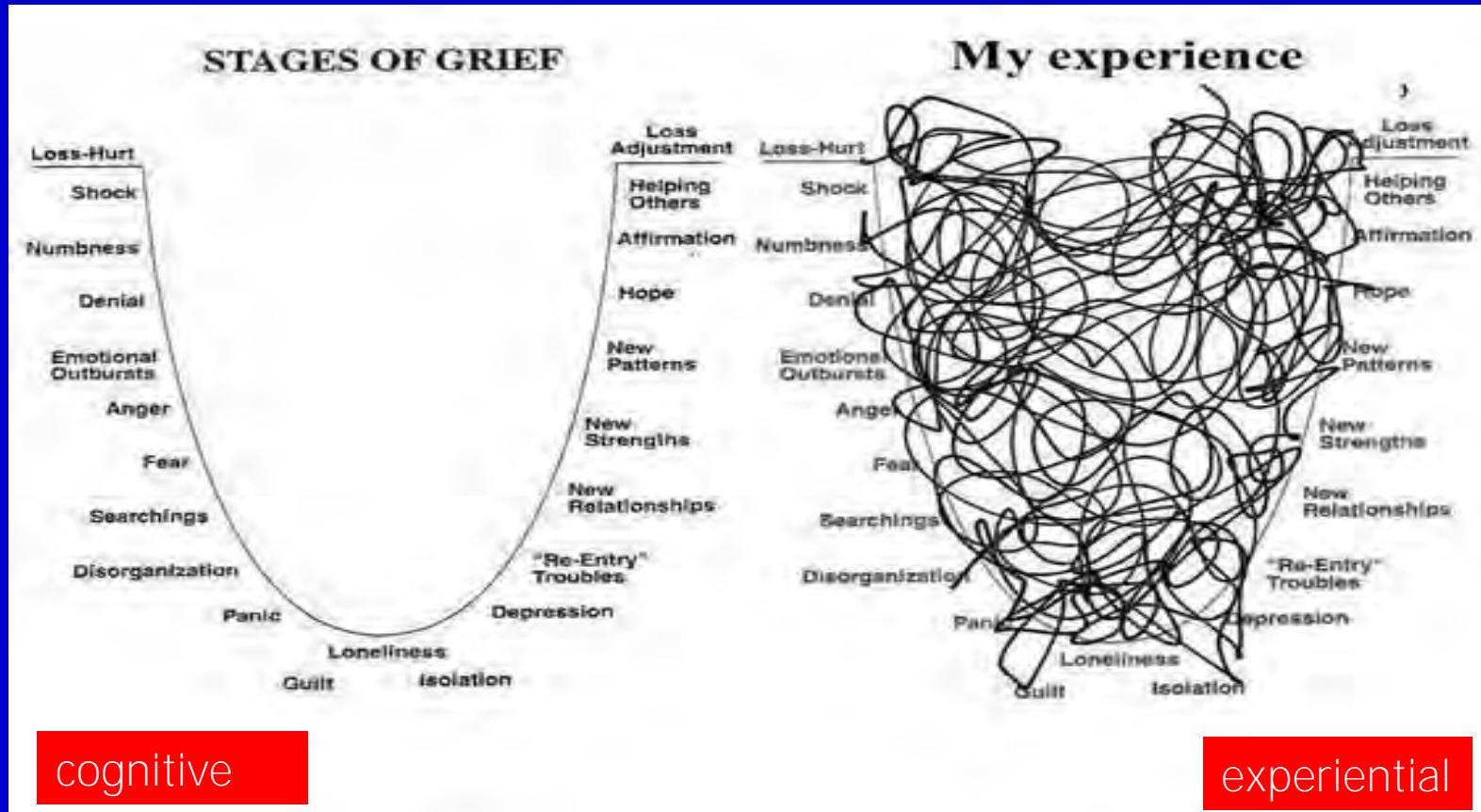


When Grief Comes to Work



Yvette Perreault and Cathy Walker
Good Grief Care Consultants
www.goodgriefcare.ca

Land Acknowledgement



Best Practices: Some of the tools we use come from Indigenous ways of knowing and are gifts of holistic approaches to life, connections and loss. We gratefully acknowledge these teachings.

