach a common ground and share a specific perception of the occasion, also known as concept-orientation.

After their initial research, McLeod and Chaffee (1973) found that families may differ in how they approach the two different orientations to meet a common ground, leading to different ways of socializing children with different types of media messages. Families whose children were more likely to use the socio-orientation desired for others to interpret messages for them, typically resorting to their parents. The children of families who rank highly on concept-orientation often sought out messages and expanded on them to make sense of media. It was evident that the orientation style of a family led to differing behaviors of children. After this discovery, McLeod and Chaffee created a measurement tool that has since been used to understand how media affects family; however, it was not until Fitzpatrick and Ritchie (1993, 1994) used the framework in their family communication research that it became popularized.

Fitzpatrick and Ritchie (1993, 1994) saw FCPT as a valuable tool for families to process media messages. However, they also recognized that the theory could be useful far beyond its original scope. Through their research, the theory could be generalized to measure family communication patterns in a broader sense. Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2006) explain how The Revised Family Communication Patterns (RFCP) measurement was created, where Fitzpatrick and Ritchie (1990, 1993, 1994; Ritchie, 1991, 1997) remodeled McLeod and Chaffee's (1972, 1973) socio-orientation to conformity orientation because of how its factors relate to families, particularly children and parents, experienced conforming practices. Additionally, concept-orientation was remodeled to conversation orientation due to the link of family discussions taking place when children explored meaning through mass media. The new measurement (RFCP) focused more on specific communication behaviors and included items to accurately measure the new dimensions separately (Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990). Utilizing the newly revised orientation measurements has allowed for a more concise look into how specific situations affect family communication patterns depending on how high or low a family scores on each measure.

### ***Conversation Orientation***

The first dimension of Ritchie and Fitzpatrick's (1990, 1993, 1994; Ritchie, 1991, 1997) revised family communication patterns measurement is conversation orientation. Conversation is the extent to which families encourage an environment where its members feel like they can have unrestricted conversations (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). Families who score high in conversation orientation experience spontaneous and frequent conversation at high rates with little to no restraint of what is discussed (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b). These families typically feel more comfortable spending time talking with one another and sharing personal details about themselves, such as daily activities and personal feelings (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). Finally,

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family units that land on the high end of conversation orientation meticulously discuss any plans that the family may encounter (i.e., vacation planning, etc.) (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006).

Overall, high conversation families hold the belief that communication is the most important aspect of family success, allowing children to be educated and socialized (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002a).

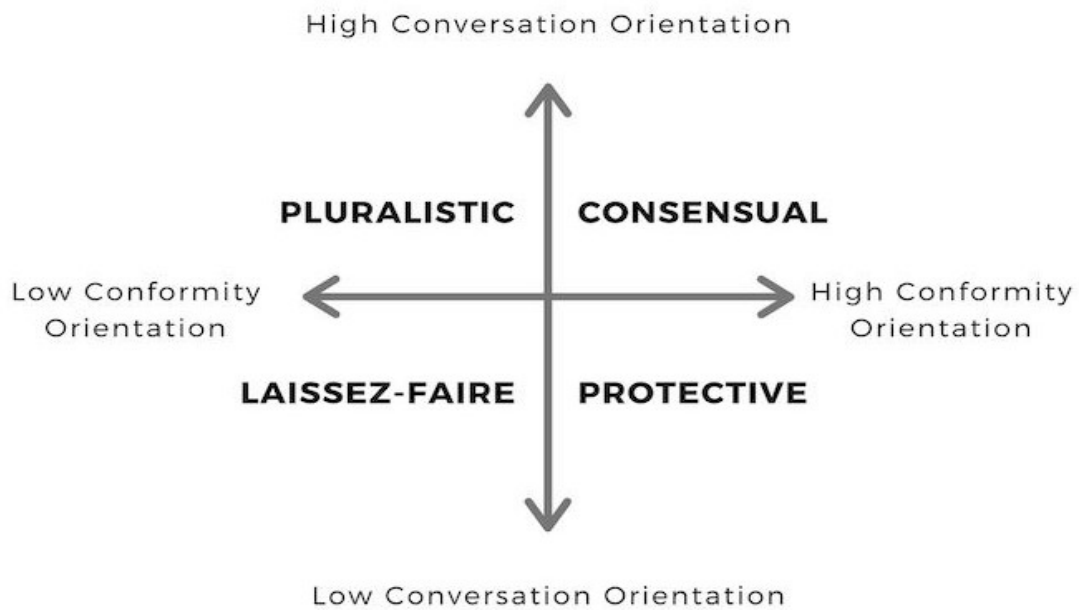
Conversely, families with low levels of conversation have little interaction with one another. Additionally, they have a few topics that can be discussed openly with the whole family (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). Unlike families high in conversation, low conversation family members rarely share personal information with their family, such as their daily activities or thoughts (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). Additionally, these families often do not seek the opinion of every member when decision-making for the family. Finally, when low conversation families the rare conversation about decision-making it is typically shallow (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). Overall, families in the low-conversation spectrum believe that open communication is not necessary for educational or socialization purposes (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002a).

### ***Conformity Orientation***

Secondly, Ritchie and Fitzpatrick's (1993, 1994; Ritchie, 1991,1997; Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990) revision of the original family communication patterns theory includes conformity orientation. Conformity orientation describes how a family communication pattern emphasizes the need to be in sync with one another's attitudes and opinions (Horstman et al., 2018; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). Family members high in conformity typically focus on avoiding conflict while promoting interdependence, where they often rely on one another (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b). Additionally, children must be obedient to any adult, whether it is their parent or other elder. Families high in conformity expect clear conversations about each

other's schedules to maximize time spent together. Regarding the parent-child dynamic, parents set clear boundaries that the children are expected to abide by, often referred to as the traditional family structure (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). After some time, literature began suggesting there were some flaws with the conformity measurement, stating that there are issues with sampling the whole domain and its structural and item validity (Hays et al., 2017; Horstman et al., 2018; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002a; Koerner & Schrod, 2014). Therefore, Horstman et al. (2018) reexamined the conformity orientation to create a more accurate measurement called the Expanded Conformity Orientation Scale (ECOS).

Families low in conformity orientation typically experience the opposite of those with high conformity. Low conformity households believe that traditional family structures are unnecessary. The families value each other's differences and believe in having independence from the family (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). These families do not have a clear hierarchy within the family and believe that relationships outside of family relationships are equally important (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). Families often support members in their attempts to achieve personal growth, even if the family structure may suffer (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). Additionally, low conformity families believe that personal space and interest trump family interests (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006).



**Figure 1.** Family types based on conversation and conformity orientation.

(Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006).

### ***Family Types***

Once families are identified as high or low in conversation and conformity orientation, a specific typology on their family type can be made. **Figure 1** shows how different families can be categorized depending on where they score on the two orientations. *Consensual* families are high in both conversation and conformity orientation. Consensual families are known for feeling pressured to agree to the hierarchy; however, communication is important to find new ideas even though parents have the final say (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997). *Pluralistic* families are identified as high in conversation orientation and low in conformity orientation. Pluralistic families are known for having open communication, with all family members having a say, and there is no clear hierarchy as the parents do not feel the need to constrain their children's decision-making process or agree with it (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997).

*Protective* families are known to be low in conversation orientation but high in conformity orientation. Protective families value obedience to authority with little care for open sources of communication, often meaning the parents have the only and final say (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997). Finally, *laissez-faire* families have low levels of conversation and conformity orientation. Laissez-faire families are known to have few meaningful conversations with a limited number of topics allowed to be discussed. This means that the parents believe that all members of the families should be able to make their own decisions with no prior discussion (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997). While other research distinguishes different types of families on different types of variables (i.e., cohesion, flexibility, open, closed, etc.), the family communication patterns theory is based on what has been established regarding conversation and conformity orientation to categorize different families (Kantor & Lehr, 1975; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006; Olson 1981, 1993).

Because literature suggests that the FCPT can differentiate between specific family types depending on two orientation styles, the framework may be able to aid in expanding a grief communication model. However, something many models may not take into consideration is the role that complicated grief plays in many scenarios.

### ***Complicated Grief***

Although some bereaved individuals may adjust to the loss of their loved one over time, this is not always the case. Other bereaved people may experience prolonged grief, otherwise known as complicated grief. Complicated grief refers to a persistent and intense yearning for the deceased person (Shear, 2015). Common symptoms for an individual experiencing complicated grief include vivid thoughts or pictures of the deceased paired with denial or resistance of reality that the individual died (Shear, 2015). Unlike typical grief, complicated grief may last for years following the death and produces the risk of impeding on the daily life of a bereaved person by an increase in mental health disorders, substance abuse, and a decrease in social life (Shear, 2015).

Roughly 7%-10% of bereaved individuals experience complicated grief following the loss of their loved one (Szuhany et al., 2021). While this may seem like a small percentage, these bereaved individuals are more likely to experience risk factors than those who may go through a normal grief process. From a communication studies perspective, individuals struggling with complicated grief may experience several risk factors. Bereaved individuals with complicated grief have been found to have a difficult time expressing their emotions properly which leads to the inability to communicate their grief symptoms to their surviving loved one (Ernstmeier & Christman, 2021).

While bereaved individuals who experience complicated grief have multiple risk factors that must be considered, specific recommendations are available to help reduce complicated grief

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impact. Most of these recommendations are forms of therapy, however, depending on each case of grief, individuals may be encouraged to try different ones. Complicated Grief Therapy focuses on attachment theory to help those who may experience attachment issues following the death of their loved one (Szuhany et al., 2021) Narrative Therapy helps clients construct stories of their life to help contextualize their issues to work through and explain them (Ghavibazou et al., 2022). Finally, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) helps individuals manage emotional and mental concerns by focusing and challenging negative thought patterns and behaviors (Chand et al., 2023).

Although complicated grief is a phenomenon that occurs only after some deaths, the symptoms that individuals who suffer from the condition are significant. Because grief is a large part of life, scholars and clinical works alike have attempted to make theoretical models and frameworks to better understand the grief process following the death of a loved one.

### ***Grief Models***

While death has always been a phenomenon that has led to grieving patterns, there was not always a distinct model to describe it. However, research on death and dying has advanced the knowledge of the grief process following death. Because death research has significantly advanced, a plethora of models have come to light to better understand the exact process an individual may experience after losing a relationship to death.

