

Unexpected Grief - A SADOD-Facilitated Focus Group

1. **Who?** Outreach staff and their direct supervisors of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's 11 post programs, which include AIDS Action Committee, AIDS Project Worcester, AIDS Support Group of Cape Cod, Boston Public Health Commission, Healthy Streets, North Shore Health Project, Greater Lawrence Family Health Center, Tapestry, Manet, Seven Hills and JRI/Project Rise.
2. **When?** POST Convening, March 10th, 2023
3. **Duration?** One hour
4. **Format?** Facilitated discussion between staff and SADOD grief support service providers
5. **Objectives?**
 1. Respond to someone experiencing acute grief
 2. Offer appropriate grief resources
 3. Manage your own grief from secondary trauma

Scenario:

While conducting post overdose outreach, you review the log from your police partners. The next house is a 27-year-old male, found unresponsive by his parents. They believe he was using cocaine, which he had sought treatment for in the past. The patient was breathing at EMS arrival, no naloxone was administered. He was found by EMS to be in a pulsed ventricular tachycardia (a rapid heart rate), treatment was provided on scene, and he was transferred to the hospital. No further information is available. This call occurred 3 days ago.

You knock on the door and a woman answers the door. She looks like she has not slept in a couple of days and has been crying. You identify yourself as a public health outreach program that follows up after medical events and you were hoping to speak to the gentleman who was taken by EMS a few days prior. She responds, "That was my son, and he passed away in the ICU yesterday" and then bursts into tears.

What is your next move? How do you handle this situation? What resources do you have at your disposal to help this family in the moment? What do you wish that you could do that you cannot do?