I am deeply thankful to live on the Traditional territory of the Wendat, Anishinaabeg & Haudenosaunee peoples – the contested Williams Treaty of 1923

Directly adjacent to the unceded territory of Kanienkehaka (Mohawk of Tyendinaga)



Intros: Yvette Perreault



- ❖ Good Grief Care Consultants - team lead
- ❖ Member of the Grief, Loss & Wellness Initiative at Breakaway free supports to harm-reduction workers
- ❖ ECMH Hastings County (*Traumatic Grief Specialist*)
- ❖ Retired Director of provincial agency: *AIDS Bereavement and Resiliency Program of Ontario*
- ❖ Director of Support Services – AIDS Committee of Toronto – *in the death years*
- ❖ Violence Against Women and Children (*Rape Relief; Women's Habitat*)
- ❖ Psychiatric Nursing (*Brandon MB*)
- ❖ Bee shepherd (current)

Leafcutter bee cocoons



Cathy Walker



Capacity for managing ongoing Loss

- Appreciate *what* you are dealing with regarding loss and the workplace
- Enhance strategies *for responding* effectively (holistically) to diverse grief/loss responses- as an agency, as a team, as an individual
- *Grief Resilience as Self awareness, Self care and Collective Care*



This session:

Part I - Intros and Warm Up

- Coming into the workshop-
- Grounded Presence as foundational tool

Part II- Presentation and Discussion

- Framework for Grief, Loss and Impact in the Workplace
- Diversity in grief responses
- Breakout room: Impact- *How am I doing- really?*

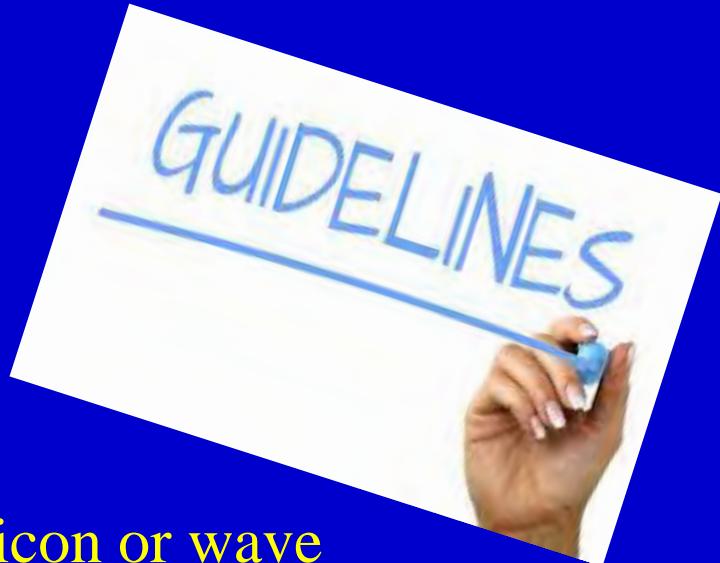
BREAK- 10:50- 11:00

Part III- Support for working it through

- Ideas about self and collective care: agency, teams, individuals
- Holistic Care: Plants as Medicine
- Wrap-Up : Reflections about our own loss and resilience

For this session:

- ✓ Space for you to participate
- ✓ Chat function open
- ✓ Can unmute yourself – use raised hand icon or wave
- ✓ If you are able, please use your camera so we can relate to each other more personally
- ✓ Share the air
- ✓ Emotions welcomed
- ✓ Differences of opinion welcomed
- ✓ Protect those who do speak- no identifying details outside of this session unless you are singing someone's praises
- ✓ *Anything else?*



Grounding as we come into today



Heart for the Work



* Grounding ourselves in our own stories/identity. *What brings you here?*
What keeps you here?

What I brought to human spirit and human suffering was...



My nurse's heart...

