

# Grief Dreams

## Grief Dreams

\ 'grēf 'drēm\ noun

1. A dream that occurs after the death of a human or animal.

**Synonyms:** Bereavement dreams, dreams after loss, dreams of the deceased, dreams of the dead, visitation dreams

## WHY ARE GRIEF DREAMS AN IMPORTANT TOPIC TO DISCUSS?

Likelihood to have a grief dream of the deceased:

86%

after spouse/partner  
loss

78%

after pet loss

57%

after miscarriage

Research comes from Black et al., 2019, and Black et al., 2021

**How much do you think you know about the topic? How much do you think the public knows?**

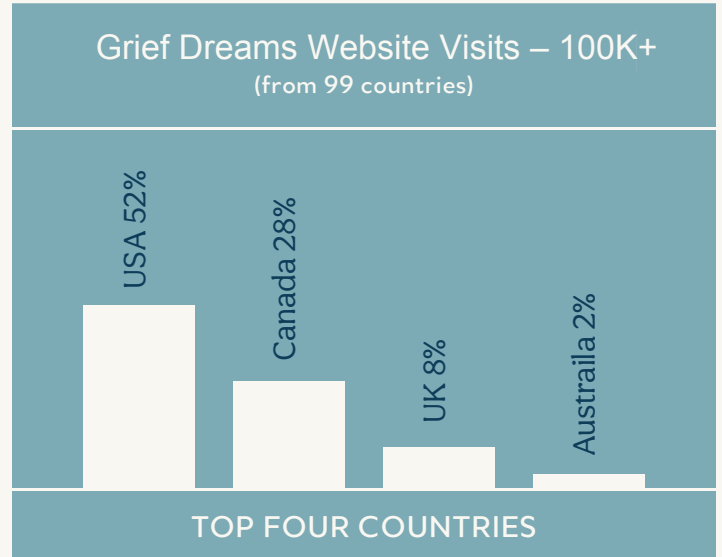
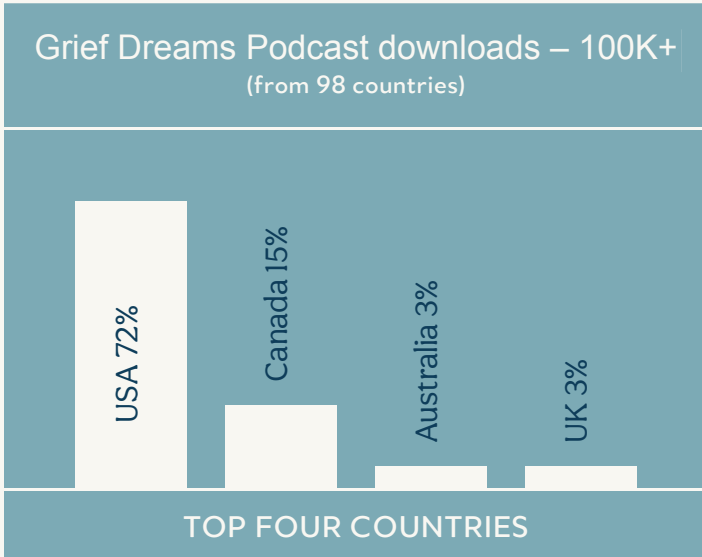
Our knowledge is a valuable resource for the bereaved and those who work in bereavement. Since this topic is not taught in traditional thanatology or clinical/counselling training classes, this will be an opportunity to educate and encourage practitioners to approach the topic with more confidence. This is likely the first time most people will hear about this topic from someone who has conducted research in this arena and are actively raising awareness about the importance (from podcasts, media interviews, to discussions with the bereaved).

**It is timely to normalize these experiences to aid others in the processing of their grief.**

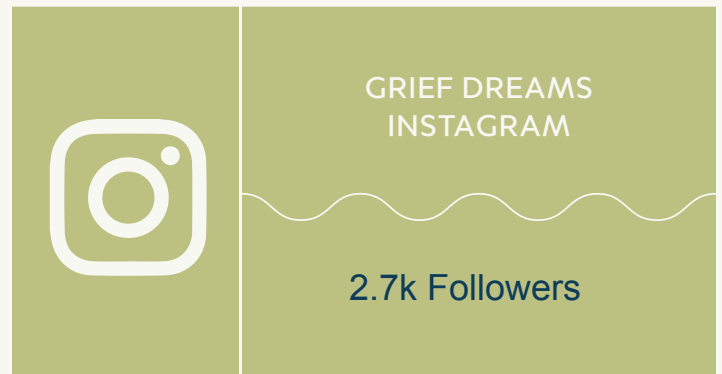
We hope our talks/workshops can assist the bereaved by normalizing their experience and reduce any isolation they may feel. In addition, we hope that those who assist the bereaved can reduce the biases associated with dreams and explore the healing that can be found within these experiences.