### ***DABDA Model***

Although there are many different models of grief, specific models are more recognizable in the field of death and dying. Kübler-Ross (1969) developed some of the earliest research on death and dying, providing a seminal study on the stages of dying. Kübler-Ross' (1969) foundational piece of literature included five stages, highlighting the psychological response to death: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance (DABDA). Since its origin, Kübler-

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Ross' (1969) model has been central to educational institutions and clinical practice (Avis et al., 2021). Avis et al. (2021) explained that despite its early success and recognition, Kübler-Ross (2005) revisited the model to focus specifically on bereavement and the subsequent grief reactions. Additionally, Kübler-Ross and Kessler (2005) suggested that it is not certain that an individual's experience is linear, meaning that they do not necessarily need to visit each stage of the process or experience the stages in the order that was discovered by Kübler-Ross (1969). Therefore, Kübler-Ross' (1969) model has been used as a guideline to follow that an individual may use to better understand the specific stage of grief they experience, specifically through anger, bargaining depression, and acceptance.

### ***Denial***

Tyrrell et al. (2023) describe Kübler-Ross' (1969) stage of denial as a type of temporary defense system to help protect oneself from the reality of death. Individuals experiencing the denial stage often refuse to accept the fact that their loved one is gone (Wang & Wang, 2021). The denial stage often leaves bereaved people believing that their loved one is still with them (Wang & Wang, 2023). To protect themselves, those in denial will isolate themselves to avoid any conversation surrounding the death (Kübler-Ross, 1969). While the individual in denial tries their best to avoid the death, when they inevitably accept reality, all the feelings that they pushed away begin to surface, which may worsen the grieving pain (Wang & Wang, 2023).

### ***Anger***

Once a bereaved individual accepts the death, they may reach the stage of anger. Kübler-Ross' (1969) stage of anger often includes the bereaved lashing out in anger or negative emotions toward themselves or others (Wang & Wang, 2023). These feelings of anger typically come from a feeling of immense guilt because the bereaved feels like the death was their fault or that they could have done something to put a stop to the death (Wang & Wang, 2023). The

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outlandish anger may also be caused by the individual not understanding why this is happening to them (Wang & Wang, 2023). Finally, Kübler-Ross' (1969) anger stage exhibits individuals feeling regretful for scenarios such as not spending enough time with their loved one before the passing (Wang & Wang, 2023).

### ***Bargaining***

Mourners who are in the stage of bargaining often attempt to change the truth surrounding their loved one's death (Wang & Wang, 2023). Bargainers often feel like there is something that they could have done to change what happened to their loved ones (Wang & Wang, 2023). Phrases such as "if only" or "what if" are used by bereaved individuals who are bargaining for the death (Wang & Wang, 2023). Bargaining allows for a temporary sense of relief or escape from their grief because they are too focused on attempting to negotiate with themselves about what could have been (Wang & Wang, 2023).

### ***Depression***

While attempts by the bereaved to bargain happen, the eventual feeling of failure plagues them because events cannot be changed (Wang & Wang, 2023). Mourners take the failure hard, often leading to a deep state of depression. In Kübler-Ross' (1969) depression stage, the bereaved have an overwhelming feeling of numbness toward everything. Tyrrell et al. (2023) explain that depression or numbness may be a result of attempting to unconsciously protect themselves from the eventual mental pain of their loved one's death. Wang and Wang (2023) suggest that Kübler-Ross' (1969) depression stage often has adverse effects on one's sleep, appetite, and mental or physical health. Suicidal tendencies are also most often associated with this stage of grief due to the overwhelming mental effects (Wang & Wang, 2023).

### ***Acceptance***

Finally, the final stage of Kübler-Ross' (1969) model of grief is accepting the fact that a loved one is dead or is going to die (Wang & Wang, 2023). Although the bereaved individual in the acceptance stage is still not over the death, they eventually realize that they cannot change what happen and begin to learn how to cope with the fact that their loved one is gone (Wang & Wang, 2023). While each stage may not occur, Kübler-Ross' (1969) stage of acceptance is known as the final stage experienced and, ultimately, the goal to achieve when grieving (Tyrrell et al., 2023; Wang & Wang, 2023).

### ***Worden's Four-tasks of Mourning***

Another popular grief theoretical model is Worden's (2018) four-task of mourning model: (1) Accepting the loss as reality, (2) Processing the pain of grief, (3) Adjusting to the world following the death, (4), Helping survivors find a space for the deceased individual emotionally after the death (Khosravi, 2021).

The accepting the loss as a reality task focuses on utilizing therapists as an outlet to assist coming to terms with the fact that a reunion will never occur (Khosravi, 2021). The next task, processing the pain of grief, suggests that survivors must take time to examine their pain surrounding the loss (Khosravi, 2021). However, Khosravi (2021) suggests that this task is easily preventable which may lead to survivors suppressing their pain, leading to a higher chance of drug or alcohol abuse. Worden's (2018) third task, adjusting to a world without the deceased, is centralized on the adjustment period following the loss. Khosravi (2021) suggests that survivors may experience internal, external, and spiritual adjustments in this task. The final task of Worden's (2018) framework, helping the survivor find space for the deceased in their emotional life, revolves around the premise of ensuring that the survivor can find peace with the death to

live a “fruitful life” (Khosravi, 2021, p. 5736). Overall, Worden’s (2018) four-tasks of mourning has provided a fresh perspective on grief research by providing an updated lens for the bereaved.

### ***Other Models and Theories***

In addition to the DABDA model, a plethora of other models and theories are referred to in a clinical or academic setting. For example, Freud (1964) suggested the grief work theory, which discusses distancing one from the deceased, readjusting life post-death, and forming new relationships following the death (Hamilton, 2016). Another, but not the last, Stroebe and Schut (1999) created the dual-process model where they describe grief as a process of back-and-forth of two modes, “loss orientation,” where the bereaved experiences emotion-focused coping, and “restoration orientation,” where the grieving centralizing on problem-focused coping (Hamilton, 2016, p. 523). While some models and theories are not as popular as others, they may not explain the different cultural and contextual ways that grief can be communicated or represented following a death.

Although there are grief models that are highly acclaimed in academia and clinical settings, they may not apply to all scenarios. For example, various cultural and contextual differences exist when discussing grief. Moreover, communication may play a role in how specific cultures portray their grief processes that traditional models of grief may not fully capture.

### ***Cultural and Contextual Differences of Grief***

Although all cultures experience death and grief, they may have different ways of expressing and communicating their grief. The different cultural and contextual ways of grieving allow for differing perspectives on how a family may communicate and approach the topic of death following a loved one’s passing. Moreover, these differences in grief processes highlight how specialized death can be depending on the culture an individual identifies with.

### ***Native American Culture***

Native Americans are known for being a diverse group of people that encompass tribal groups with varying types of characteristics. Therefore, their communication about grief is just as unique (Lawson, 1990). Native Americans often only give themselves four days to grieve the loss of a family/tribal member; after this period, they are expected to return to their everyday lives (Esposito et al., 1996; Stroebe, 1993). Throughout these four days, Native Americans are discouraged from expressing or communicating extreme emotion regarding the death. For example, the Navajo people think that the newly deceased have a power that can negatively impact the living if the death is heavily communicated (Esposito et al., 1996; Stroebe, 1993). Moreover, the Navajo people are considered “private grievers,” and it is seen as disrespectful to the deceased to outwardly communicate about their death (Esposito et al., 1996, p. 24). Because of the strict guidelines for avoiding excessive communication, Koerner and Fitzpatrick (1997) may describe Native American families/cultures as protective families.

### ***Southeast Asian Culture***

Esposito et al. (1996) describe Southeast Asians as a diverse group that include many ethnic groups, languages, origins, and religions. Those in Japan, for example, typically do not try to work through their grief; instead, they focus on understanding the presence of the deceased and how it may affect the newly bereaved (Esposito et al., 1996). These cultures typically attempt to communicate their grief through their ancestors to keep connected with the deceased (Esposito et al., 1996). Many Southeast Asian cultures typically decide their grief on whether it is a “good” or “bad” death (Esposito et al., 1996). A good death is experienced in Chinese cultures when the correct rituals are adhered to following the death; in this scenario, families are expected to grieve their loved ones. Conversely, a bad death is when specific rituals are not followed (typically because the death was sudden, violent, etc.); in this situation, Chinese

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families consider the death to be shameful and mourning or discussion of the deceased is not allowed (Esposito et al., 1996). Because Southeast Asian families have different interpretations of death (good vs. bad), their family type may vary. Using Koerner and Fitzpatrick's (1997) family types, "good deaths" may be categorized as consensual families due to the rigid guidelines of rituals but allowing them to speak openly about the death. However, families experiencing "bad deaths" may be classified as a laissez-faire due to the strict guidelines of following rituals and not being allowed to discuss the death.

### *Hispanic Culture*

Hispanic cultures are known as those from Puerto Rican and Spanish descent (Esposito et al., 1996). In Puerto Rico, for example, grief processes place a special lens on conflict resolution and "completing" the relationship before death occurs to allow the deceased to be free to enter the afterlife (Esposito et al., 1996). If conflict resolution is unable to occur before the death, immense guilt is communicated outwardly to other family members (Esposito et al., 1996). However, unlike many other cultures, many Hispanic cultures embrace death. For example, Mexico celebrates Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead), where the day is spent honoring deceased family members, often communicating about past stories and events from when the deceased was alive (Gutiérrez et al., 2020). Due to Hispanic cultures emphasizing conflict resolution and embracing communication surrounding a death, Koerner and Fitzpatrick (1997) may consider them to be consensual families.

### *African American Culture*

Historically, African Americans have experienced greater rates of unexpected and tragic deaths compared to other American racial or ethnic groups (Esposito et al., 1996). However, they are heavily reliant on communication to grieve their loved ones. Specifically, African Americans

typically seek to have strong communities (i.e., church, family, etc.) to communicate through their death. McGoldrick et al. (1986) explain that in the early stages of death, African American cultures often communicate their grief through music as a symbol of joy and reunion to the deceased. Moreover, African American cultures tend to commemorate deceased family members by speaking positively about them and believe that the best way to communicate with the deceased is through dreams (Moore, 2003; Moore et al., 2022). Because African American cultures rely heavily on strong communities of people to help them through experiencing death and communicate regularly and freely about the deceased, Koerner and Fitzpatrick (1997) may classify them as consensual families.

Because there is an excess amount of cultural and contextual differences concerning grief, there is no “best” method to go through the grieving process. Therefore, there is debate on whether traditional models of grief can fully capture the grieving process accurately. Some literature provides an interesting perspective on the effectiveness and accuracy of traditional grief models despite their acclaim in academic and clinical settings.

### ***Grief Model Critiques***

With every model comes its critiques. Although models like Kübler-Ross’ (1969) DABDA model of grief are widely valued in academic and clinical realms, the literature raises concerns about their effectiveness. Therefore, highlighting the literature’s critiques regarding grief models is critical for transparency.