Brandon Mental Hospital 1971





Rape Relief 1975

Me 1978
Vancouver



Social Justice as driver



NOW NO ONE IS SAFE FROM AIDS



No road maps for the AIDS journey- 1980s

- Waves of losses
- Stigma of AIDS / gay
- Heart for community
- A desperate need not to suffer alone
- Activism as fuel
- Need to right wrongs
- *Not service-provision, but survival*

Proud Lives

1005

*we mourn
we celebrate
we remember*

CHRISTINE LOUISE
HINDSON
Mar 18, 1963 —
Sep 8, 1994



GARY JOSEPH PION
Jul 16, 1956 — Aug 25, 1994



DOUG WEILAND
Jul 3, 1931 —
Nov 19, 1994



RODNEY LEONARD
JAMIESON
May 1, 1960 —
Dec 18, 1994



RALPH JAMES BROWN
Apr 10, 1957 —
Dec 31, 1994



REV. DON MCRAE
Jul 2, 1944 — Jan 2, 1995



DANNY ROY OGILVIE
Apr 16, 1960 — Jan 7, 1995



SKOT MACAULAY
Aug 14, 1964 — Jan 9, 1994



N ERIC NOBES
AUG 20, 1947 —
SEP 23, 1994



JEAN-CLAUDE
BOURGault
Mar 26, 1957 — Dec 1, 1994



JOHN
MACCORMON
Feb 9, 1968 — Dec 21, 1994



RICK SAVOYDAVIS



JERRY COIWELL
Jul 9, 1957 —
Jan 4, 1995



ALFRED EU
Sep 30, 1951 — Jan 10, 1995



DAVID ADAM KARNICK
May 27, 1965 — Mar 19, 1994



KEN WEBSTER
Jun 5, 1948 —
Oct 28, 1994



JAMES CECIL
MURRANT
Aug 1, 1962 — Dec 2, 1994



DAVID WILLIAM FARMER
Jan 22, 1956 — Dec 22, 1994



BEN



DAVID
Jul 7, 1947 — Jan 6, 1995



SCOTT ASSEUN
Oct 9, 1963 — Jan 12, 1995

BENJAMIN (BENNY)
BARMAK
May 2, 1959 — Jan 13, 1995

PAUL ASTON
Apr 12, 1965 — Jan 14, 1995



LUC FERLAND
Apr 22, 1963 — May 14, 1994

COLIN WARD

DAVID MCINTOSH

RON CEJKOWSKI
"MISS KITTY"
1961 — 1995

RON JEAN-PAUL
MARCK
Oct 25, 1958 — Jan 6, 1995

There are important distinctions

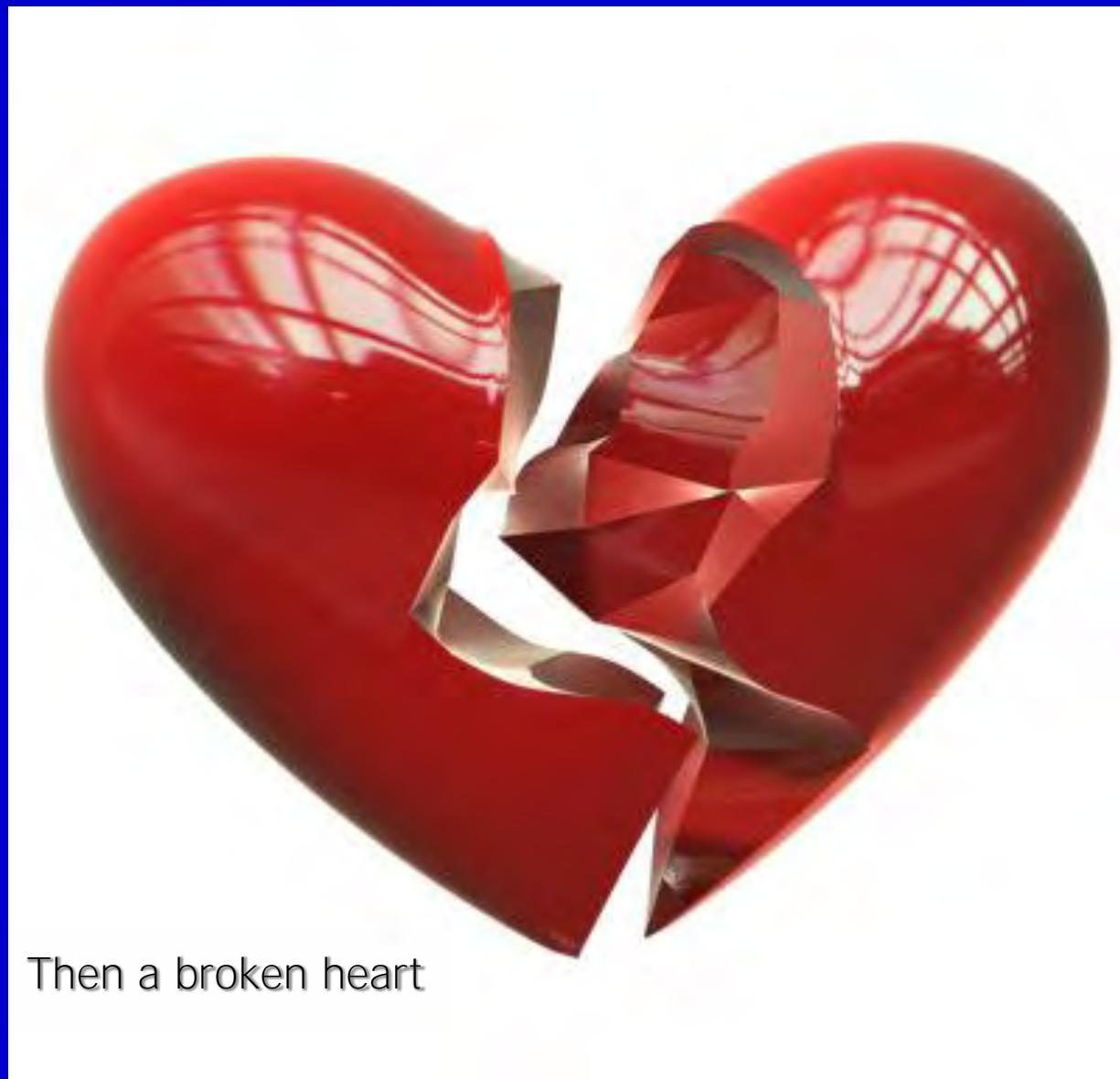


Way death is experienced:

- *Time to say goodbye and to shape a dignified death vs sudden/tragic.*
- *Unpreventable vs Preventable.*
- *Anticipatory loss vs Expected losses.*



