

**GROWTH WITHOUT COMPROMISE  
STRATEGIC PLAN – 2024-2027**



[www.upliftphilly.org](http://www.upliftphilly.org)

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## Growth Without Compromise

Uplift Center for Grieving Children’s strategic plan is a result of a community coming together to pause, reflect, and plan the future after an organizational transition. In some ways this is a metaphor for what Uplift does daily. Clinicians facilitate peer-to-peer grief groups by providing the time and space for introspection, sharing, and learning in order to take steps toward a future changed by the present.

As Uplift looks to supporting and strengthening emotionally resilient communities, it is poised for significant growth. This is exciting! The need for professional grief services is considerable, and it is vital for Uplift to be more present and more pervasive in communities. \*

Uplift intends to embark on this expansion in a managed, mission, and values-driven way. **Growth Without Compromise** means to hold fast to providing high-quality services, acting as a trusted partner, and being driven by core values. Uplift will proceed methodically and creatively so that in growing it is responsive to the evolving needs of youth and caregivers and does not lose sight of the very attributes that make it effective.

“No child should grieve alone” is a refrain that Uplift shares with other grief services providers across the country. The following goals frame strategies for how Uplift will pursue that imperative over the next several years.

### **RESPONSIVE GRIEF SERVICES**

Greater capacity to respond to the needs of more youth and caregivers who are grieving in more communities.

### **SHARED UNDERSTANDING & COLLECTIVE ACTION**

Greater capacity to share knowledge and spark community-wide engagement.

### **A CULTURE OF MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

Greater capacity to care for people, deepen relationships, and steward financial resources in service to the mission with core values guiding every step.

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\*Throughout this strategic plan “community/communities” is used in a variety of ways to express the unlimited connections between people. In any given sentence in this plan, “community” might represent a relationship, partnership, or collaboration, or a shared neighborhood, ethnic group, affinity, or common experience.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### Mission

Uplift Center for Grieving Children (Uplift) provides tools for youth and caregivers to understand, grow, and heal from their grief/loss.

### Emotionally Resilient Communities

Uplift envisions healthy and emotionally resilient communities where people work together to support youth and caregivers who are grieving. Young people are still developing, physically, mentally, and emotionally throughout their journey from child to adult. As a result, the consequences of their unresolved grief not only affect their long-term well-being, but also the lives of their caregivers and the vitality of their communities. In addition, caregivers need support with their own grief and to be able to care for grieving youth.

### Growth Without Compromise

The demand for Uplift's services far exceeds its current capacity. Accordingly, Uplift feels compelled to do more to meet the need (at a pace and scale that are aligned with its capacity in terms of dollars and people).

Without compromising:

- The **QUALITY** of the work that all youth and caregivers who are grieving deserve and need to thrive, as recognized and valued by partners.
- The **TRUST** built into every relationship so that Uplift is well received and effective.
- The **VALUES** that underpin priority setting, decision making, and assessment.

### Core Values

#### LOVE + COMPASSION

To best serve and support youth, caregivers, and communities – love and compassion – is at the center of all we do.

#### UNITY + DEDICATION

We dedicate ourselves to holding space and providing access to healing through shared experiences of grief and loss. In doing so, we establish lasting bonds with our families, partners, and communities.

#### INCLUSIVE + ESSENTIAL

We strive to foster an atmosphere that is tailored to the needs of our communities, honoring the unique histories, cultures, identities, and systems of marginalization. We start by doing this essential work internally to achieve the co-creation of healing spaces where all are heard and valued.

#### EQUITY + INTENTIONALITY

We act thoughtfully, meaningfully, and intentionally to respect all and to create equitable opportunities for all, to nurture relationships, to strengthen our connections and our work in service to families.

#### BELONGING

Everyone belongs.

When we intentionally foster a belonging environment, one of psychological safety and trust, we are empowered to contribute to our very best.

## GOAL 1: RESPONSIVE GRIEF SERVICES

**Greater capacity (without compromise) to respond to the needs of more youth and caregivers who are grieving in more communities.** Uplift feels the weight of unmet community need. Its grief services have proven to be effective and are valued by youth, caregivers, and partners. Unfortunately, the wait list for a grief group far exceeds current capacities.

