

# ADDRESSING GRIEF IN COLLEGE LIFE

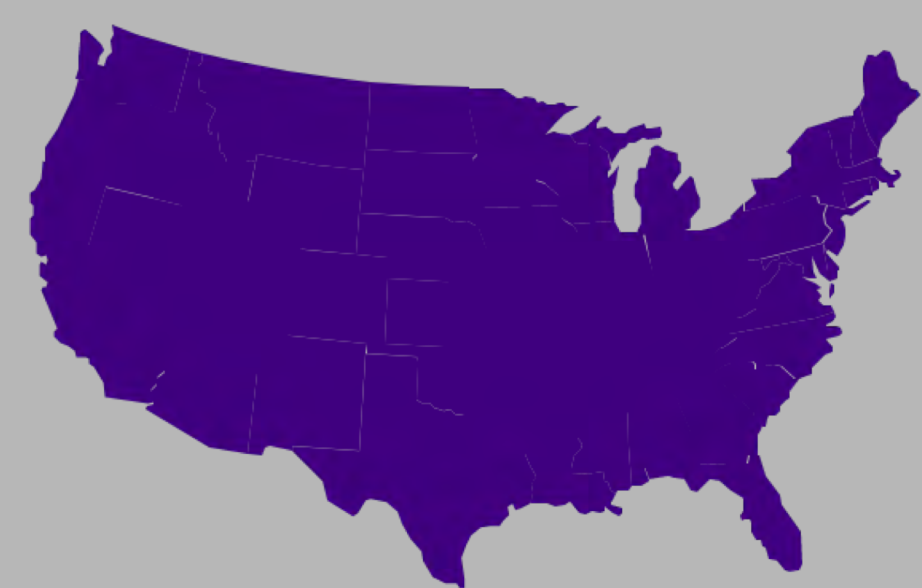
Genna Dalence and Tedra Sheperd

## National Data

- 22-30% of college students experience a death of a loved one every year.
- More than 4.5 million college students are grieving the loss of a loved one.

## Furman Data

- About 39% diagnosed with a type of depression, commonly linked to situations of grief.
- 93 personal losses in the 2016-2017 academic year.
- 24 personal losses have been recorded this Fall 2017.



## What Did We Do

Comprehensive research on grief and loss from the college student perspective including:

- Interviews with Furman staff to understand what systems of protocol are already in place for student grief support on campus
- Interviews with professionals in death and dying occupations (Greenville and national) to understand grief among different populations and communities
- Interviews with 150 University personnel across the US to understand grief support services offered
- Interviews with bereaved Furman students and faculty to understand their unique grief journey
- Peer-reviewed articles

**DEVELOPED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURMAN UNIVERSITY TO IMPROVE SUPPORT FOR GRIEVING STUDENTS**



## Recommendations and Actions

1. **Created** New Resources
  - Furman sympathy cards
  - Online information to educate on grief and resources
  - College student grief brochure
2. **Expand** group/individual counseling support
  - Better advertisements for grief support group
  - Recommend for peer led support group
  - Recommend for grief memorial service
3. **Enhance** support systems
  - Recommend establishment of bereavement policy
4. **Educated** the Furman community
  - Two organized educational lectures on grief for student credit through the Cultural Life Programs
  - Presented trainings to student organizations including Student Government Association, Greek life chapters, Religious Counsel, Advisor training, and RA training
  - Recommend for on-campus awareness week

## Background

- Three student losses on campus in 2016-2017 academic year, most on campus deaths in Furman history.
- University Chaplain sees need to directly address grief support on campus. The Furman community needs more support in academic life, social life, and grief support outreach.

## Looking Forward

Hope for continued grief education, increased awareness, decreased stigma, and more students overall actively healing from their grief.

**Contact Information:**  
Tedra Sheperd  
Teddy.sheperd@furman.edu  
704-953-5651

Genna Dalence  
Genna.dalence@furman.edu  
813-892-4107