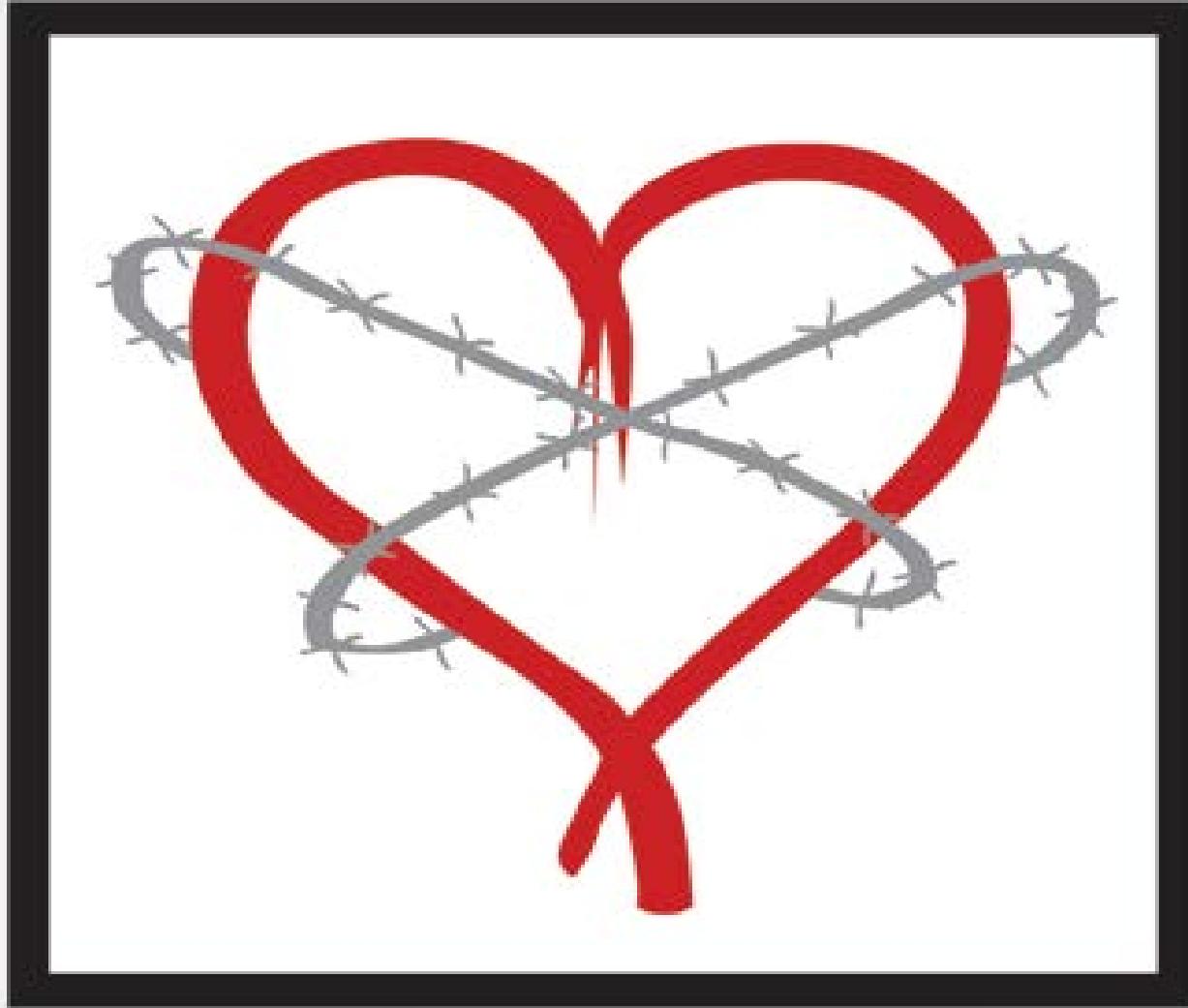
I started out with a full radiant heart- my activist/community/nurse identity