### ***DABDA Critiques***

Because Kübler-Ross’ (1969) is the most popular model for grief, it has received the brunt of the critiques. Perhaps the largest critique Kübler-Ross (1969) has received is questions about the validity of the research that formed the model (Tyrrell et al., 2023). Specifically, critics

suggest that Kübler-Ross' (1969) research is too population specific, lacking empirical evidence because the research did not originate from bereaved persons but rather derived from already dying patients (Stroebe et al. 2017). Therefore, the audience used in the initial study cannot speak for the entirety of the grieving population, which is how the model has been used for decades in clinical settings. Additionally, there is a lack of empirical testing because researchers believe it is difficult to test (Archer, 1999; Stroebe et al. 2017). However, it is important to note that there is evidence that individuals experience some of the reactions described by the model, there is not enough support to suggest that an individual experiences each of the steps, or even a majority of them (Stroebe et al., 2017).

Another critique that the DABDA model has faced in recent years is the misrepresentation of grief and grieving. Stroebe et al. (2017) suggest that it is unclear whether the stages (i.e., denial, anger, etc.) are an affective or cognitive process. This confusion often leads to criticism of what the stages truly are and if they are an accurate representation of the grieving process. Additionally, those who refer to the DABDA model often believe that it is linear, meaning that they must progress through each stage to achieve the final step of acceptance (Corr, 1993; Murray et al., 2005). Critics believe this is a major flaw in the model because grief does not necessarily work in a forward progress motion and may not have a clear ending (Murray et al., 2005; Rosenblatt, 2000; Wortman & Silver, 2001). Critics also believe the model focuses too heavily on recovery and acceptance and not enough on strengthening bonds, reengaging in existing and new relationships, and finding meaning in the loss through time (Attig, 2001; Murray et al., 2005; Klass, 2001). This has been explained to be particularly concerning because the supposed evolution through the stages encourages detachment from the deceased physically and a false connection with the deceased mentally (Boerner & Heckhausen, 2003).

Because of the popularization of Kübler-Ross' (1969) DABDA model people often follow it rigidly. This concerns researchers because the inaccuracies of linearity may cause grieving individuals to think they are doing something incorrectly with their grieving process (Avis et al., 2021). When bereaved individuals feel like they are grieving incorrectly, it has been shown to result in receiving improper support from their family and healthcare doctors (Avis et al., 2021). With critiques like this and others in mind, Kübler-Ross and Kessler (2005) came in support of some of the critics. Kübler-Ross and Kessler (2005) agreed that grief is fluid and that the stages were not meant to act as a rigid timeline to grief. In other words, Kübler-Ross and Kessler (2005) assert that not everyone will go through each stage or in any specific order. However, following this, Corr (2019) highlights that referring to the model as going through “stages” assumes that there is linear progression and should be used prescriptively rather than descriptively.

Although there is literature supporting grief models, there are many scholars who are highly critical of them. Nonetheless, there is little, if any, research that supports specific grief models for different types of relational losses. Moreover, a grief model specialized for how different family types communicate following the death of a parent may be especially useful for capturing different grief processes.

### ***Family Communication Patterns Theory and Parental Death Grief***

There is a deficiency in literature utilizing family communication patterns theory (FCPT) in relation to parental death grief. However, Carmon et al. (2010) initially attempted to bridge the two concepts by relating Koerner and Fitzpatrick's (2006) two orientations (conversation and conformity) to family bereavement and grief. Carmon et al. (2010) found that conversation orientation had no relation to the grief process following bereavement. However, conversation

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orientation was seen to be related to personal growth following the death, potentially stemming from feeling less attached to the deceased. Conformity orientation was also found to be insignificant to bereavement grief, which may be attributed to grief measurements being centralized around cognitive features rather than behavioral characteristics (Carmon et al., 2010). While Carmon et al. (2010) laid the framework for FCPT regarding bereavement, other literature has attempted to combine the two in more specific terms.

Frick (2024) further bridged the gap between FCPT and bereavement grief experiences. Specifically, Frick (2024) explored the differing experiences between deceased and non-deceased parental families. Results from the survey suggest that deceased parental families have lower conversation orientations than families who have not experienced the death of a parent (Frick, 2024). This lower conversation orientation may be attributed to research findings that suggest orientation does not play a major role in grieving (Carmon et al., 2010). Frick (2024) suggest that this may be because families are not having frequent interactions with one another, and when they do, it is most likely not about the deceased parent. Frick (2024) suggests that parentally bereaved children scored lower in conformity orientation than non-parentally bereaved children. Frick (2024) attributes lower levels of conformity in the parentally deceased households to the concept of parentification. In other words, conformity may be lower in parentally bereaved families because bereaved children may feel the need to grow up faster and assume more adult-like responsibilities, which may heighten their individuality and independence within a family unit (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Spark, 1973; Frick, 2024; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006).

Finally, Frick (2024) identified potential differences in family types between bereaved and non-bereaved parental families. Using Koerner & Fitzpatrick's (1997) family types, Frick

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(2024) found that non-parentally bereaved families were higher in both conversation and conformity orientations, classifying them as more likely to be consensual families. Conversely, when compared to non-bereaved families, those who have lost a parent are lower in conversation and conformity orientations, potentially classifying them as laissez-faire families (Frick, 2004; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997).

No research uses FCPT specifically to explain grief communication after the death of a parent. Because there little known about the relationship between existing grief models and FCPT, a noticeable gap is present. Specifically, it is unknown whether the death of a parent is proceeded by a different grief process than the loss of other relational types. Additionally, it is unclear if Koerner and Fitzpatrick's (1997) family types play a role in the way a family may grieve the death of a parent versus a different type of relationship. As reviewed, the existing grief models, while acclaimed, have various concerns, from lack of empirical evidence to the disillusion of linearity. Because of these critiques, existing models cannot explain how a family communicates in the aftermath of a parental death. Therefore, the lack of literature about grief communication concerning a parent and generalized grief models that do not consider family dynamics creates a need for the expansion of grief models. Consequently, the current study aims to address the following research questions and hypotheses:

**RQ1:** Do different family styles (e.g., pluralistic, consensual, protective, laissez-faire) have different ways of grieving the death of a parent?

**RQ2:** How is culture or ethnicity associated with family communication styles (e.g., pluralistic, consensual, protective, laissez-farez) after the death of a parent?

**H1:** Families who are lower in conversation orientation will be more likely to have a suppressed and internalized grieving process than families high in conversation orientation following the loss of a parent.

**H2:** Families who are lower in conformity orientation will be more likely to experience an independent compared to a cooperative grieving process than families high in conformity orientation following the loss of a parent.

**H3:** The loss of a parent has significant differences in the length of grieving than other types of relational losses.

**H4:** The loss of a parent will differ in overall grief expression than other types of relational losses.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

An online survey of individuals ( $N = 210$ ) who have experienced the loss of a parent or the loss of another relationship was used to explore the hypotheses and answer the research questions. The survey was conducted using a convenience sample of various online sources, such as a university participant pool and multiple social media platforms. The survey asked participants to report information regarding their family communication patterns before and after the death of their loved one, the extent to which they experienced prolonged and complicated grief, and how often they communicated about the death of their loved one. Inclusion and exclusion questions were used to exclude participants who indicated they had not experienced the loss of a loved one.

### ***Participants***

Participants who volunteered to partake in the survey included 210 individuals (74.8% female, 22.4% male, 1.8% non-binary, 1% prefer not to say) that have experienced the loss of a

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parent (51%) or the loss of another relationship (49%). A total of 471 individuals started the survey; however, only 223 participants completed the survey, and 210 were analyzed.

### ***Parentally Bereaved Participants***

Respondents of the survey who have lost a parent answered that they lost either their mother (22.4%), father (48.6%), or both parents (29%). Participants reported their parent(s) died from heart disease (12.1%), cancer (34.6%), COVID-19 (2.8%), stroke (4.7%), Alzheimer's disease (4.7%), diabetes (1.9%), suicide (6.5%), car accident (2.8%), and other (29.9 %).

Participants who reported having lost their parent(s) lost them 0-6 months ago (9.3%), 6 months-1 year ago (2.8%), 1 year 1 month-3 years ago (12.1%), 3 years 1 month-5 years ago (14%), 5 years 1 month-10 years ago (23.4%), 10 years 1 month-15 years ago (16.8%), and 16+ years (21.5%) ( $M= 4.76$ ,  $SD= 1.84$ ). Additionally, respondents detailed that they were young adults when their parent(s) died ( $M= 26.67$ ,  $SD= 13.68$ ).

### ***Other Relational Loss Participants***

Respondents to the survey who have not lost a parent reported they lost their spouse (1%), child (1%), sibling (1.9%), friend (10.7%), aunt/uncle (13.6%), grandparent (69.9%), and cousin (1.9%). Participants of other types of relational losses explained that they lost their loved one by heart disease (11.7%), cancer (22.3%), COVID-19 (2.9%), stroke (11.7%), Alzheimer's disease (9.7%), diabetes (4.8%), suicide (2.9%), car accident (2.9%), and other (31.1%).

Participants who have not lost a parent but have experienced a different type of relational loss expressed they lost them 0-6 months ago (8.7%), 6 months-1 year ago (5.8%), 1 year 1 month-3 years ago (25.2%), 3 years 1 month-5 years ago (16.5%), 5 years 1 month-10 years ago (22.3%), 10 years 1 month-15 years ago (17.5%), and 16+ years (3.9%) ( $M= 4.06$ ,  $SD= 1.60$ ).

Additionally, respondents detailed that they were teenagers at the time of their loved one's death ( $M= 15.66, SD= 6.43$ ).

### ***General Demographics***

The sample was gained by using a university's participant pool and a variety of social media platforms, where participants were required to be at least 18 years old ( $M= 29.31, SD= 12.10$ ). The racial composition of the sample was 81% White, 4.8% Multiracial, 4.3% Asian, 3.8% Black or African American, 1.9% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 4.2% other or preferred not to say. Participants reported their ethnicity as 90% Not Hispanic or Latino and 10% Hispanic or Latino. The racial demographics in this study differ from the United States population by overrepresenting White participants (60.9%) and underrepresenting Black or African American individuals (15%) and Hispanic or Latino people (19.5%). Respondent's sexual orientation was 76.5% straight, 4.8% gay, 2.4% lesbian, 11% bisexual, 2.4% asexual, and 2.9% other. The participants' relationship status was 37.6% single, 22.4% married, 31.4% in a relationship, 3.8% divorced, 2.4% widowed, and 2.4% preferred not to say. Participants reported their highest level of education as 1.9% had less than high school, 12.4% are high school graduates, 35.2% have some college, 6.7% have a 2-year degree, 27.1% have a 4-year degree, 13.3% have a professional degree, and 3.3% have a Ph.D.

