

Independent Board Publishes Grief Coach Certification Standard for an Unregulated Field

The Independent National Board for Grief Coaching issues the Board Certified Grief Coach credential and publishes the standard behind it.



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The title grief coach is not protected. Unlike a licensed counselor or a registered nurse, a person using it is not required to complete training, pass an examination, or answer to any published standard. The Independent National Board for Grief Coaching issues the [Board Certified Grief Coach credential](#), an independent board certification that establishes what that title should mean.

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A grieving person is not equipped to vet credentials. Neither is the therapist or funeral director who refers them. A published standard is what makes a referral defensible instead of hopeful.”

*Rita Suzanne, Executive
Director*

The distinction matters to the people most likely to need it. Someone searching for grief support has no reliable way to tell a coach who has completed rigorous preparation from one who has completed none. Board certification exists to close that gap. A training program prepares a practitioner. A board certifies one.

Candidates for the designation must pass a [Board Examination](#) with a minimum score of 80 percent across six equally weighted topic areas, document a minimum of 25 verified practice hours, and agree to a [published code](#)

[of ethics](#) that defines the scope of grief coaching and the point at which a candidate must refer a client to a licensed professional. The credential is maintained through annual renewal and 30 hours of continuing education on a rolling three-year cycle.

The standard also reflects a broader definition of grief than the public commonly assumes. Grief follows a death, and it also follows divorce, job loss, serious illness, estrangement, caregiving, and the loss of an identity or a career. Practitioners are examined on grief in each of these contexts.

"Grief is one of the few areas where the person seeking help is least equipped to evaluate who is offering it," said Rita Suzanne, Executive Director of the Independent National Board for Grief Coaching. "The same is true of the professionals who refer them. A therapist, a hospice nurse, or a funeral director sending someone to a grief coach is trusting that the title carries a standard behind it. Publishing that standard is what makes a referral defensible instead of hopeful."

Candidates come from more than one background. Some work primarily as coaches. Others hold clinical licenses and practice in a non-clinical coaching capacity, where a credential that defines that scope is useful precisely because the work sits outside their license.

Two routes lead to the credential. Practitioners who have completed qualifying training elsewhere may apply through the Equivalency Path. Practitioners who prefer to prepare through board materials may use the Curriculum Path. Both routes lead to the same Board Examination and the same credential.

Governance is separated by design. An Advisory Board of licensed clinicians, credentialed thanatology professionals, and practicing coaches sets and owns the published standard. Program Administration applies that standard to individual candidates. People with a commercial interest in the volume of candidates do not set the requirements those candidates are measured against.

The published standards and the code of ethics are available at inbgc.org.

About the Independent National Board for Grief Coaching

The Independent National Board for Grief Coaching is an independent credentialing body that issues the Board Certified Grief Coach designation. The board is not a training program. It publishes the standard for grief coaching practice, administers the Board Examination, and maintains the credential through renewal and continuing education requirements. The board is operated by Meridian Credentialing LLC, an Ohio limited liability company.

Rita Suzanne

Independent National Board for Grief Coaching

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