Then a broken heart



A shattered heart...



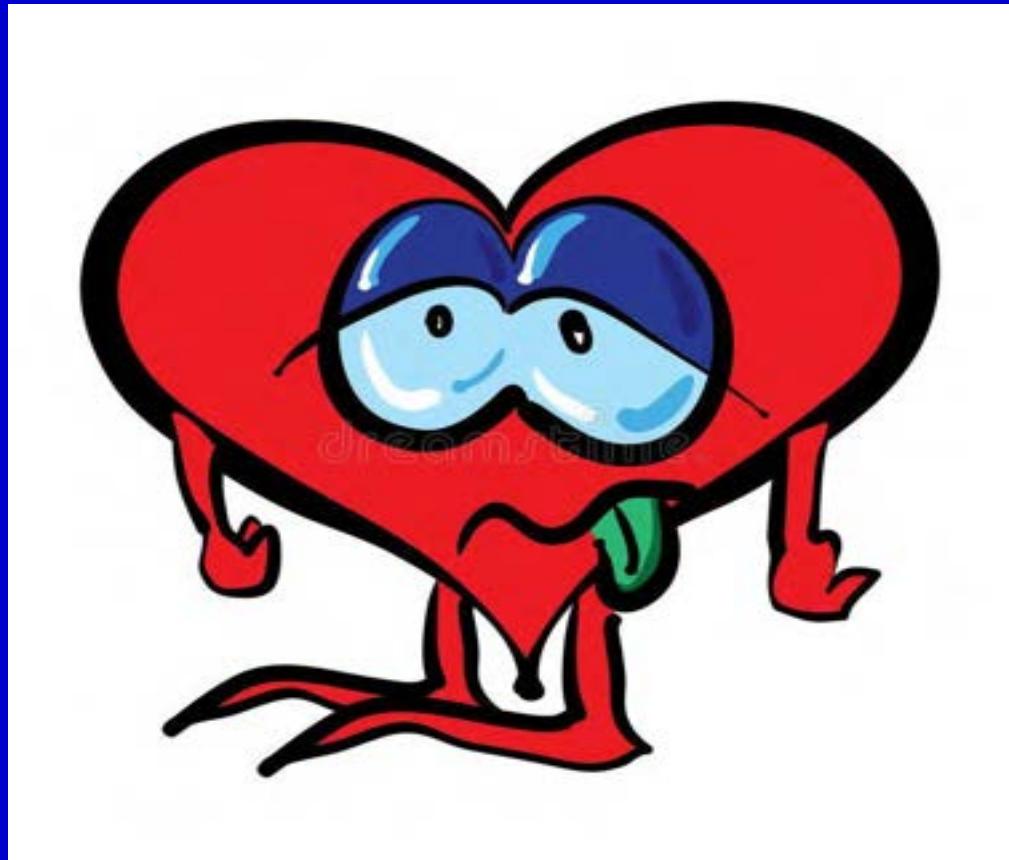
An inaccessible heart- impacting my personal life