# Statistics

## WEBSITE AND PODCAST



## SOCIAL MEDIA



# Who We Are?



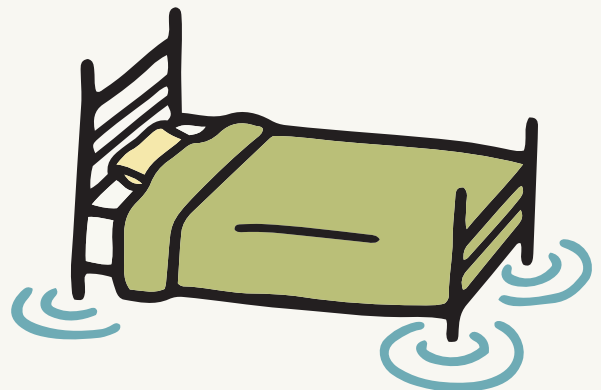
## Dr. Joshua Black

Dr. Joshua Black holds a MA and PhD in Psychology. He is a grief/bereavement researcher, speaker, consultant, and host of the Grief Dreams Podcast. His work focuses on dreams and continuing bonds after loss, including prenatal and pet loss. As one of the leading academic experts in grief dreams, which can be dreams of the deceased, Joshua has directed his efforts on raising awareness about this fascinating phenomenon through media interviews, including PBS Next Avenue, CBC News, and Toronto Sun, in addition to speaking engagements and workshops.

Joshua has done over 50 presentations and an abundance of interviews. He can speak about grief, trauma, sleep, dreams in general, grief dreams, love after loss, and the power of love. He has a beautiful ability in discussing the research in a palatable way for the audience. He commonly presents personal narratives on the topic and uses examples on how grief dreams and love can significantly influence our waking life. Joshua can develop full day training workshops, as well as shorter presentations on any topic discussed above (e.g., 1 to 2 hours). He can teach people how to explore their grief dreams or those of their clients (in one-on-one or group sessions) in ways that can facilitate the processing of grief. This is not about dream interpretation, but about what questions to ask based on the imagery. By asking the right questions, the bereaved can connect their dream imagery to waking life, and can open dialogue on concerns or comforts that come from the experience. All presentations/workshops can be done in-person or virtually.

## My First Grief Dream

“When I was 24, I experienced my first significant loss. My father, Mark, died suddenly in 2008. The death caused deep discontent in me, however, this shifted after I had a dream of my father three months later. In the dream, I had the chance to say goodbye and hug my father one last time. When I woke up from the dream, something had changed within me. My suffering subsided and the colour quickly came back into my world. It was the dream that changed me, not any interpretation I gave it.”



# Who We Are?



## Jade Karling Black

Jade Karling Black holds a Master's degree in Critical Criminology (Gender Studies & Addiction). Jade has worked with women in active addiction and early recovery for over a decade. Additionally, she has worked as the wellness manager for a local Indigenous community in beautiful British Columbia. Jade is also a grief and community health researcher and podcast co-host who actively explores the impact of grief on sleep, dreaming and employment. Lastly, Jade is a certified life skills coach, published author and the current editor for the grief dreams newsletter.

Jade has done multiple presentations and interviews throughout her career. She can speak on grief, trauma, grief dreams, grief and addiction, personal wellness and coping strategies in grief, gender roles in grief, love after loss, and the power of love. She commonly presents personal narratives on the topic and uses examples from grief dreams. Jade can develop full day training workshops, as well as shorter presentations on any topic discussed above (e.g., 1 to 2 hours). All presentations/workshops can be done in-person or virtually.