### ***Procedures***

The current study used a convenience sample to gather participants using a SONA recruiting system at a large Southeastern United States university. The SONA system is an online program that many universities use for researchers to post their research for faculty and students. Additionally, the study was posted on various social media platforms for potential followers to participate (See Appendix A). The survey instrument was administered using

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QuestionPro, a free survey platform. The sample was restricted by using inclusion/exclusion questions. The inclusion/exclusion questions were meant to gauge participants' ages to ensure they were 18 or older, and multiple questions on their experience with death. Examples of these questions are as follows: "Have you lost at least one person in your life?", "Have you lost one (or both) of your parents?", and "What type of relationship have you lost to death?". People who met the requirements of the study were then brought to one of two surveys, depending on whether they have lost a parent or a different type of relationship. Although some may suggest that friends are not members of a family unit, friendship often requires a close bond which may lead to individuals considering their friends member of their family. Therefore, the current study included friends in the other types of relational loss. Once the data was cleaned using statistical software, a total of 210 participants completed the survey. The clean data was analyzed using SPSS (Version #27). The average time it took participants to complete the study was also recorded ( $M= 7.62$  minutes,  $SD= 8.06$  minutes).

### ***Measurements***

Multiple variables have been examined in the current study. RQ1 has the independent variable of family types (pluralistic, consensual, protective, laissez-faire) and a dependent variable of different grieving processes following parental bereavement. RQ2 examines cultural and ethnic association (independent) in relation to family types following parental bereavement (dependent variable). H1 and H2 examine conversation orientation and conformity orientation (high vs. low) (independent variable) and types of grieving (suppressed vs. more expressive; independent vs. cooperative) (dependent variable). The final two hypotheses inspected the kind of loss (independent variable) regarding the length of grieving and overall grief expression

(dependent variable). These research variables will be measured by using the following scale measurements:

***The Revised Family Communication Patterns Scale (RFCP).*** The Revised Family Communication Patterns Scale (RFCP) was revised by Ritchie and Fitzpatrick (1990) to condense the original. The measurement examines the level at which a family is high or low in conformity and conversation orientation. For this study, the conversation orientation measurement has been adapted to cater to the language for people who have lost a parent and those who have lost other types of relationships. The 15-item Likert scale ranges from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). An example question from the parental death measurement is: “After the death of my first parent, my surviving parent often asked for my opinion when the family was talking about something.” An example question from the other relational loss measurement is, “After the death of my loved one, my parents encouraged me to challenge their ideas and beliefs.” Cronbach’s alpha reliability score for the conversation subscale before parental bereavement was 0.85 ( $M= 3.00, SD= 6.18$ ), and the reliability score after parental bereavement was 0.87 ( $M= 3.01, SD= 6.49$ ). The reliability score before other relational bereavement was 0.87 ( $M= 3.23, SD= 6.23$ ), and after other relational loss was 0.85 ( $M= 3.30, SD= 5.66$ ), both suggest good reliability.

***The Expanded Conformity Orientation Scale (ECOS).*** The Expanded Conformity Orientation Scale was created by Horstman et al. (2018) to address the limitations of the RFCP conformity orientation scale with the aim of strengthening it. For this study, the measurement has been personalized for people who have lost a parent and for individuals who have experienced other types of relational losses. The 24-item Likert scale is divided into four dimensions: (1) Respecting parental authority, (2) Experiencing parental control, (3) Adopting parent’s

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values/beliefs, and (4) Questioning parent's beliefs/authority. A factor analysis showed 4 distinct dimensions with 3 items with cross-loading. The scale ranges from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). An example question from the parental loss measurement is, "After the death of my first parent, my surviving-parent emphasized certain attitudes that they wanted the children in our family to adopt." An example question from the other relational loss scale is, "After the death of my loved one, my parents expected me to trust their judgment on important matters." The overall alpha reliability score for the conformity measurement before parental bereavement was 0.85 ( $M= 3.36, SD= 11.88$ ) and 0.91 after the loss ( $M= 3.02, SD= 16.64$ ). The Cronbach alpha reliability score for the conformity measurement before the loss of a different type of relational loss was 0.85 ( $M= 3.50, SD= 10.88$ ) and 0.89 after the loss of a different loved one ( $M= 3.40, SD= 12.91$ ), both suggest good reliability.

***Communication with Patients about Illness and Death Scale (CCID).*** The Communication with Patients about Illness and Death (CCID) Scale was created by Bachner et al. (2008) to better understand caregivers' communication with their patients who have been diagnosed with terminal illness and potential death. For this study, the scale has been adapted to focus on how individuals communicated about their parent's/other relational loss' death with their families. This scale captured participant's comfortability to communicate about a sensitive topic like death or their grief about their loved one's death to family members. The 5-item Likert scale ranges from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). An example question from the parental loss measurement is, "I hardly talk to my family about my deceased parent(s) because I do not want to make them sad." An example scale question from the other types of relational loss measurement is, "I don't know what to do or say to my family about my loved one's death." Cronbach's alpha reliability score for the CCID revealed a good reliability of 0.89 ( $M= 2.61,$

$SD= 5.57$ ) for individuals who have experienced the loss of a parent and an excellent score of 0.90 ( $M= 2.51$ ,  $SD= 5.25$ ) for those who have lost someone else.

***Inventory of Complicated Grief Scale (ICG).*** The Inventory of Complicated Grief Scale was created by Prigerson et al. (1995) to measure the extent of complicated grief following bereavement. This study has adapted the wording for parentally bereaved participants, and the original version has been used for other types of relational losses. The scale captured the potential difference in complicated grief between parentally bereaved participants and those who have experienced other relational losses. The 22-item Likert scale ranges from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). An example question from the parental loss scale is, “I think about my deceased parent(s) so much that it's hard for me to do things I normally do.” An example question from the other types of relational loss measurement is, “I go out of my way to avoid reminders of the person who died.” Cronbach’s alpha reliability score was revealed to be excellent, with a score of 0.92 ( $M= 3.01$ ,  $SD= 16.87$ ) for parentally bereaved participants and an excellent score of 0.95 ( $M= 2.56$ ,  $SD= 17.03$ ) for those who have experienced different types of bereavement.

## **Chapter 4: Results and Analysis**

### ***Family Styles After Parental and Complicated Grief (Research Question 1)***

RQ1 explored how the different family types after the death of a parent (i.e., consensual, pluralistic, etc.) differ in complicated grief symptoms following the death. An analysis of variance with Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons revealed that there were significant differences in family types and their complicated grief following the death of a parent. Specifically, consensual families ( $M= 3.35$ ,  $SD= .73$ ) were found to score significantly higher than protective families ( $M= 2.73$ ,  $SD= .81$ ) in complicated grief symptoms.

Table 1

**Degree to which the different family types have a main effect on complicated grief.**

	Consensual	Pluralistic	Protective	Laissez-faire
<i>Mean</i>	3.35 <sub>a</sub>	3.12 <sub>ab</sub>	2.73 <sub>b</sub>	2.96 <sub>ab</sub>
<i>SD</i>	.15	.13	.14	.16

$F(3, 104) = 3.37, p > .001, \eta^2 = .09, r^2 = .09.$

Note: means with no subscript in common differ at the  $p < .05$  using Bonferroni post hoc correction.

***Low Conversation and Grieving Practices (Hypothesis 1)***

H1 stated that families lower in conversation following the death of a parent would be more likely to practice a suppressed and internalized grieving process. A Pearson's correlation was conducted to examine if there was a correlation between families low in conversation orientation following parental bereavement and their willingness to communicate about the death of their parent. The correlation test revealed a significant moderate, negative relationship,  $r(108) = -.43, p < .03$ . In other words, an individual whose family is lower in conversation orientation following parental bereavement will be less likely to communicate with their family about the death.

***Low Conformity and Grieving Processes (Hypothesis 2)***

H2 stated that families lower in conformity following the death of a parent are more likely to experience an independent compared to a cooperative grieving process. A Pearson's correlation showed there was a correlation between families low in conformity orientation following parental bereavement and their willingness to communicate about the death of their parent. The correlation test revealed a significant moderate, positive relationship,  $r(108) = .42, p < .03$ . In other words, an individual whose family is lower in conformity orientation following parental bereavement will be more likely to try and resolve their grief independently rather than cooperatively with their family.

***Parental vs Other Relationship Loss and Length of Grieving (Hypothesis 3)***

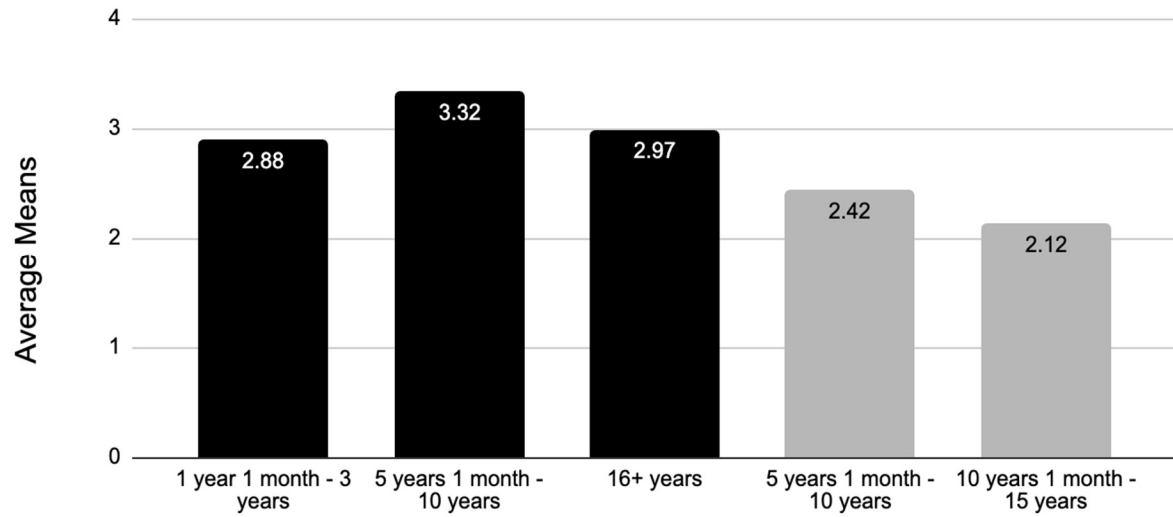
H3 explored the differences in the timeline of complicated grief between parentally bereaved individuals and other relationally bereaved individuals. A one-way ANOVA with Bonferroni post-hoc corrections revealed significant differences in the timeline of complicated grief between the two groups. Specifically, parentally bereaved individuals experienced more

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complicated grief at 1 year 1 month – 3 years after the death ( $M= 3.05, SD= .66$ ) than individuals experiencing other relational loss 10 years 1 month – 15 years ago ( $M= 2.12, SD= .86$ ).