And that became an angry heart



Then a blue heart... it's not supposed to be like this...



After years on the front lines, one very tired heart ...



With effort and determination and a lot of help....

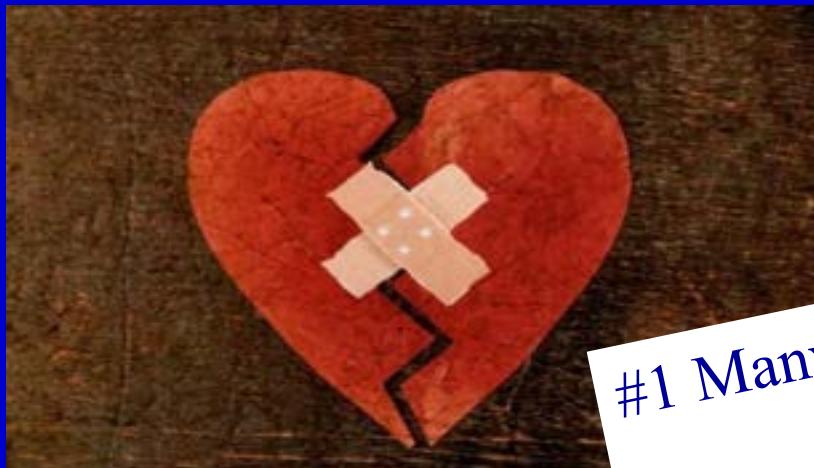


I found my own unique expressive, dynamic heart- one that could integrate the grief of losing- one that could lean into the pain so I could equally lean into joy, love and connection

Five good lessons from earlier years~

“As Workers, the capacity for compassion and empathy seems to be at the core of our ability to do the work *and at the core of our ability to be wounded by the work*”

