



VOICES OF GRIEF
Support and Education Center

Voices of Grief Support and Education Center

COLORADO SPRINGS CITY COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 12, 2022



People are hurting
and need safe spaces
to process their grief.




Mission:

The Voices of Grief Support and Education Center works to transform the way people encounter grief.

Vision:

Our vision is to create supportive spaces to honor the natural process of grief and to educate our community in healthy expressions of grief and mourning.





"Substance use and bereavement are related and common themes: untreated grief might impact high-risk behavior, substance use and recovery treatment outcomes.

<https://www.hazeldenbettyford>

Consequences of Unattended Grief:

- Isolation
- Correlation between complicated grief and mental health challenges
- Increased risk for addiction and substance use
- Family system unhealth (relational dysfunction)



Risks of Complicated Grief from the Mayo Clinic:

Complicated grief can affect you physically, mentally and socially. Without appropriate treatment, complications may include:

- Depression
- Suicidal thoughts or behaviors
- Anxiety, including PTSD
- Significant sleep disturbances
- Increased risk of physical illness, such as heart disease, cancer or high blood pressure
- Long-term difficulty with daily living, relationships or work activities
- Alcohol, nicotine use or substance misuse

Local Needs in our Community:

Total El Paso County Deaths reported in 2021: **6057**

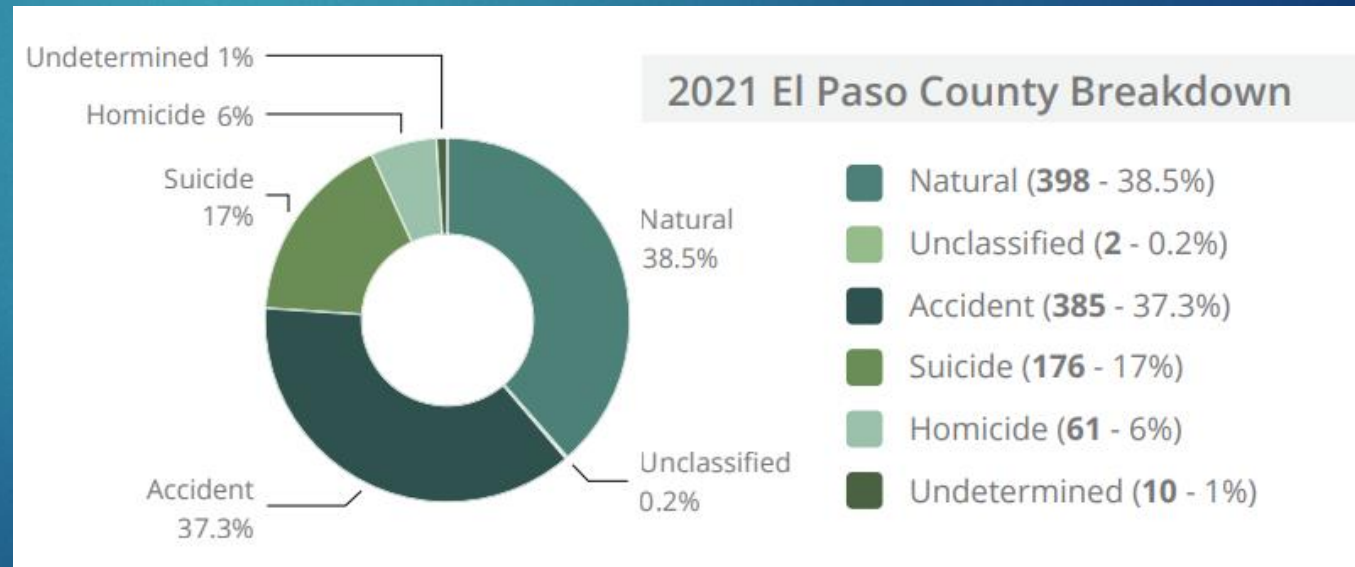
Colorado Dept. of Public Health and Environment

El Paso County Resident Cumulative Covid 19 deaths: **2133**

covid19.colorado.gov

El Paso County
Coroner investigation
determinations, 2021:

El Paso county Coroner



Changing our Culture to Create Supportive Communities

Voices of Grief
HONORING THE SACRED JOURNEY

"SOMEHOW YOU MANAGE TO WREST THE BEAUTY FROM TERRIFYING LOSSES, AND MAKE IT THE LAST SAY."
PAULA D'ARCY, RED BIRD FOUNDATION