Additionally, the one-way ANOVA revealed that parentally bereaved participants experienced more complicated grief at 5 years 1 month – 10 years after the death ( $M= 3.37, SD= .69$ ) than participants who experienced other types of loss 5 years 1 month – 10 years ago ( $M= 2.42, SD= .61$ ) and 16 years or more years ago ( $M= 2.58, SD= .87$ ).

Finally, the one-way ANOVA showed that parentally bereaved individuals experience complicated grief at higher rates at 16 years or more after the death ( $M= 2.97, SD= .75$ ) when compared to participants who experienced the loss of a different relationship 10 years 1 month – 15 years ago ( $M= 2.12, SD= .86$ ).



**Figure 2. Degree to which the timeline of complicated grief differs.**

- Parentally Bereaved
- Other Relationally Bereaved

***Parental vs Other Relational Loss and Grief Expression (Hypothesis 4)***

H4 examined the extent to which parentally bereaved individuals differ from other types of relational loss in overall grief expression. An independent, sample t-test employing two-tails was conducted to explore the differences. The results revealed no significant differences between parentally bereaved and other types of relational bereavement. There is no evidence to support the hypothesis.

***Culture/Ethnicity and Family Types After Parental Bereavement (Research Question 2)***

RQ2 explored the extent to which culture and ethnicity play a role in family types following the death of a parent. An analysis of variance with dummy variables was conducted to explore the relationship. The results revealed no significant associations between culture and ethnicity and family types following the death of a parent. This research question revealed no associations.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

***Theoretical Implications***

This study investigated how different types of relational deaths are associated with family communication. Specifically, the research compared parental death to other kinds of relational loss by examining family types, conversation orientation, conformity orientation, cultural/racial differences, and length of grief concerning complicated grief and grief communication. Koerner and Fitzpatrick's (2002b) Family Communication Patterns Theory (FCPT) was the theoretical basis for this research. FCPT has been a critical tool used in family communication to analyze various topics such as parent-child relationships, health and well-being, and conflict resolution. However, little research links the theory to parental death and grieving. Therefore, the current

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study contributes to a growing body of research examining how FCPT relates to parental bereavement and the following grieving process.

To study these questions, this study employed an online survey ( $N= 210$ ) of people who had experienced the death of a loved one and asked them to share their perspectives on grief and communication. Here, the results yielded significant differences in overall family types, the way they prefer to grieve, and the length of time they experience complicated grief.

The current study found that parentally bereaved families who classify as consensual are more likely to experience complicated grief at higher rates than families who fall within the protective family type. Koerner and Fitzpatrick (1997) position consensual families as those who are high in conversation and conformity orientation. Consensual families often have pressures to follow a hierarchy but value communication to find ordinary meaning and new perspectives (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997). Additionally, Samek and Rueter (2011) suggest that consensual families are closer to one another than all the other family types. Supplementing Koerner and Fitzpatrick's (1997) and Samek and Rueter's (2011) work combined with the current research findings can explain why families who are consensual following the death of a parent may be significantly different from protective families. Specifically, the openness and willingness to communicate paired with the family's dependence on one another may explain the intensified grief response when a prominent member, like a parent, dies.

Conversely, Koerner and Fitzpatrick (1997) position protective families as low in conversation but high in conformity orientation. Protective families tend to obey authority while lacking open and free communication among their members. The lack of communication within protective families may discourage emotional expression during the grieving process following parental bereavement, which may explain their lower complicated grief scores. Theoretically, the

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findings between consensual and protective families highlight that grief is not an individual experience but instead is shaped by trends in a family's conversation and conformity scores. This research also contributes significant findings by examining how low conversation scores affect grieving. Findings from the study suggest that participants whose families score low on the conversation scale may be more likely to suppress and internalize their grief. Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002b) highlight that families who are high in conversation have little to no boundaries regarding what they can communicate to their families and when that conversation occurs.

These findings support FCPT's position that families with higher conversation orientation can promote and foster an environment where family members feel comfortable and encouraged to share their thoughts on specific situations, including difficult ones (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b). Therefore, like Frick's (2024) findings, when conversation orientation is low, it suggests that family members will internalize their grief because they do not have the same encouragement to discuss the death as high conversation families.

Interestingly, these findings do contradict Carmon et al.'s (2010) results, which state that conversation orientation plays a minimal role after the death of a loved one. This discrepancy may be because the current study looks explicitly at parental bereavement in comparison to other relationally bereaved individuals, whereas Carmon et al. (2010) broadly examined familial death. Therefore, these current findings may suggest that parental death may have different relational dynamics and emotional intensity that the Carmon et al. (2010) data is missing. Regardless, the current study revealed that conversation orientation may have another purpose to help explain grief across different contexts.

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In addition to conversation orientation's impact on parental bereavement, this study yielded significant results regarding low conformity scores and the grieving process. Specifically, the study found that individuals who lost a parent and scored low on the conformity orientation scale are more likely to experience independence compared to a collaborative grieving process. This finding aligns with Koerner and Fitzpatrick's (2006) description of low conformity orientation. Families with low conformity orientation are typically independent, support members' personal growth, and think personal space is most important in a family unit (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). Therefore, families high in conformity are more likely to rely on each other, are obedient to a hierarchy, and have a rigid structure of what occurs in the family unit (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006).

This finding supports FCPT's position on expectations between high vs. low conformity families. Specifically, following the death of a family, Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2006), a family with low conformity orientation would expect an individual to want to deal with their grief alone. However, these low conformity orientation scores may be because of what Frick (2024) suggests is the result of parentification. Frick (2024) explains that following the death of a parent, the children may adopt new roles and assume more mature responsibilities within the family unit, which may cause them to be more independent. Therefore, supplementing Koerner and Fitzpatrick's (2006) description of conformity orientation with Frick's (2024) study, the current study can bridge that gap between the two to suggest that the FCPT can be a valuable tool to explain a family's grieving process through conformity orientation.

However, like conversation orientation, Carmon et al. (2010) suggest that conformity orientation did not play a role in familial bereavement. Carmon et al. (2010) claim that the insignificant results may be because the grief measurements focused heavily on cognitive rather

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than behavioral features. However, the grief measurement focused on communication, behavioral, and cognitive functions to ensure a more accurate picture.

Theoretically, these findings support FCPT claims on high vs. low conversation and conformity orientations of families and illustrate a broader picture of the scope of the theory. Unlike previous studies such as Carmon et al. (2010) that suggest that FCPT may not be the best tool to measure how families communicate during the time of death, this study suggests that the theory is not only applicable but an essential tool that can help understand complicated grief and the ways families communicate and conform during their grieving process. The current study, along with Frick's (2024) research, lays the groundwork for the future of the FCPT and invites scholars to revisit its boundaries and usefulness in the field of grief communication and death and dying.

Overall, individuals with low conversation or low conformity are more likely to experience a suppressed and individualized grieving process which aligns well with Worden's four tasks of mourning. Specifically, the findings in this paper align with Worden's (2018) second task of mourning which is survivors must take time to examine their pain surrounding the loss. However, Khosravi (2021) suggests that this step is often avoided because it is easy for survivors to suppress their pain. Therefore, the findings regarding low conversation and conformity individuals may suggest that they are more likely to skip Worden's (2018) second task of mourning.

The study also found significant differences in the length of time that parentally bereaved individuals experience complicated grief when compared to participants who experienced other types of relational bereavement. Specifically, the data analysis revealed that parentally bereaved individuals had significantly more complicated grief than other relationally bereaved individuals

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at 1 year 1 month – 3 years compared to 10 years, 1 month – 15 years, 5 years 1 month – 10 years compared to 5 years 1 month- 10 years and 10 years 1 month – 15 years, and 16+ years compared to 10 years 1 month – 15 years. Theoretically, these significant findings may result from a variety of reasons.

Luecken and Roubinov (2012) suggest that losing a parent, especially at a younger age, causes short-term mental implications rather than a lifelong experience with poor mental health. However, Szuhany et al. (2021) explains that complicated grief at any time in life increases the likelihood of an individual experiencing mental health issues such as PTSD, sleep disorders, and anxiety or depression. Therefore, the current results support Luecken and Roubinov's (2012) research, suggesting that parentally bereaved individuals may experience an immense amount of grief early in the grieving process (i.e., 1 year, 1 month, and 3 years). However, this study also extends their research by showing that they continue to experience complicated grief for as long as 16+ years following the death of their parent, especially when compared to other types of relational losses. Supplementing these results with Szuhany et al.'s. (2021) findings suggest that grieving the death of the parent may never truly end and that even as long as 16+ years following the death, severe mental health implications may still linger.

The results associated with the length of time for complicated grief may also theoretically extend information regarding the impact of attachment theory following parental death. The current findings may suggest that the parent-child relationship is powerful and significantly affects attachment styles when stripped away. Peleg (2003) suggests that becoming parentally bereaved, especially the younger someone is, often results in insecurities in attachment in adulthood, which can cause issues with relationship growth and development (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Peleg's (2003) research, paired with the current findings, may suggest that

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attachment insecurity years after the death of a parent may play a role in the extent to which parentally bereaved individuals experience complicated grief, especially when compared to other types of relational loss.

Finally, and perhaps the most significant theoretical implication, the results suggest that the length of grief is associated with grief communication. As most critics suggest about Kübler-Ross' (1969) DABDA model, the current findings reveal no clear ending to grief (Murray et al., 2005; Rosenblatt, 2000; Wortman & Silver, 2001). The findings for length of complicated grief between parentally bereaved participants and other types of relationally bereaved individuals suggest that parental death may experience a much different grieving experience through the years that may not fit within the context of Kübler-Ross' (1969) DABDA model. Additionally, many researchers suggest that Kübler-Ross' (1969) DABDA model focuses too heavily on recovery and acceptance of loss rather than the strengthening remaining relational bonds and finding the meaning of the loss through time (Attig, 2001; Murray et al., 2005; Klass, 2001), which supports current findings that suggest that parentally bereaved individuals still struggle with grieving the death 16+ years later.

Therefore, a reexamination of Kübler-Ross' (1969) DABDA model may be needed to capture the grieving process for parentally bereaved individuals fully and perhaps even other specific relational losses. Because this study also suggests that the FCPT can measure the extent to which conversation and conformity orientation affect the grieving process following bereavement, this may be the perfect theoretical supplement needed to revisit the DABDA model through a family and grief communication lens.

