



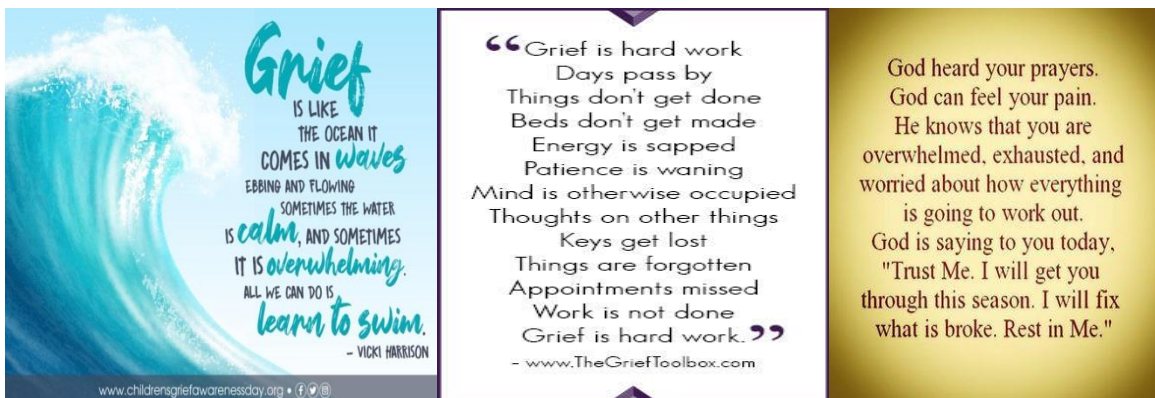
Bereavement Café Newsletter

A safe space to talk and listen

Written and compiled by
Edna Thomas

JOURNEY THROUGH GRIEF: UNDERSTANDING GRIEF AND LOSS - AN OVERVIEW

The journey through the valley of grief is possible because of hope. Sometimes that hope seems hard to grasp, and it seems as though the waves of sadness will drown you. Know that you are not the first one to go through this valley, and you are not the only one going through it right now. As dark and hopeless as things may appear, you can be certain that what you see and feel right now is not all there is [Carol Peter-Tanksley MD, D. Min].



Types of Grief



Normal Grief

Including Inhibited Grief, Masked Grief and Delayed Grief



Complicated Grief

or prolonged grief characterized by long-lasting & severe emotional reactions.



Chronic Grief

Can last for years, often related to traumatic loss



Anticipatory Grief

Happens before the loss occurs often during a terminal illness



Secondary Loss

Occurs when the bereaved experiences additional losses.



Absent Grief

When the person is in total denial about their loss. Not able to admit they've experienced loss.



Cumulative Grief

Can result from multiple losses over a short time period.



Disenfranchised Loss

Occurs when society does not recognize or acknowledge the value of the loss.

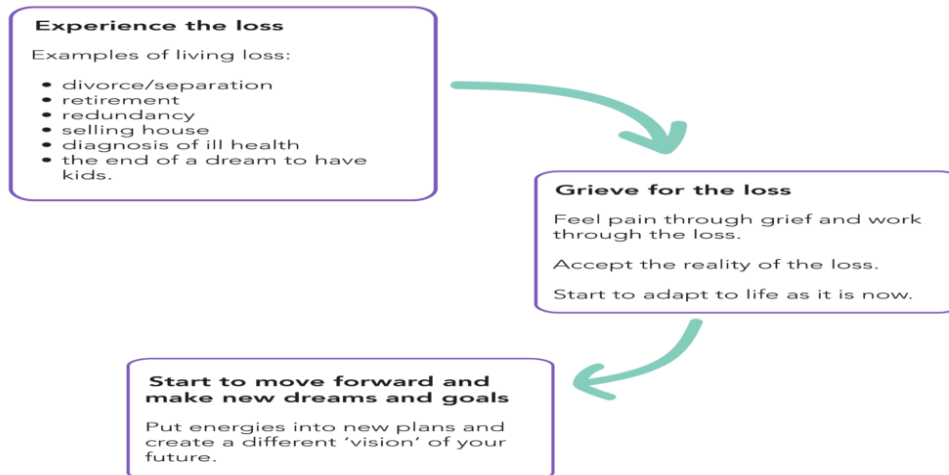


What causes grief?