ACCLAIMED DOCUMENTARY FILM
VOICES OF GRIEF
FEATURING
MARIANNE WILLIAMSON
DAVID KESSLER
PAULA D'ARCY
DR. ALAN WOLFELT
THOMAS LYNCH
RABBI HAROLD KUSHNER
PRODUCER, DIRECTOR AND EDITOR: DEB COLLINS
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: KATHY SPARNINS

CHARLESTON
INTL. FILM FESTIVAL
BEST DOCUMENTARY
AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD
2016

BEST DOCUMENTARY
SHORT NOMINEE
HUDSON VALLEY
INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
2016

OFFICIAL SELECTION
LYONS
FILM
FESTIVAL
2016

OFFICIAL SELECTION
ROCKY
MOUNTAIN
WOMEN'S FILM
FESTIVAL
2016

OFFICIAL SELECTION
AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION
FILM FESTIVAL
2017

RMPBS

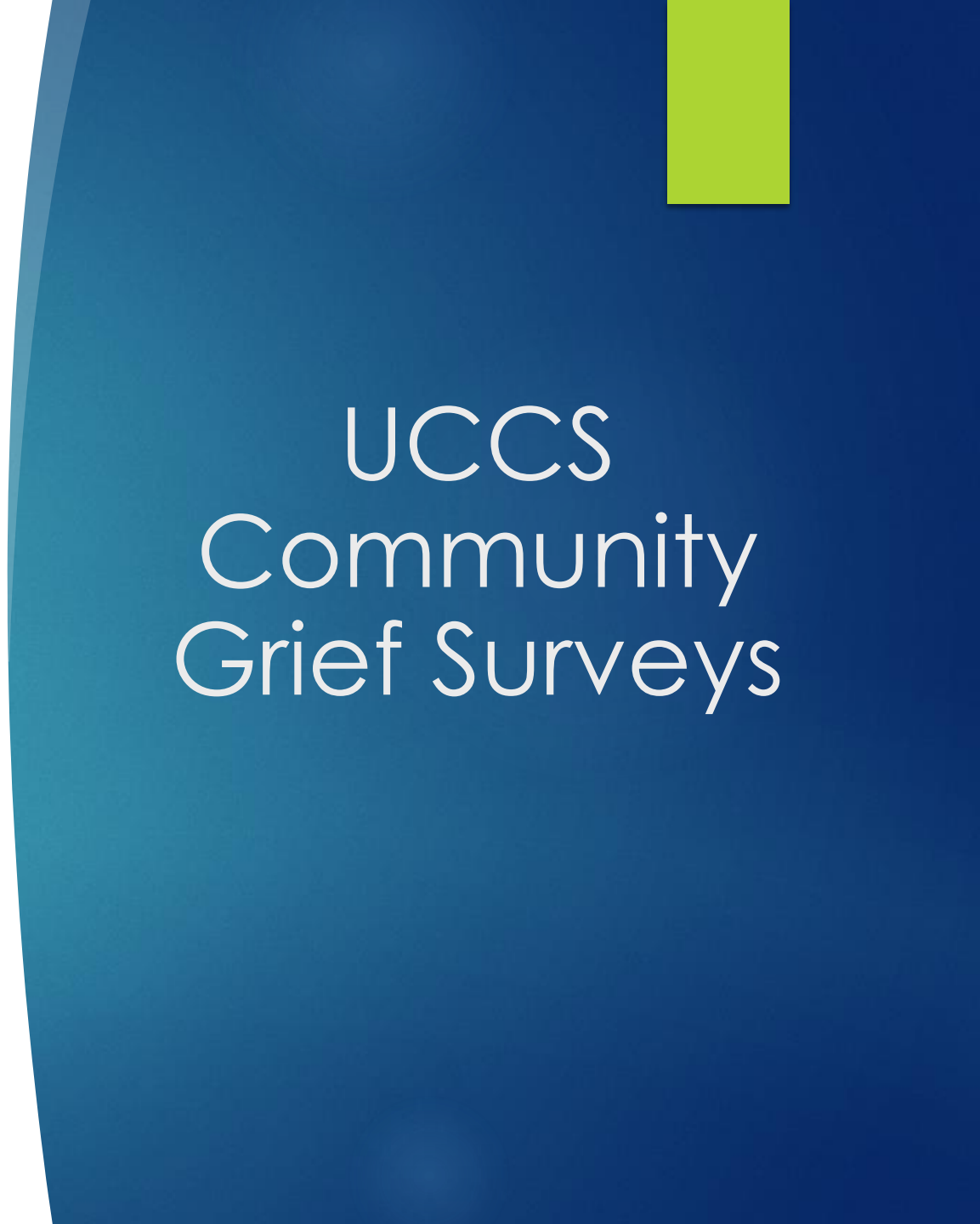
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The Difficulty of Finding Appropriate Support:

- Resources are available in town, but they are scattered and narrow in focus.
- Grief reduces our bandwidth to do the work to find support.
- Prevalence of cultural myths around grief and mourning.
- Professionals in our community have acknowledged that they too are personally impacted by these cultural myths. *(Megan Divine quote)*

The logo for the University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS) features the letters 'UCCS' in a bold, gold-colored, blocky font with a black outline.

University of Colorado
Colorado Springs

The right side of the slide features a large, dark blue curved shape that tapers towards the bottom. In the top right corner, there is a small, solid lime green rectangle.

UCCS Community Grief Surveys



Colorado Springs Community Grief Surveys

Rachel Weiskittle, PhD
Assistant Professor of Psychology

Lisa Stone, MA
PhD Candidate



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Is there a **need** for a grief center?

Is there **support** for a grief center amongst the professional community?

Methodology

General Community Survey

$N = 668$

Professional Community Survey

$N = 141$

- Mental health professionals
- Teachers
- Healthcare professionals
- Family law
- Funeral directors
- Chaplains and faith leaders

General Community Survey Results

Brief Highlights

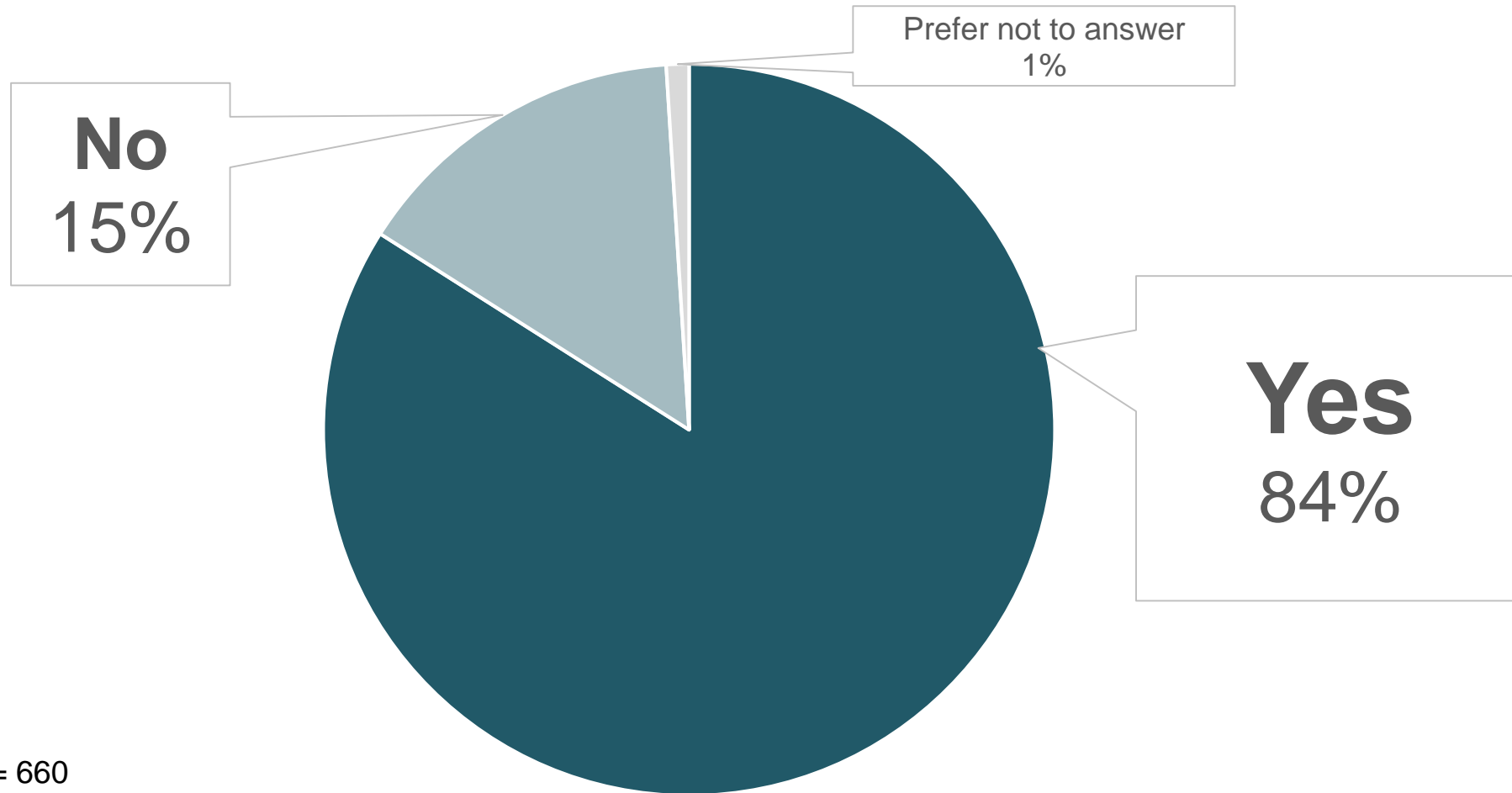


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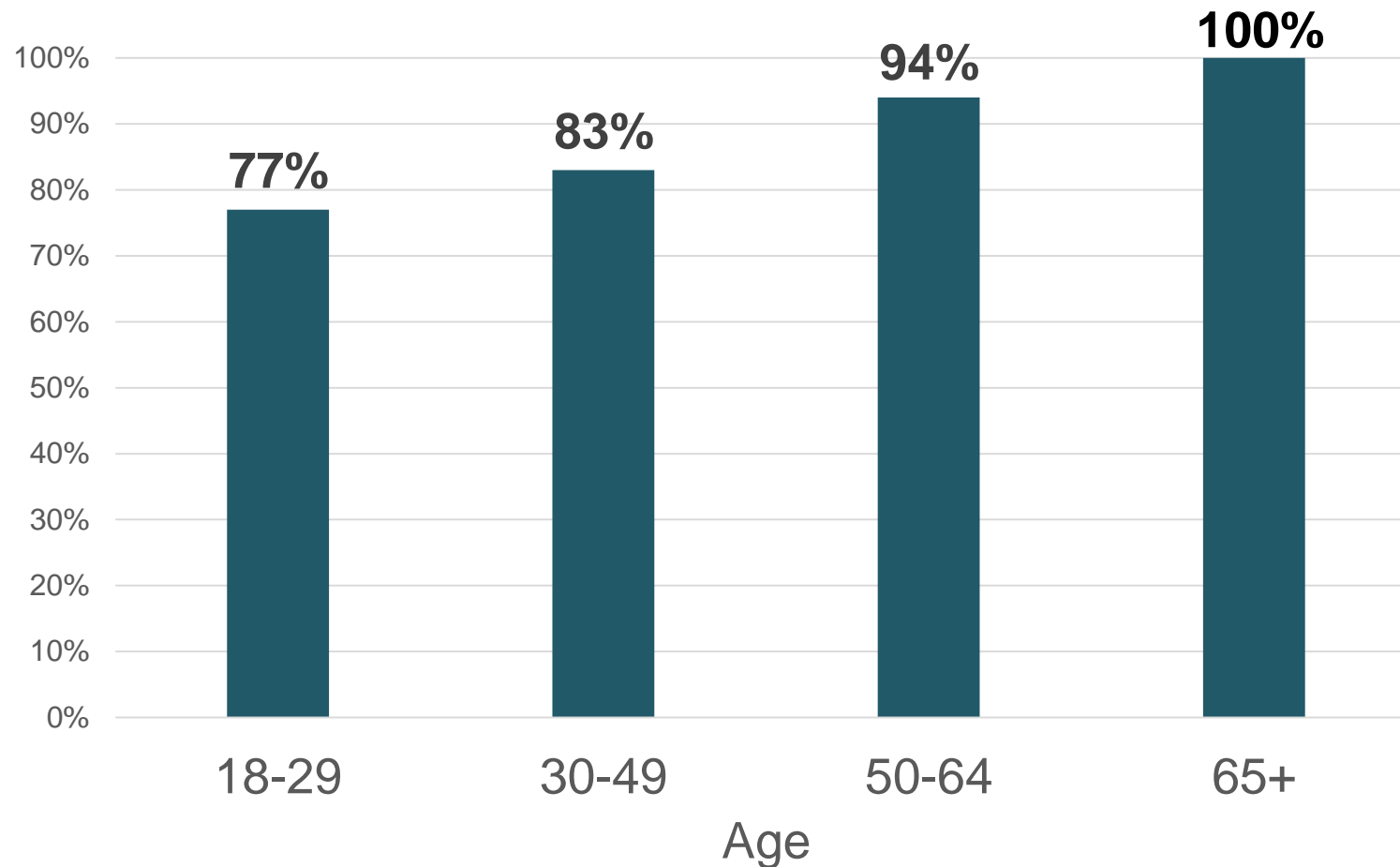