### ***Practical Implications***

This study builds on past research which attempts to bridge the gap between FCPT and parental death grief (Carmon et al., 2010; Frick, 2024). The results from this study can provide a larger picture for those experiencing grief, people who may have a loved one experiencing grief, and those who are in academia and clinical settings. The current thesis suggests that consensual families are more likely to experience complicated grief symptoms than protective families. The adverse effects that complicated grief may have on an individual include poor quality of life, risky behavior, suicidal ideation, and a variety of mental disorders such as depression or PTSD (Simon, 2013). Therefore, different tactics may need to be available for families depending on their specific family type.

Specifically, grief counselors must be able to recognize when their client's family is consensual vs. protective because it will change the way they approach suggesting tactics. Because Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2006) suggest that consensual families are high in conversation and conformity, this means that they are more likely to be very expressive with their grief and are working through their grief with their family members. Additionally, the results may suggest that when a consensual family loses the main decision-maker (a parent) that there is no one to make decisions on what can be talked about and when, which may leave family members unsure of what is appropriate to discuss. Therefore, consensual families need coping strategies that focus on communicating about the death without fear of rigid guidelines of what discussion is allowed and when it is allowed.

As for protective families, Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2006) characterize them as being low in conversation and high in conformity. Counseling strategies for protective families should heavily encourage and foster an environment where communication about complex topics, like

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death, is acceptable. Overall, the best option, depending on the level of complicated grief within a specific family type, is to enroll in different bereavement programs. Harrop et al. (2020) state that bereavement programs are a good outlet where families with complex grief can focus on emotion processing, coping, and finding mutual support with other bereaved individuals.

This research contradicts findings from Carmon et al. (2010) that suggest conformity and conversation orientation have little effect on parental death grieving. Specifically, this research suggests that families who are low in conversation are more likely to suppress and internalize their grief. Additionally, results revealed that families that are low in conformity orientation following the death of a parent are more likely to experience independence compared to a cooperative grieving process following the death of a parent. While these results are troubling, they also provide an accurate picture of how communicative theory plays a role in grieving the death of a parent. Therefore, practical implications can lead to a better understanding of how to address parentally bereaved individuals who may be independently internalizing their grief when they score low conversation and conformity orientations following the death of their parent.

Because the current study suggests that individuals who are low in FCPT's orientation measurements, it may be important to implement these findings within a clinical setting. According to O'Neill and Naksah (2021), an initial intake session by a grief counselor includes rapport building, identifying vulnerabilities and coping strategies, gathering medical records, and exploring social support systems. While all these facets of a traditional intake session are beneficial, the current study may suggest that additional strategies are required. Specifically, additional intake sessions should occur where grief counselors assess their patients' conversation and conformity orientation scores.

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By gaining the knowledge of these scores, grief counselors can identify whether their patients are more likely to internalize their grief or attempt to solve it independently. After gathering the conversation and conformity scores, grief counselors would be better equipped to move forward with future visits by adopting specific strategies to help their clients based on their family communication patterns. However, it is important to note that FCPT may not account for the quality of communication between family members, but counseling and therapy could be the place that facilitates that quality communication among family members. This suggestion could also be beneficial for family counseling following the death of a parent because it would allow for grief counselors, once trained adequately on conversation and conformity orientation, to assess the best steps forward on how to strengthen the two orientations to allow for a more externalized and collaborative grieving process for the family.

Finally, practical implications are apparent for the length of time that parentally bereaved persons grieve when compared to those grieving other types of relationships. Therefore, several suggestions are available to ensure parentally bereaved individuals are getting the care they need even years after the death of their parent. Hanlon et al. (2022) state that bereavement camps are a resource that typically focuses on short-term grief support, which typically targets children and adolescents who have lost a loved one. Because the current findings suggest that parentally bereaved individuals experience high levels of complicated grief symptoms as long as 16+ years after the death, there is a discrepancy in the current approach that bereavement camps take to lessen complicated grief symptoms. Therefore, bereavement camps should have different layers to their programs where members group up depending on the length that their loved one passed. By splitting the camp members into these groups, counselors can ensure they tailor the correct coping strategies for short-term vs. long-term grievers. Chi et al. (2025) claim that bereavement

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camp's short-term grieving practices focus on providing emotional support, group interactions, and psychosocial well-being training. However, these short-term practices may not provide long-term support in later adulthood (Chi et al., 2025). This study suggests that if bereavement camps offer long-term grief support practices, they should focus on relationship building, regaining attachment security, long-term emotion regulation, and identity disruption.

These suggestions for counseling services and bereavement camps may help align FCPT with grief models like Worden's (2018) four tasks of mourning, which lends further evidence that the theory is a plausible framework to predict grief processes. Specifically, these recommendations can be useful in ensuring that bereaved individual's meet Worden's (2018) tasks of accepting the loss as a reality (task 1), adjusting to a world without the deceased (task 3), and helping the survivor find space for the deceased in their emotional life (task 4). With these recommendations, FCPT not only positions itself as a framework to use to help predict grief patterns, but it can also prove to be a useful tool to helping the bereaved get back on track following the loss of a loved one.

### ***Limitations***

Although the current thesis provides multiple significant findings that provide larger theoretical and practical implications for parental death grief, there are some limitations. Each of the limitations involves different aspects of the makeup of the participants. First, the current study has quite a gender imbalance, with 74.8% female, 22.4% male, 1.9% non-binary, and 1% prefer not to say. When comparing this study to the United States population, women are overrepresented (50.5%), and men are underrepresented (49.5%). Additionally, one of the study's research questions was to analyze the extent to which culture and race play a role in

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family styles (i.e., consensual, protective, pluralistic laissez-faire) following the death of a parent. Unfortunately, no significant results may be because of the lack of cultural and racial diversity within the sample. Specifically, 81% of the participants in the study signified that they were white, and 90% expressed that they were not Hispanic or Latino/Latina. Also, the average age of participants in the study ( $M= 29.31$ ) is much lower than the national average ( $M= 38.7$ ), therefore, the results may signify that younger adults may grieve differently. Finally, the current study could benefit from more diversity regarding the types of other relational loss. Much of the current sample indicated that the type of relationship they experienced (that was not a parent) was a grandparent. Considering these limitations could benefit future researchers planning to take on studies like this one.

### ***Future Directions***

By addressing the limitations of this thesis, future researchers could learn how to approach similar research topics. By ensuring that the gender gap in this study is closed in the future, researchers can provide context on whether results remain similar with a greater male sample. While the culture and race research question showed no significance in this study, future research may consider diversifying the pool of participants and gaining more individuals from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. One way this is possible is by offering the study in different languages to reduce potential barriers for non-English speaking participants. Addressing the final limitation, future researchers should attempt to find individuals who have lost other relationships besides grandparents. Because this research gained many of its respondents from a university's participant pool, this may have led to an increase in individuals who have not experienced any other type of relational loss. One potential outlet for future researchers to gain a more diverse pool for other types of relational loss is collaborating with

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bereavement organizations or camps in advance. Although many bereavement support groups or camps have rigid guidelines on research participation, if researchers give themselves sufficient time before starting data collection, they can work around the bureaucratic tape.

Despite these limitations on generalizing these results to the U.S. population, this research lays a solid groundwork for future research to transform and extend theory. While FCPT is predominantly a tool to examine family decision-making, conflict, and dynamics, the current study provides a solid framework that suggests FCPT may be a proper tool to understand familial grief better. Therefore, future research should continue to establish FCPT as a grief theory. Future studies may want to examine how FCPT intervention methods to reach the desired conversation and conformity levels may be effective in a clinical setting to determine how effective and ineffective specific coping strategies are for parental bereavement. Additionally, the current research prepared future researchers to examine how FCPT can extend Kübler-Ross' (1969) DABDA model specifically for parental bereavement. Moreover, because there were some significant findings regarding parental bereavement and other relational loss, this may open the door to exploring if each type of loss may deserve its grief model based on the grieving process that occurs for a specific relationship. By integrating FCPT into future communicative grief research, the literature could widen the knowledge about how family dynamics can facilitate or inhibit grieving processes.

Finally, future research, such as the current study, could benefit from a mixed methods research design. Although the current quantitative lens has provided helpful insight into measurements such as FCPT and complicated grief, implementing qualitative methods like interviews and focus groups could provide a more in-depth analysis of the lived experiences of participants regarding death. Additionally, adding a qualitative aspect to a study of this nature

would allow future researchers to identify direct patterns and recurring themes of participants' coping strategies, resilience, and willingness to communicate about death. Also, a qualitative lens on this type of research could extend this theory to minors who have experienced grief throughout their life. Overall, a mixed methods approach in the future could strengthen the already strong results, ultimately assuring theoretical and practical implications in a clinical setting.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

While some questions regarding differences in grief between parental death and other types of relational loss are unanswered, this research reveals promising strides toward capturing a better consensus of how family communication plays a role in grief processing and response. Although little research to date has explored family communicative grief processes between parentally bereaved and other relationally bereaved individuals, this study expanded the use of FCPT to a grief context and how they differ depending on the type of loss experienced. Here, results suggest that families who fall within the consensual family (high conversation and high conformity) type are more likely to experience prolonged and complicated grief than families who identify as protective (low conversation and high conformity).

Additionally, families who have lost a parent and are low in conversation and conformity orientation are more likely to internalize their grief and choose to handle it independently compared to collaboratively with their family. Notably, the research revealed that there are differences in the level of complicated grief parentally bereaved individuals experienced when compared to other types of relationally bereaved people, suggesting that different methods of grief support should occur at different times. FCPT has been established as a measurement to explore how different types of families grieve according to their level of conversation and

conformity. Overall, this study highlights that there is a need for families, clinical workers, and support systems to know not only who or what is lost but also how families communicate, or the lack thereof, about the loss.

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## Appendix A: Survey Posting Locations

1. A large Southeastern United States university's SONA system
2. Facebook
3. Snapchat
4. Instagram
5. Reddit

## Appendix B: Survey Statistics

### Summary

**2,414**

 Viewed

**471**

 Total Responses


**223**

Completed

**47.35%**

 Completion Rate

**248**

 Dropouts

**7 min**

 Average Time

## Appendix C: IRB Approval Letter



Division of Scholarly Integrity and  
Research Compliance  
Institutional Review Board  
North End Center, Suite 4120 (MC 0497)  
300 Turner Street NW  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061  
540/231-3732  
irb@vt.edu  
<http://www.research.vt.edu/sirc/hrpp>

### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** December 20, 2024  
**TO:** Megan Ann Duncan, Bradley James Frick  
**FROM:** Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572)  
**PROTOCOL TITLE:** Creation of the Family Communication Patterns Parental Death Grief Model  
**IRB NUMBER:** 24-1306

Effective December 20, 2024, the Virginia Tech Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) determined that this protocol meets the criteria for exemption from IRB review under 45 CFR 46.104 (d) category(ies) 2(i).