- Grief is experienced in the face of loss!

A lot of people associate grief with the loss of a loved one through death; however, this is not always the case as any kind of loss can cause grief.

The experience of loss



Grief and secondary loss



How long does someone usually grieve for?

- Grief is as unique as the person experiencing it so there is no agreed-upon timeframe of how long grief should last. When asked this question, grief expert David Kessler asked "How long will your loved one be dead? That's how long". Although pain comes with grief, over time and depending on how you tend to your grief³, the grief you feel in your heart will become "more love than pain" (Choosing Therapy).

Does grieving ever stop?

- "Grieving never truly stops because our lives are forever changed when we lose someone we love. Over time, however, we can learn how to cope with our new reality. This allows us to

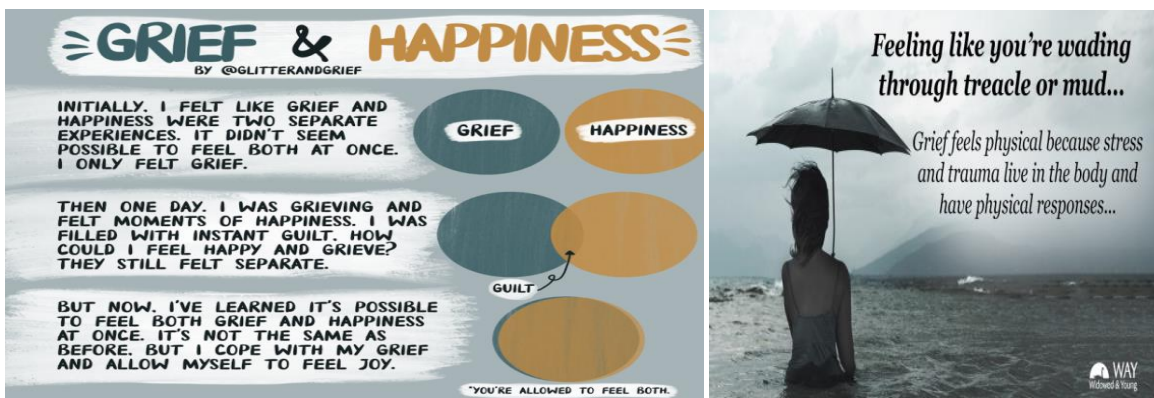
start healing emotionally and can eventually lead us to acceptance. Of course, there will always be moments when you miss the person you lost”.

What does grief feel like?

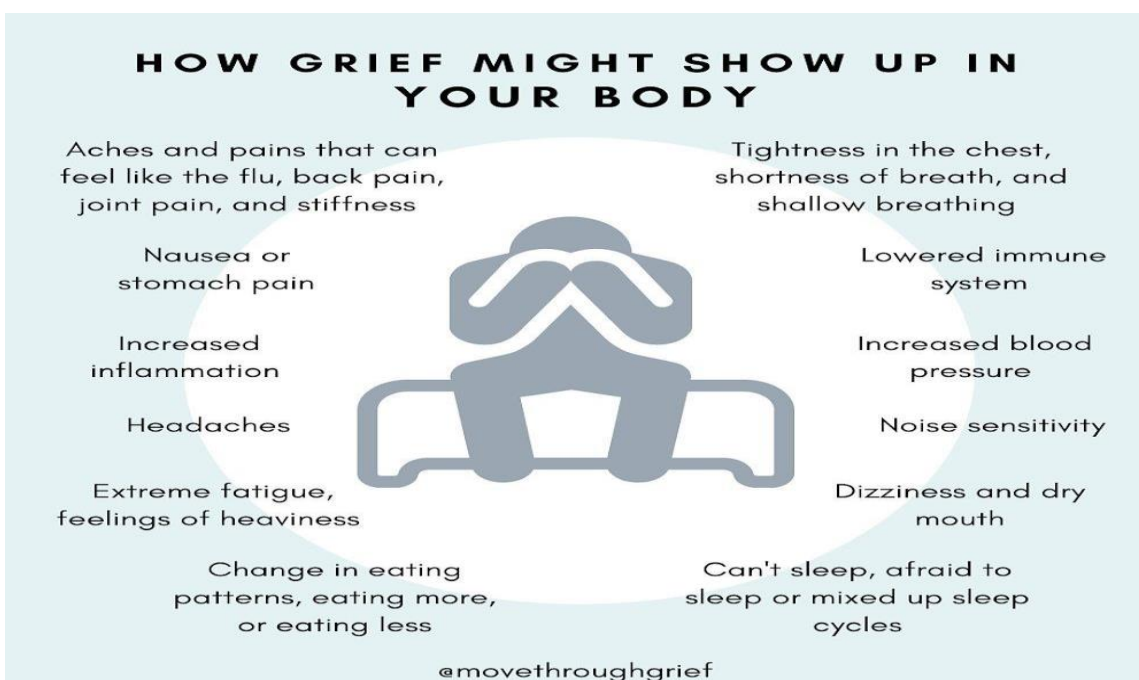
Grief feels and looks different for everyone who experiences it.