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Have you experienced the death of someone significant in your lifetime?



Have you experienced the death of someone significant in your lifetime?



There is a need for grief services in Colorado Springs

31%

Of respondents have never participated in any form of grief support, including talking about their loss with family or friends

85%

Reported that they would **likely** or **very likely** participate in at least one one the services proposed for the grief center

17

Is there a **need** for a grief center?



Is there **support** for a grief center amongst the professional community?

Professional Community Survey Results

Brief Highlights

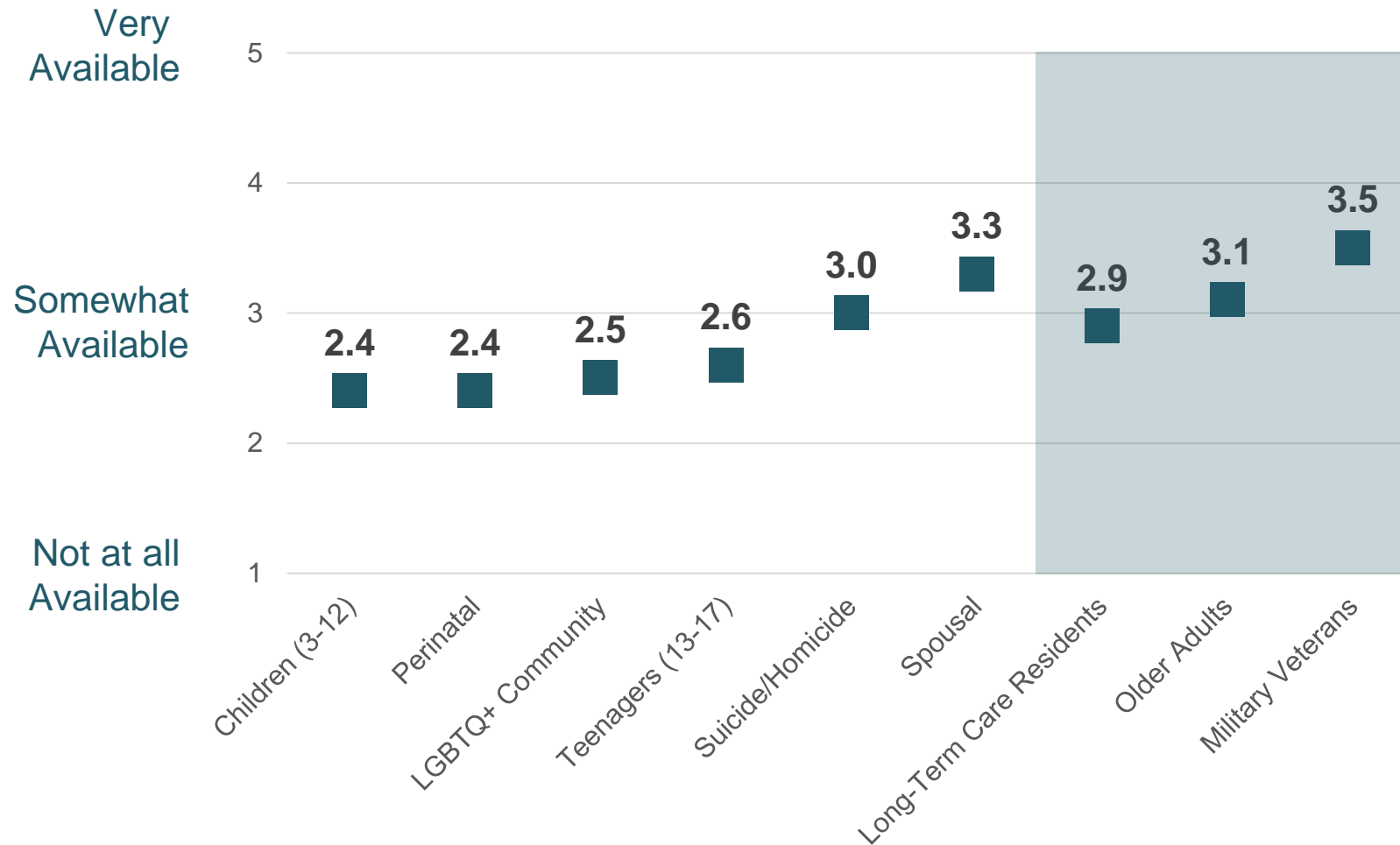


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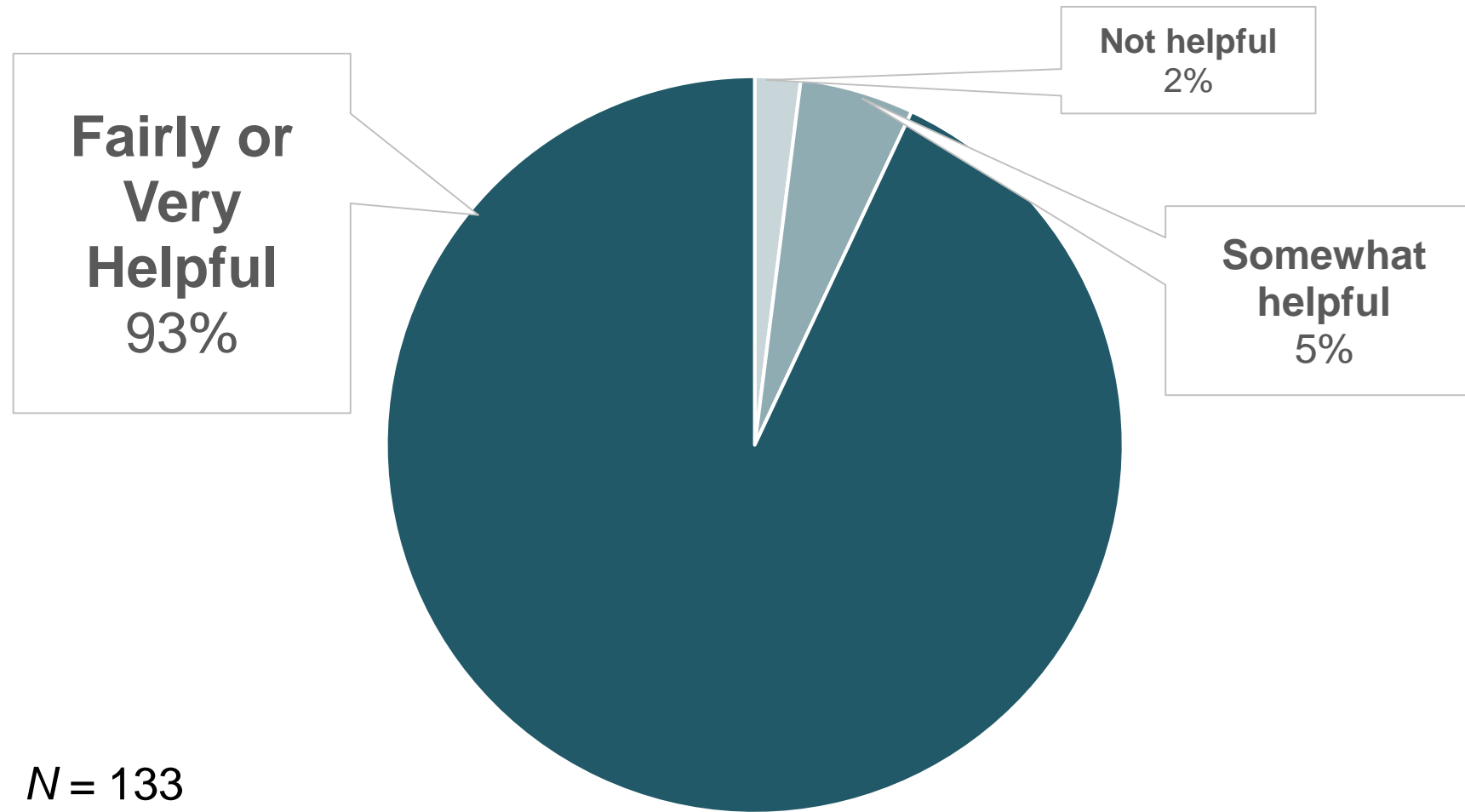