Ongoing IRB review and approval by this organization is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these activities impact the exempt determination, please submit an amendment to the HRPP for a determination.

This exempt determination does not apply to any collaborating institution(s). The Virginia Tech HRPP and IRB cannot provide an exemption that overrides the jurisdiction of a local IRB or other institutional mechanism for determining exemptions.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

<https://secure.research.vt.edu/external/irb/responsibilities.htm>

(Please review responsibilities before beginning your research.)

### PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Determined As: **Exempt, under 45 CFR 46.104(d) category(ies) 2(i)**  
Protocol Determination Date: **December 20, 2024**

### ASSOCIATED FUNDING:

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this protocol.

## Appendix D: Consent Form

**Title of research study:** Creation of Family Communication Patterns Parental Death Grief Model

**Principal Investigator:** Megan Duncan, PhD, meganduncan@vt.edu, 540-231-7136

**Other study contact(s):** Bradley Frick, bradleyf@vt.edu

**Key Information:** This study aims to use the family communication patterns theory to analyze grief communication within families during the loss of a parent in order to expand preexisting grief models that tend to generalize grief processes.

**Detailed Information:** This project attempts to address the lack of literature by providing a new lens for the theory supplement, specifically concerning parental bereavement. The purpose of this project uses FCPT to analyze grief communication within families during the loss of a parent. This will expand theory to allow communication scholars to better understand the specific grief communication for families following parental bereavement. Learning more about this could also help families who experience grief and their caregivers.

### Who can I talk to?

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, talk to the research team at 540-231-7162 or meganduncan@vt.edu

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (IRB). You may communicate with them at 540-231-3732 or irb@vt.edu if:

- You have questions about your rights as a research subject
- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team
- You cannot reach the research team
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team to provide feedback about this research

### How many people will be studied?

We plan to include between 300-400 people in this research study.

### What happens if I say yes, I want to be in this research?

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be given an opportunity to complete a communication research survey. The study should take approximately 30 minutes of your time.

### What happens if I say yes, but I change my mind later?

You can leave the research at any time, for any reason, and it will not be held against you. If you decide to exit the survey before completion, any data you provided will not be included in the research project and will not be analyzed.

### Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me? (Detailed Risks)

## Grieving Between the Lines

There are no known risks to participating in this study.

### **What happens to the information collected for the research?**

We will make every effort to limit the use and disclosure of your personal information, including research study and medical records, only to people who have a need to review this information.

We cannot promise complete confidentiality. Organizations that may inspect and copy your information include the IRB, Human Research Protection Program, and other authorized representatives of Virginia Tech.

The results of this research study may be presented in summary form at conferences, in presentations, academic papers, and as part of a thesis.

### **What else do I need to know?**

We will not offer to share your individual test results with you. You may accept or decline these results.

### **Counseling Services**

#### **988 Suicide Lifeline.**

Call or text 988 or [chat online](#) to connect with a trained crisis counselor. The Lifeline provides 24-hour, confidential support to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. By selecting yes on this consent form, you are claiming to be over the age of 18.

#### **Crisis Text Line**

Text **HOME** to 741741 from anywhere in the United States – 24/7, free, confidential. Crisis Text Line (CTL) is here for you. A live, trained volunteer Crisis Counselor receives the text and responds, all from our secure online platform.

### **Counseling Services for Virginia Tech Students**

TimelyCare

<https://www.hr.vt.edu/benefits/optional-benefits/mental-wellness/timelycare.html>

Cook Counseling Center

Call 540-231-6557

Do you consent to partake in the research study?

YES

NO → Boot

## Appendix E: Survey Instrument

What is your gender?

1. Male
2. Female
3. Non-binary
4. Prefer not to say

What is your age?

1. 18
83. 100

Have you lost at least one person in your lifetime?

1. Yes
2. No → Boot

Have you lost one (or both) of your parents?

1. Yes
2. No

If you have lost a parent, which parent did you lose?

1. Mother
2. Father
3. Both

How long has it been since you have lost your first parent?

1. 0 – 6 months
2. 6 months – 1 year
3. 1 year 1 month – 3 years
4. 3 years 1 month – 5 years
5. 5 years 1 month – 10 years
6. 10 years 1 month – 15 years
7. 16 years or more

How old were you at the time of your first parent's death?

1. 18
2. 100

How did your parent die?

1. Heart disease
2. Cancer
3. COVID-19
4. Stroke
5. Alzheimer's disease
6. Diabetes
7. Suicide
8. Car accident
9. Other (Explain)

Please pick one relationship that you have lost to refer to in order to complete this survey.

1. Spouse
2. Child
3. Sibling
4. Friend

## Grieving Between the Lines

5. Aunt/Uncle
6. Grandparent
7. Grandchild
8. Niece/Nephew
9. Cousin

How long has it been since you have lost this relationship?

1. 0 - 6 months
2. 6 months - 1 year
3. 1 year 1 month - 3 years
4. 3 years 1 month - 5 years
5. 5 years 1 month - 10 years
6. 10 years 1 month - 15 years
7. 16 years or more

How old were you at the time of this death?

1. 18
83. 100

How did this person die?

1. Heart disease
2. Cancer
3. COVID-19
4. Stroke
5. Alzheimer's disease
6. Diabetes
7. Suicide
8. Car accident
9. Other (Explain)

Directions: Please rate the following on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before the death of my first parent, my family talked about topics like politics and religion where some persons disagreed with others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my first parent, my parents often said something like "Every member of the family should have some say in family decision."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my first parent, my parents often asked for my opinion when the family was talking about something.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my first parent, my parents encouraged me to challenge their ideas and beliefs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Grieving Between the Lines

Before the death of my first parent, my parents often said things like "You should always look at both sides of an issue."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my first parent, I usually told my parents what I was thinking about.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my first parent, I could tell my parents almost anything.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Directions: Please rate the following on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
After the death of my first parent, my family talked about topics like politics and religion where some persons disagreed with others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my first parent, my surviving parent often said something like "Every member of the family should have some say in family decision."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my first parent, my surviving parent often asked for my opinion when the family was talking about something.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my first parent, my surviving parent encouraged me to challenge their ideas and beliefs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my first parent, my surviving parent often said things like "You should always look at both sides of an issue."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my first parent, I usually told my surviving parent what I was thinking about.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my first parent, I could tell my surviving parent almost anything.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Directions: Please rate the following on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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Grieving Between the Lines

Before the death of my first parent, my parents expected me to respect our elders.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my first parent, I was expected to speak respectfully to my parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my first parent, my parents had clear expectations about how a child is supposed to behave.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my first parent, when I was at home, I was expected to obey my parent's rules.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my first parent, my parents insisted that I respect those who have been placed in positions of authority.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my first parent, my parents emphasized certain attitudes that they wanted the children in our family to adopt.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my first parent, my parents had the last word.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my first parent, my parents expected me to trust their judgement on important matters.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my first parent, I was expected to follow my parent's wishes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Directions: Please rate the following on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before the death of my first parent, my parents felt that it was important to be the boss.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my first parent, my parents became irritated with my views if they were different from theirs views.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my first parent, my parents would try to persuade me to view things the way they saw them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my first parent, my parents would say things like "You'll know better when you grow up."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Grieving Between the Lines

Before the death of my first parent, my parents would say things like "You may not understand why I am doing this right now, but someday you will."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my first parent, my parents would say things like "My ideas are right, and you should not question them."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Directions: Please rate the following on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before the death of my first parent, members of my family were expected to hold similar values.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my first parent, I was expected to adopt my parent's values.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my first parent, my parents encouraged me to adopt their values.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my first parent, my family had a particular way of seeing the world.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my first parent, I felt pressured to adopt my parent's beliefs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Directions: Please rate the following on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before the death of my first parent, I was expected to challenge my parent's beliefs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my first parent, I was allowed to question my parent's authority.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my first parent, my parents encouraged open disagreement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my first parent, I was encouraged to question my parent's authority.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Grieving Between the Lines

Directions: Please rate the following on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
After the death of my first parent, my surviving parent expected me to respect our elders.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my first parent, I was expected to speak respectfully to my surviving parent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my first parent, my surviving parent had clear expectations about how a child is supposed to behave.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my first parent, when I was at home, I was expected to obey my surviving parent's rules.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my first parent, my surviving parent insisted that I respect those who have been placed in positions of authority.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my first parent, my surviving parent emphasized certain attitudes that they wanted the children in our family to adopt.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my first parent, my surviving parent had the last word.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my first parent, my surviving parent expected me to trust their judgement on important matters.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my first parent, I was expected to follow my surviving parent's wishes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Directions: Please rate the following on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
After the death of my first parent, my surviving parent felt that it was important to be the boss.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my first parent, my surviving parent became irritated with my	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Grieving Between the Lines

views if they were different from their views.					
After the death of my first parent, my surviving parent would try to persuade me to view things the way they saw them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my first parent, my surviving parent would say things like "You'll know better when you grow up."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my first parent, my surviving parent would say things like "You may not understand why I am doing this right now, but someday you will."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my first parent, my surviving parent would say things like "My ideas are right, and you should not question them."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Directions: Please rate the following on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
After the death of my first parent, family members were expected to hold similar values.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my first parent, I was expected to adopt my surviving parent's values.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my first parent, my surviving parent encouraged me to adopt their values.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my first parent, my family had a particular way of seeing the world.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my first parent, I felt pressured to adopt my surviving-parent's beliefs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Directions: Please rate the following on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

## Grieving Between the Lines

After the death of my first parent, I was expected to challenge my surviving parent's beliefs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my first parent, I was allowed to question my surviving parent's authority.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my first parent, my surviving parent encouraged open disagreement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my first parent, I was encouraged to question my surviving parent's authority.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Directions: Please rate the following on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before the death of my loved one, my family talked about topics like politics and religion where some persons disagree with others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my loved one, my parents often said something like "Every member of the family should have some say in family decision."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my loved one, my parents often asked for my opinion when the family was talking about something.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my loved one, my parents encouraged me to challenge their ideas and beliefs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my loved one, my parents often said things like "You should always look at both sides of an issue."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my loved one, I usually told my parents what I was thinking about.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my loved one, I could tell my parents almost anything.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Directions: Please rate the following questions on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree).