- For some, it can feel as though you've lost control of your emotions; or, as if you're “going crazy”,
- It can be a very lonely and isolating experience. One of the hardest things about grieving is that no one else can do it for you.

No one ever told me that grief felt so much like fear (CS Lewis)



Grief and its effects on the body



Visit our webpage: wntcg.org/bereavement

The Bereavement Café ministry is part of The Willesden New Testament Church of God

Grief and Culture

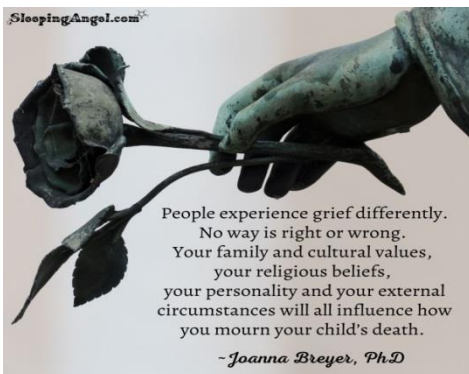
While grief is universally painful, the specific rituals and practices for expressing grief reflect the diverse beliefs, customs, and values that shape meaning in loss for each community. Understanding cross-cultural mourning traditions can bring comfort and human connection in times of sorrow.

Cultural factors that shape grieving

A person's cultural background heavily influences how they grieve the death of loved ones and observe mourning rituals. Key cultural factors that impact grieving include:

- Religious beliefs about the afterlife and nature of the soul.
- Family dynamics and gender roles for mourners.
- Norms around emotional expression during bereavement.
- Traditional mourning rituals and customs for honouring the deceased.

(Grief in Different Cultures and Religions)



"If we create a culture where talking about death is acceptable, it's possible that death will become easier to cope with when it does come."



Feelings of relief during bereavement

- One of the secret of grief is relief. Few bereaved individuals would admit to this. It's an "I shouldn't be experiencing this" kind of feeling. One of the struggles when in grief is wondering if it's all right to feel and think what we are feeling and thinking. We know what we're experiencing but we wonder if it's okay and hope that it is also okay with those around us. (Norman Wright).

Grief and Loneliness:

"Loneliness has an ugly twin sister named fear. When I am lonely, I fear that life will always be this way".

The writer, Dr Alan Wolfelt says this about Loneliness, it is the feeling of being empty, alone, and unwanted. It is discomfort or pain of wanting connection with other human beings but not having it. It is the internal response to an external experience [or lack of it).



Grief and the grieving process

- "To begin to process a loss, it is important to acknowledge the different stages of the process. Also, it is important to recognise that your feelings and emotions are normal and that they are personal to you. It may help for you to begin by acknowledging your emotional pain and try to accept that you will feel many different and often unexpected emotions" (<https://cpdonline.co.uk/knowledge-base/mental-health/grief/?>)

Myths and facts about grief and grieving

Myth: The pain will go away faster if you ignore it

Fact: Trying to ignore your pain or keep it from surfacing will only make it worse in the long run. For real healing, it is necessary to face your grief and actively deal with it.