## My First Grief Dream

“A memorable grief dream I’ve had was around a childhood friend I lost unexpectedly in 2015. I had a lot of confusion around his passing and making sense of our last conversations, in-person meeting. I was walking down a hallway of an institutional setting, like a hospital or a school. I remember the space being immaculately clean and very quiet. The hallway was lined with doors, all of them closed. About ten or twelve doors down, I saw someone’s head peek out and look down the hallway toward me. It was my beloved friend, I felt a rush of joy in my body and began to run toward him, smiling. He came out into the hallway and proceeded to quickly run

toward me as well. We were laughing hysterically as we got closer and closer and when it came time for us to embrace, I jumped into his arms and wrapped my legs around his waist. He spun me around while saying nothing, just wildly laughing. I could feel his warm smile with his gaze overlooking my shoulder. I just knew that he was okay, he felt as though he was in a calm space. We exchanged memories without ever uttering a single word. I awoke smiling and relaxed. The dream helped me move through the next phase of my grief journey.”

# Testimonials

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“I’ve had the pleasure of knowing Dr. Black for some years now, and watching his work grow exponentially. His ground-breaking and eye-opening research within the field of grief dreams is imperative if we are truly to appreciate the whole person. In addition to his scholastic brilliance, he is one of the most compassionate, caring people I’ve come to know, while maintaining an exceptional capacity of professionalism. This was evident when I asked him to speak to the staff and volunteers at our Hospice. His presentation was exceptional and very well received, with requests for follow-up sessions, which we quickly booked! Thank you Joshua for the wonderful work you are doing, and the manner with which you are delivering it!”

- Past employer/participant

“I have known Dr. Black since 2016, when he worked with our youth at Camp Keaton (children’s bereavement camp). Dr Black’s ability to connect with the youth was so impactful in them better understanding what their grief dreams meant, that we invited him to speak to a group of parents and professionals in the summer of 2020 (early pandemic). Dr. Black’s caring nature, compassion, and his ability to connect with his audience provided an intimate session where everyone felt like they were the only one in the room, even though the seminar was conducted virtually via zoom. “Grief Dreams” was our most highly attended seminar of the summer season with multiple requests for a part 2. We look forward to offering Grief Dreams part 2!”

- Past employer/participant

“I really enjoyed hearing about the topic that most people shy away from. Rather than ignoring or minimizing dreams about grief, I look forward to, and feel more confident about bringing them up in conversation.”

- Past participant

“I really appreciate being provided this very useful training for grief facilitators! Joshua was excellent about integrating his research and practical experience dealing with grief and dreams.”

- Past participant

# Selected Media Articles

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The Strange Phenomena of Grief Dreaming. (Toronto Sun - June 14, 2021)  
<https://torontosun.com/life/relationships/the-strange-phenomena-of-grief-dreaming>

In a Pandemic, Sometimes a Dream is the Only Way to Say Goodbye. Here's Why it Still Counts. (CBC News - May 17, 2021)  
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/grief-dreams-1.6022089a>

What are Grief Dreams? (Next Avenue - June 10, 2020)  
<https://www.nextavenue.org/what-are-grief-dreams/>

Grief Dreams Can Provide Comfort and Healing During Holidays. (The Brock News - December 17, 2018)  
<https://brocku.ca/brock-news/2018/12/grief-dreams-can-provide-comfort-and-healing-during-holidays/>

## Selected Publications on Grief Dreams

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Black, J., Belicki, K., McCann, A., & Piro, R. (2021). Dreaming of the Deceased After Miscarriage: A Pilot Study. *Dreaming*.

Black, J., Belicki, K., Piro, R., & Hughes, H. (2020). Comforting Versus Distressing Dreams of the Deceased: Relations to Grief, Trauma, Attachment, Continuing Bonds, and Post-Dream Reactions. *OMEGA - Journal of Death and Dying*.

Black, J., Belicki, K., & Emberley-Ralph, J. (2019). Who Dreams of the Deceased? The Roles of Dream Recall, Grief Intensity, Attachment, and Openness to Experience. *Dreaming*, 29, 57-79.

Black, J., DeCicco, T., Seeley, C., Murkar, A., Black, J., & Fox, P. (2016). Dreams of the Deceased: Can Themes be Reliably Coded? *International Journal of Dream Research*, 9, 110-114.

Black, J., Murkar, A., & Black, J. (2014). Examining the healing process through dreams in bereavement. *Sleep and Hypnosis*, 16, 10-17.

(see website for full list)