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How available are grief services for the following populations in Colorado Springs?



How helpful do you think it would be to establish a grief center in Colorado Springs?



Is there a **need** for a grief center?



Is there **support** for a grief center amongst the professional community?

Professionals are enthusiastic about the proposed grief center

71% *N* = 92

Are interested in **attending educational
workshops**

40% *N* = 57

Are interested in **collaborating** with and/or
volunteering with the grief center

Is there a **need** for a grief center?



Is there **support** for a grief center amongst the professional community?





Colorado Springs Community Grief Surveys

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“Grief will sit and wait, and it will never just go away without being acknowledged....”


~ Karyn Arnold,
Founder of “Grief in Common”





“... Somewhere between avoidance and floundering there could be a place that allows a griever to sit with their grief without being totally and completely swept away by it.”

~ Karyn Arnold,
Founder of “Grief in Common”

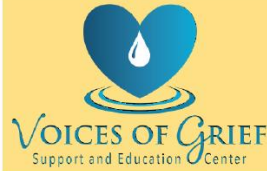


“Grief is not an illness; it is the natural and necessary sequel to love. Unlike the medical model of grief care, the companioning model does not seek to treat or cure but rather bear witness, learn, and accompany. Grievers are the experts of their own experience. Companions offer a safe space, an open heart, affirmation, and hope.”

Dr. Alan Wolfelt, The Center for Loss and Transition

Our Three-fold Model:





Presents

Dr. Alan D. Wolfelt

AUTHOR, EDUCATOR, GRIEF COUNSELOR



Dr. Wolfelt, founder of the Center for Loss and Life Transition, is a world renowned grief educator and prolific author of bereavement books and materials.

Exploring the Need to Grieve and Mourn:

Healing yourself, your family, and your friends

Wednesday, Sept. 28, 2022, 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Registration is free and open to the public.

This compassionate program will be helpful to anyone who is experiencing grief or is wanting to learn more about helping friends or family who are experiencing grief or loss.

Exploring Grief After Suicide:

Thursday, Sept. 29, 2022 9:00 am - 3:30 pm

Open to the public. Registration, materials & lunch \$25. Limited scholarships.

This compassionate program will be helpful to anyone who wants to learn more about facing their own suicide grief and those who wish to support others facing suicide grief. Supporting those experiencing suicide grief is an important aspect of suicide prevention.

Location of Both Events: UCCS ENT Center for the Arts, 5225 N. Nevada Ave, Colorado Springs

Registration:

Online: voicesofgriefcenter.org **Email:** info@voicesofgriefcenter.org **Phone:** 719-286-0612



How might the City Council support our work?

- **Personal Encounters:** Would you affirm in your own circles that grief is natural and that mourning practices are healthy expressions of loss?
- **Community Champion:** Would you empower our work through your connections?
 - Networking – Can you spread the word and connect us with others who might help spread the word about our work? Do you know of other grief resources that we can network with?
 - Resources - Can you connect us with contacts who may help with resources to support the growth of the center?
(Current needs include sponsorship, general funding, office and meeting space, event support)



“Covid has put the world at risk for
prolonged grief disorder”

*Scientific American article,
May 9, 2021*

Voices of Grief Lead Team:



Kathy Sparnins
Executive Director



Paul Wood
Board Chair



Sarah Lee
Program Director



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***THANK YOU FOR YOUR
TIME AND INTEREST IN
THIS WORK!***