

“A Safe Space to Think About Grief”

Reflecting on Bereavement Through Video Games and Experiential Metaphor

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BACKGROUND

Supporting the experiences of bereaved individuals is important for their mental health, particularly in the wake of COVID-19. Video games have been identified as potentially supportive for bereaved individuals by the HCI and Game Studies communities. Experiential metaphor suggests that bereaved individuals receive support by comparing in-game grief experiences to their own personal grief experiences. We believe this connection can provide important design implications for supportive systems and artifacts.

METHODS

- 1 30 minute, semi-structured **interview** in bereavement experiences
- 2 Independent play through of the video game GRIS, supported by **six diaries**
- 3 30 minute, semi-structured **interview** on experiences playing through GRIS

WHY GRIS?

GRIS aligns with the concept of experiential metaphor. It allow players to experience a story of grief by living through the character they are controlling.



Ongoing Recruitment:
bit.ly/3DytEqr

Screening Survey



GRIS - Level 4

EARLY FINDINGS (n=5)



ENGAGE

Participants played GRIS and **engaged** with its grief narrative



COMPARE

Participants **compared** their personal grief experiences to the game narrative



REFLECT

Participants **reflected** on their personal grief experiences while playing

P6 “[Playing GRIS] was a very safe way to think of my own grief... it was kind of like I have a guidance”

P7 “I recognized, oh... I was holding myself back from being able to move on”

FUTURE WORK

We plan to complete our study, aiming for 9-12 participants in total. We then plan to more thoroughly analyze our findings, and generate design implications for bereavement-focused systems and artifacts.