- Key Results**
- More grief groups
  - Increased cultural proficiencies in staff
  - Youth advisors

It's time to position Uplift to make its services more accessible to more youth and caregivers. This will, of course, require greater financial resources but that is not all that must be in place. Uplift needs to move at the speed of trust. To serve more communities, Uplift needs to have the internal infrastructure and be more proficient culturally and technically. When it comes to expansion, this means finding values-aligned partners who welcome what Uplift has to offer. When it comes to designing and conducting programs, Uplift will turn to the experts – youth and caregivers – to learn what can be customized and refined.

OBJECTIVES		MAJOR INITIATIVES	
<b>1.1</b>	<b>To increase the accessibility of Uplift's grief services</b>	<b>1.1.1</b>	Relocating Uplift's offices to streamline operations and provide greater and more equitable access for grief groups and other services
		<b>1.1.2</b>	Forging new strategic partnerships to enhance collaborations and support of families
		<b>1.1.3</b>	Enhancing tools for being an accessible and responsive resource for youth and caregivers
<b>1.2</b>	<b>To enhance cultural awareness and outreach efforts to meet people where they are</b>	<b>1.2.1</b>	Deepening community-based relationships through greater networking and presence to facilitate culturally-informed and authentic services
		<b>1.2.2</b>	Supporting clinicians and other staff with continued training in areas such as cultural sensitivity, new-language proficiency, and technical support
		<b>1.2.3</b>	Directing recruitment efforts to attract staff with lived experiences that reflect those of the youth and caregivers Uplift serves
<b>1.3</b>	<b>To ensure that the perspectives of program participants inform program design and implementation</b>	<b>1.3.1</b>	Creating multiple channels for hearing community-based insights and enlisting youth/caregiver input and feedback
		<b>1.3.2</b>	Providing greater opportunity for youth to lend their voice to program development and impact assessment
		<b>1.3.3</b>	Establishing options for youth and caregivers to remain in community after completing their initial session(s) without enrolling in additional grief groups.

## GOAL 2: SHARED UNDERSTANDING AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

### Greater capacity (without compromise) to share knowledge and spark community-wide engagement.

Grief/loss is an experience that often is misunderstood, stigmatized, and neglected in curricula, programs, or support systems. Yet attention to this unique component of mental health – particularly for youth who are still developing physically, mentally, and emotionally – is essential. In addition, caregivers might be struggling with forced cultural norms about grief and dealing with unmanaged grief from losses at other times in their lives.

It's time to position Uplift to be proactive in sharing its knowledge in grief/grief services with the greater community. As an experienced leader, Uplift can raise awareness of the consequences of unresolved grief as they affect youth and caregivers, and as they affect communities. As a convenor, Uplift can facilitate networking and collaboration. As a partner in healing, it can invite and inspire others to collective action in developing holistic pathways to navigating grief/loss.

#### Key Results

- Increased media coverage and social media engagement
- More high-profile panels, external trainings, and published articles
- Increased engagement of affiliated entities in supporting youth and caregivers

OBJECTIVES		MAJOR INITIATIVES	
2.1	<b>To sharpen the public's understanding of the importance of professional grief services</b>	2.1.1	Expanding the use of multiple communication channels to raise awareness of grief and the compounded trauma and acute effects of social, economic, and systemic issues
		2.1.2	Elevating the importance and effectiveness of professional grief services in addressing unresolved grief in youth, caregivers, and communities
		2.1.3	Hosting convenings and other opportunities to facilitate greater networking and collaboration
2.2	<b>To build Uplift's capacity to provide thought leadership around understanding and supporting youth who are grieving</b>	2.2.1	Investing resources for staff to participate in selected panels, locally and nationally, to advance knowledge within the field
		2.2.2	Offering more trainings/presentations on prevention and grief support to other professionals to further holistic outcomes
		2.2.3	Leveraging experience in co-development of evidence-based practices in a community-based setting to form new partnerships
2.3	<b>To motivate others to act in support of youth who are grieving</b>	2.3.1	Messaging "grief/loss" as intersectional, and inclusive of ambiguous loss to honor youths' and caregivers' varied and compounded experiences
		2.3.2	Issuing public education campaigns to help de-stigmatize grief/loss in the eyes of youth and their caregivers and communities
		2.3.3	Providing information on the implications of unmanaged grief/loss

## GOAL 3: A CULTURE OF MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

**Greater capacity (without compromise) to care for people, deepen relationships, and steward financial resources in service to the mission.** Enacting the goals of Responsive Grief Services and Shared Understanding & Collective Action calls for a culture of mutual accountability grounded in empathetic relationships.