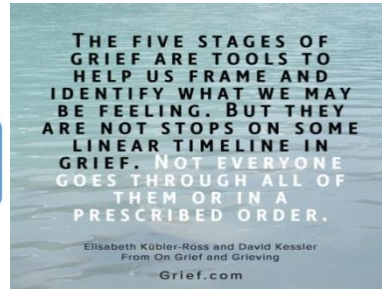
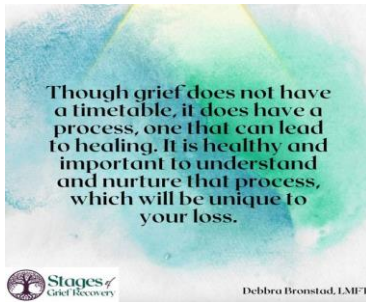
Myth: If you don't cry, it means you aren't sorry about the loss.

Fact: Crying is a normal response to sadness, but it's not the only one. Those who don't cry may feel the pain just as deeply as others. They may simply have other ways of showing it.

Myth: It's important to "be strong" in the face of loss.

Fact: Feeling sad, frightened, or lonely is a normal reaction to loss. Crying doesn't mean you are weak. You don't need to "protect" your family or friends by putting on a brave front. Showing your true feelings can help them and you.

The stages of grief



The Needs of Mourning

The Tasks of Mourning

Alan Wolfelt – The Six Needs of Mourning	J. William Worden – The Four Tasks of Mourning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Acknowledge the reality of the death *Embrace the pain of the loss *Remember the person who died *Develop a new self-identity *Search for meaning *Receive ongoing support from others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *To accept the reality of the loss *To process the pain of grief *To adjust to a world without the deceased *To find an enduring connection with the deceased while embarking on a new life

Factors that may hinder the grieving process

These include the following:

- Self-blame and guilt
- Anger and fear
- Loss of identity
- Feelings of relief during bereavement

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/grief/coping-with-grief-and-loss.htm>

How to cope with the grieving process

While grieving a loss is an inevitable part of life, there are ways to help cope with the pain, come to terms with your grief, and eventually, find a way to pick up the pieces and move on with your life.

1. Acknowledge your pain.
2. Accept that grief can trigger many different and unexpected emotions.
3. Understand that your grieving process will be unique to you.
4. Seek out face-to-face support from people who care about you.
5. Support yourself emotionally by taking care of yourself physically.



"If you can't tell your story to another human, find another way: journal, paint, make your grief into a graphic novel with a very dark storyline. Or go out to the woods and tell the trees. It is an immense relief to be able to tell your story without someone trying to fix it. The trees will not ask, 'How are you really?' and the wind doesn't care if you cry."

Megan Devine



In your grief journey- Exercise self-compassion

Remember that it takes times to heal on your grief journey. Healing is your primary job now! In the meantime, it is important to exercise self-compassion. This is simply the process of turning compassion inward.



Adjusting to this new normal takes patience, self-compassion and self-care.



Please note!

Bereavement Café Support Group

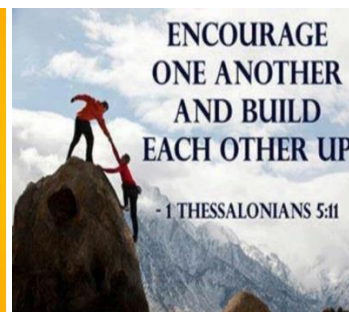
Our support group recognises that "enduring the pain of grief can be one of the most difficult challenges you will face in your life. At its core, loss creates a void, a hole in your life that must be faced". If at any time you are having suicidal thoughts or any other negative feelings, please don't sit in silence. We are here to help and support you.

As a support group, we offer:

- ✚ A safe environment for those who are living with grief either through the loss of a loved one or any other significant loss you might be experiencing right now in your life.
- ✚ We believe that sharing can help to you feel connected with others who are going through a similar experience.
- ✚ Sharing your story can also help those who are more recently bereaved to feel understood on their journey of grief

Remember that Grief isn't something you get over; it's something you go through. Everyone's journey through grief is unique.

✚ Our Next Support Group will be on the 19th November, 2023 Why not join us!!



Useful Information:

- Samaritans Helpline: 08457 909090, 24 hours a day
- Sudden Bereavement Help 0800 2600 400).
- Bereavement Trust Helpline: 0800 435 455, from 6-10pm

The resources used in this Newsletter are taken from Books on "Grief" and various Internet websites on grief.

Our prayer is that you will find this month's Newsletter helpful in your journey of grief.

BLESSINGS - The Bereavement Café Support Team