## Grieving Between the Lines

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
After the death of my loved one, my family talked about topics like politics and religion where some persons disagree with others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my loved one, my parents often said something like "Every member of the family should have some say in family decision."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my loved one, my parents often asked for my opinion when the family was talking about something.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my loved one, my parents encouraged me to challenge their ideas and beliefs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my loved one, my parents often said things like "You should always look at both sides of an issue."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my loved one, I usually told my parents what I was thinking about.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my loved one, I could tell my parents almost anything.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Directions: Please rate the following questions on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before the death of my loved one, my parents expected me to respect our elders.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my loved one, I was expected to speak respectfully to my parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my loved one, my parents had clear expectations about how a child is supposed to behave.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my loved one, when I was at home, I was expected to obey my parent's rules.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my loved one, my parents insisted that I respect those who have been placed in positions of authority.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Grieving Between the Lines

Before the death of my loved one, my parents emphasized certain attitudes that they wanted the children in our family to adopt.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my loved one, my parents had the last word.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my loved one, my parents expected me to trust their judgement on important matters.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my loved one, I was expected to follow my parent's wishes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Directions: Please rate the following questions on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before the death of my loved one, my parents felt that it was important to be the boss.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my loved one, my parents became irritated with my views if they were different from their views.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my loved one, my parents would try to persuade me to view things the way they saw them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my loved one my parents would say things like "You'll know better when you grow up."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my loved one, my parents would say things like "You may not understand why I am doing this right now, but someday you will."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my loved one, my parents would say things like "My ideas are right, and you should not question them."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Directions: Please rate the following questions on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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Grieving Between the Lines

Before the death of my loved one, members of my family were expected to hold similar values.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my loved one, I was expected to adopt my parent's values.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my loved one, my parents encouraged me to adopt their values.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my loved one, my family had a particular way of seeing the world.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my loved one, I felt pressured to adopt my parent's beliefs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Directions: Please rate the following questions on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before the death of my loved one, I was expected to challenge my parent's beliefs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my loved one, I was allowed to question my parent's authority.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my loved one, my parents encouraged open disagreement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before the death of my loved one, I was encouraged to question my parent's authority.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Directions: Please rate the following questions on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
After the death of my loved one, my parents expected me to respect our elders.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my loved one, I was expected to speak respectfully to my parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my loved one, my parents had clear expectations about how a child is supposed to behave.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Grieving Between the Lines

After the death of my loved one, when I was at home, I was expected to obey my parent's rules.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my loved one, my parents insisted that I respect those who have been placed in positions of authority.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my loved one, my parents emphasized certain attitudes that they wanted the children in our family to adopt.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my loved one, my parents had the last word.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my loved one, my parents expected me to trust their judgement on important matters.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my loved one, I was expected to follow my parent's wishes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Directions: Please rate the following questions on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
After the death of my loved one, my parents felt that it was important to be the boss.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my loved one, my parents became irritated with my views if they were different from their views.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my loved one, my parents would try to persuade me to view things the way they saw them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my loved one, my parents would say things like "You'll know better when you grow up."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my loved one, my parents would say things like "You may not understand why I am doing this right now, but someday you will."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my loved one, my parents would say things like "My ideas are right, and you should not question them."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Grieving Between the Lines

Directions: Please rate the following questions on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
After the death of my loved one, members of my family were expected to hold similar values.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my loved one, I was expected to adopt my parent's values.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my loved one, my parents encouraged me to adopt their values.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my loved one, my family had a particular way of seeing the world.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my loved one, I felt pressured to adopt my parent's beliefs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Directions: Please rate the following questions on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
After the death of my loved one, I was expected to challenge my parent's beliefs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my loved one, I was allowed to question my parent's authority.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my loved one, my parents encouraged open disagreement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After the death of my loved one, I was encouraged to question my parent's authority.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Directions: Please rate the following questions on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel the urge to cry when I think about my deceased parent(s).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I find myself thinking about my deceased parent(s).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Grieving Between the Lines

I think about my deceased parent(s) so much that it's hard for me to do things I normally do.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Memories of my deceased parent(s) upsets me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel I cannot accept the death of my parent(s).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have feelings that it is unfair my parent(s) died.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel myself longing for my deceased parent(s).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel drawn to places and things associated with my deceased parent(s).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can't help feeling angry about my deceased parent's death.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel disbelief over what happened to my deceased parent(s).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel stunned or dazed over what happened to my deceased parent(s).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ever since my parent(s) died, it is hard for me to trust people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ever since my parent(s) died, I feel as if I have lost the ability to care about other people or feel distant from people I care about.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel lonely a great deal of time ever since my parent(s) died.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have pain in the same area of my body or have some of the same symptoms as my deceased parent(s).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I go out of my way to avoid reminders of my deceased parent(s).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel that life is empty without my deceased parent(s).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I hear the voice of my deceased parent(s) speak to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I see my deceased parent(s) stand before me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel that it is unfair that I should live when my parent(s) died.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel bitter over my parent(s) death.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel envious of others who have not lost their parent(s).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Grieving Between the Lines

Directions: Please rate the following questions on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel the urge to cry when I think about the person who died.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I find myself think about the person who died.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think about this person so much that it's hard for me to do the things I normally do.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Memories of the person who died upset me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel I cannot accept the death of the person who died.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have feelings that it is unfair this person died.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel myself longing for the person who died.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel drawn to places and things associated with the person who died.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can't help feeling angry about his/her death.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel disbelief over what happened to my loved one.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel stunned or dazed over what happened to my loved one.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ever since he/she died, it is hard for me to trust people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ever since he/she died, I feel as if I have lost the ability to care about other people or feel distant from other people I care about.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel lonely a great deal of the time ever since he/she died.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have pain in the same area of my body or have some of the same symptoms as the person who died.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I go out of my way to avoid reminders of the person who died.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel that life is empty without the person who died.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I hear the voice of the person who died speak to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I see the person who died stand before me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Grieving Between the Lines

I feel that it is unfair that I should live when this person died.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel bitter over this person's death.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel envious of others who have not lost someone close.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Directions: Please rate the following questions on a scale of 0 (Never), 1 (Rarely), 2 (Sometimes), 3 (Often), 4 (Always).

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
I was afraid to talk to my family about continuing my life without my deceased parent(s).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I hardly talk to my family about my deceased parent(s) because I do not want to make them sad.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I avoid talking to my family about my deceased parent's death.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I avoid talking with my family about their feelings and fears surrounding my parent's death.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't know what to do or say to my family about my parent's death.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Directions: Please rate the following questions on a scale of 0 (Never), 1 (Rarely), 2 (Sometimes), 3 (Often), 4 (Always).

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
I was afraid to talk to my family about continuing my life without my deceased loved one.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I hardly talk to my family about my deceased loved one because I do not want to make them sad.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I avoid talking to my family about my deceased loved one's death.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I avoid talking with my family about their feelings and fears surrounding my loved one's death.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't know what to do or say to my family about my loved one's death.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Grieving Between the Lines

What is your ethnicity?

1. Hispanic or Latino/Latina
2. Not Hispanic or Latino/Latina

What is your race?

1. American Indian or Alaska Native
2. Asian
3. Black or African American
4. White
5. Multiracial
6. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
7. Other
8. Prefer not to say

What is your current relationship status/

1. Single
2. Married
3. In a relationship
4. Divorced
5. Separated
6. Widowed
7. Prefer not to say

What is your sexual orientation?

1. Straight
2. Gay
3. Lesbian
4. Bisexual
5. Asexual
6. Other

What is your highest educational achievement?

1. Less than high school
2. High school graduate
3. Some college
4. 2-year degree
5. 4-year degree
6. Professional degree
7. Doctorate

## Appendix F: Factor Analysis

Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
(before) Respecting parental authority - Before the death of my first parent, my parents expected me to respect our elde	.495	.573	.255	.154
(before) Respecting parental authority - Before the death of my first parent, I was expected to speak respectfully to my	.499	.585	.253	-.152
(before) Respecting parental authority - Before the death of my first parent, my parents had clear expectations about ho	.555	.602	-.015	-.130
(before) Respecting parental authority - Before the death of my first parent, when I was at home, I was expected to obey	.614	.592	.106	-.125
(before) Respecting parental authority - Before the death of my first parent, my parents insisted that I respect those w	.605	.488	-.026	.239
(before) Respecting parental authority - Before the death of my first parent, my parents emphasized certain attitudes th	.642	.239	.107	-.389
(before) Respecting parental authority - Before the death of my first parent, my parents had the last word.	.747	.055	-.033	.003
(before) Respecting parental authority - Before the death of my first parent, my parents expected me to trust their judg	.683	.192	.218	-.083
(before) Respecting parental authority - Before the death of my first parent, I was expected to follow my parent's wishe	.714	.173	-.019	-.087
(Before) Experiencing Parental Control - Before the death of my first parent, my parents felt that it was important to b	.744	.190	-.061	.234
(Before) Experiencing Parental Control - Before the death of my first parent, my parents became irritated with my views	.615	-.445	-.246	-.056
(Before) Experiencing Parental Control - Before the death of my first parent, my parents would try to persuade me to vie	.678	-.419	.059	.080
(Before) Experiencing Parental Control - Before the death of my first parent, my parents would say things like "You'll k	.703	-.220	.137	.486
(Before) Experiencing Parental Control - Before the death of my first parent, my parents would say things like "You may	.563	.073	.068	.573
(Before) Experiencing Parental Control - Before the death of my first parent, my parents would say things like "My ideas	.721	-.296	-.066	.212
(Before) Adopting Parents' values/beliefs - Before the death of my first parent, members of my family were expected to h	.669	-.437	.289	-.138
(Before) Adopting Parents' values/beliefs - Before the death of my first parent, I was expected to adopt my parent's val	.641	-.381	.370	-.153
(Before) Adopting Parents' values/beliefs - Before the death of my first parent, my parents encouraged me to adopt their	.655	-.279	.455	-.092
(Before) Adopting Parents' values/beliefs - Before the death of my first parent, my family had a particular way of seein	.489	-.332	.323	-.292
(Before) Adopting Parents' values/beliefs - Before the death of my first parent, I felt pressured to adopt my parent's b	.730	-.415	.094	-.010
(Before) Questioning parents' beliefs/authority - Before the death of my first parent, I was expected to challenge my pa	-.543	.006	.469	.048
(Before) Questioning parents' beliefs/authority - Before the death of my first parent, I was allowed to question my pare	-.661	-.017	.538	.161
(Before) Questioning parents' beliefs/authority - Before the death of my first parent, my parents encouraged open disagr	-.644	.187	.575	.067
(Before) Questioning parents' beliefs/authority - Before the death of my first parent, I was encouraged to question my p	-.609	-.040	.621	.106

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 4 components extracted.