It's time to position Uplift for significant, managed growth without diluting quality, trust, or core values. This goal demands ongoing attention to fostering an internal environment and practices that honor the skills and inherent joy that staff bring to their work. Managed growth guides the board toward a longer-term, strategic approach to its stewardship, facilitating well-paced and principled progress. Board-staff introspection and collaboration will deepen empathy for each other as well as inform values-driven interactions with donors, volunteers, and program participants. Uplift also will widen its outreach to diversify its funding and build a sense of community among donors.

### Key Results

- High staff retention and self-reported satisfaction
- Strategic board stewardship
- Strong board-staff relationships
- Fiscal health – sufficient resources for an expanded infrastructure and services

OBJECTIVES		MAJOR INITIATIVES	
3.1	<b>To sustain a supportive, collaborative, and flexible workplace</b>	3.1.1	Directing resources toward advancing equity in the workplace and increasing opportunities for staff to continue their professional growth and development
		3.1.2	Enhancing systems, technology, and infrastructure to facilitate internal communications, staff productivity, and morale
		3.1.3	Offering community-building activities that deepen empathy, strengthen relationships, and enhance collegiality among staff, board, and supporters
3.2	<b>To enhance the board's capacity to ensure current and future organizational health</b>	3.2.1	Recalibrating committee charges and agendas to emphasize planning and decision making from a strategic and multi-year perspective and to prepare for leadership succession
		3.2.2	Redesigning the onboarding process and group learning exercises to ensure that board members are fully prepared and equipped to support mission, program, and core values
		3.2.3	Equipping board members with knowledge of relevant trends/emerging issues and with explicit tools for helping to position Uplift for growth in capacity, profile, and resources
3.3	<b>To diversify and increase resources to fuel managed organizational growth</b>	3.3.1	Conducting values-driven financial modeling that unites program development, staff readiness, and fiscal policy to inform a multi-year rolling operating budget
		3.3.2	Reconciling donor strategies and relationships to ensure full alignment with organizational values and to encourage a wide spectrum of donors and a broader base of support
		3.3.3	Establishing and monitoring goals for long-term sustainability that are informed by fiscal health principles and periodic analysis of organizational risk

## IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation is underpinned by an ongoing cycle of reflection, learning, action, assessment, and adjustment.

### A Transparent & Flexible Tool

The strategic plan is an important anchor and flexible tool to focus and refocus energies when needed; either to shift direction or to capitalize on newfound opportunities.

#### WORK PLANS

The strategic plan drives the agenda and scope of the full board, board committees, and staff teams. Each group will create annual work plans derived from the strategic plan. At the board level, meetings serve as key touchpoints for generative discussions and assessment of strategic focus.

Uplift will conduct an annual comprehensive review of the plan in light of any changes in the internal and external landscapes. This review will inform refreshed priorities as warranted and assist in determining when to embark upon a new planning process.

#### FISCAL PLANNING

An operating budget projects sources and uses of funds for the life of the strategic plan. Some initiatives are contingent upon having the financial and human resources in place for planning and execution, and will be launched accordingly.

### Accountability

Key results have been identified for each goal to focus work plans, assessment, and realignment as the plan unfolds. Both qualitative and quantitative measures are important to illustrate a holistic picture of progress toward the goals, including the scale of outputs and the depth of outcomes.

#### BOARD ROLE

As the board reviews progress toward goals, it relies on the good judgment and experience of the Executive Director and entire the staff to design programs and processes to achieve the goals.

#### COMMITMENT TO CORE VALUES

Strengthening a culture of inclusivity in the workplace and with youth, caregivers, and communities is a priority. Uplift's Core Values are infused within every goal of the strategic plan and are implemented through major initiatives. The staff and board work collaboratively to embody equitable practices and live out these core values.