

# CASE STUDY

## GROWING THROUGH GRIEF

### Overview

Operating in the Twin Cities and western Wisconsin, Growing Through Grief is a school-based program providing weekly peer grief support groups, individual counseling, death-related school crisis support, and community education. A program of the Park Nicollet Foundation, Growing Through Grief is free of charge to program participants and completely funded by philanthropy.

Without adequate resources to outsource program evaluation and recognizing opportunity for improvement and a need for connection to an evaluation community, Growing Through Grief turned to JAG Institute's *Childhood Bereavement Changemaker* (CBC) initiative to establish evaluation protocols in-house.

Through the CBC initiative, Growing Through Grief developed an effective internal evaluation process and enhanced their relationships with important stakeholders and funders.

Moving forward, Growing Through Grief believe they can continue to expand their evaluation efforts and make more positive change for grieving children and youth in their community.

### Outcomes

#### Strengthened Community

By creating a sustainable data collection process, Growing Through Grief can better communicate the impact and importance of their programs to stakeholders, increasing support for their organization.

#### Enhanced Collaboration

By participating in the initiative, Growing Through Grief tapped into a network of bereavement organizations invested in adopting evaluation best practices and expanding evaluation capacity. Together, they can exchange ideas, ask questions, and collaborate on solutions that bolster their programs.



### Primary Challenges

#### Little Program Evaluation Knowledge

There are limited dedicated program evaluation resources in the childhood bereavement field and minimal knowledge about best practices.

#### Uncertainty Surrounding Data Visualization

Knowing how to present relevant data to stakeholders in a way that is engaging, compelling, and garners additional support is difficult.

#### Limited Resources

Growing Through Grief would need to reallocate essential programmatic funding to hire an external evaluation consultant unlikely to have bereavement experience.

“ The program doesn't exist unless the community sees value in the program. The more contributions we can give them to understanding and finding that value, the more the community gives back to the program, which is foundational to sustainability. ”

Nicole Barnes, Growing Through Grief Program Director

#### Improved Evaluation Capacity

With an established replicable evaluation process established, Growing Through Grief is equipped to apply their learnings from the CBC program to future efforts with the parents and school districts they serve.

#### A Sustainable Evaluation Process

At the start of the program, Growing Through Grief recognized opportunity to improve their evaluation process. Now, they have created an evaluation process that allows them to continually assess their programs' impact and determine future growth opportunities.