Charles Figley



#1 Many of us are Broken Hearted
not Burned Out

#2



#3

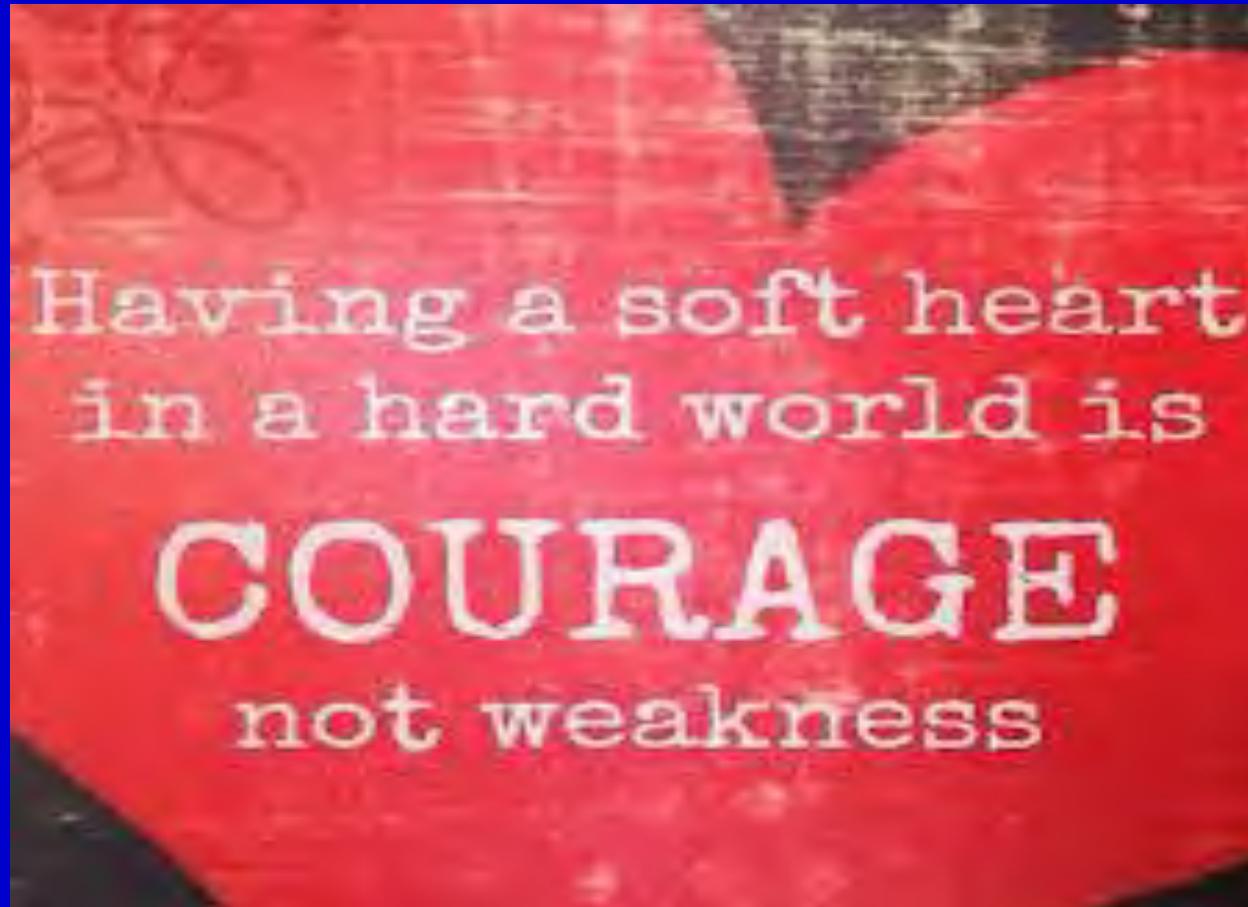
**There are two kinds of pain
in this world. The pain that
hurts, the pain that alters.**

Denzel Washington

Denzel Washington

*I think deep pain changes us, changes community-
and hopefully, eventually that can be for the better*

#4



#5



Seems to me like our social-justice /equity struggles need an army of energetic, smart, tough humans who know what needs to be done and who have the energy to sustain this work over time.

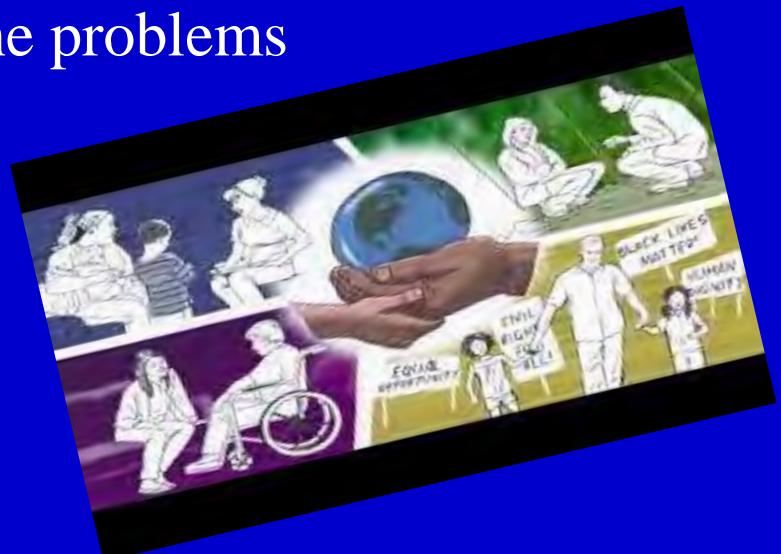
Workers Experience of Traumatic Loss and Support in the Workplace- *supportive housing sector*



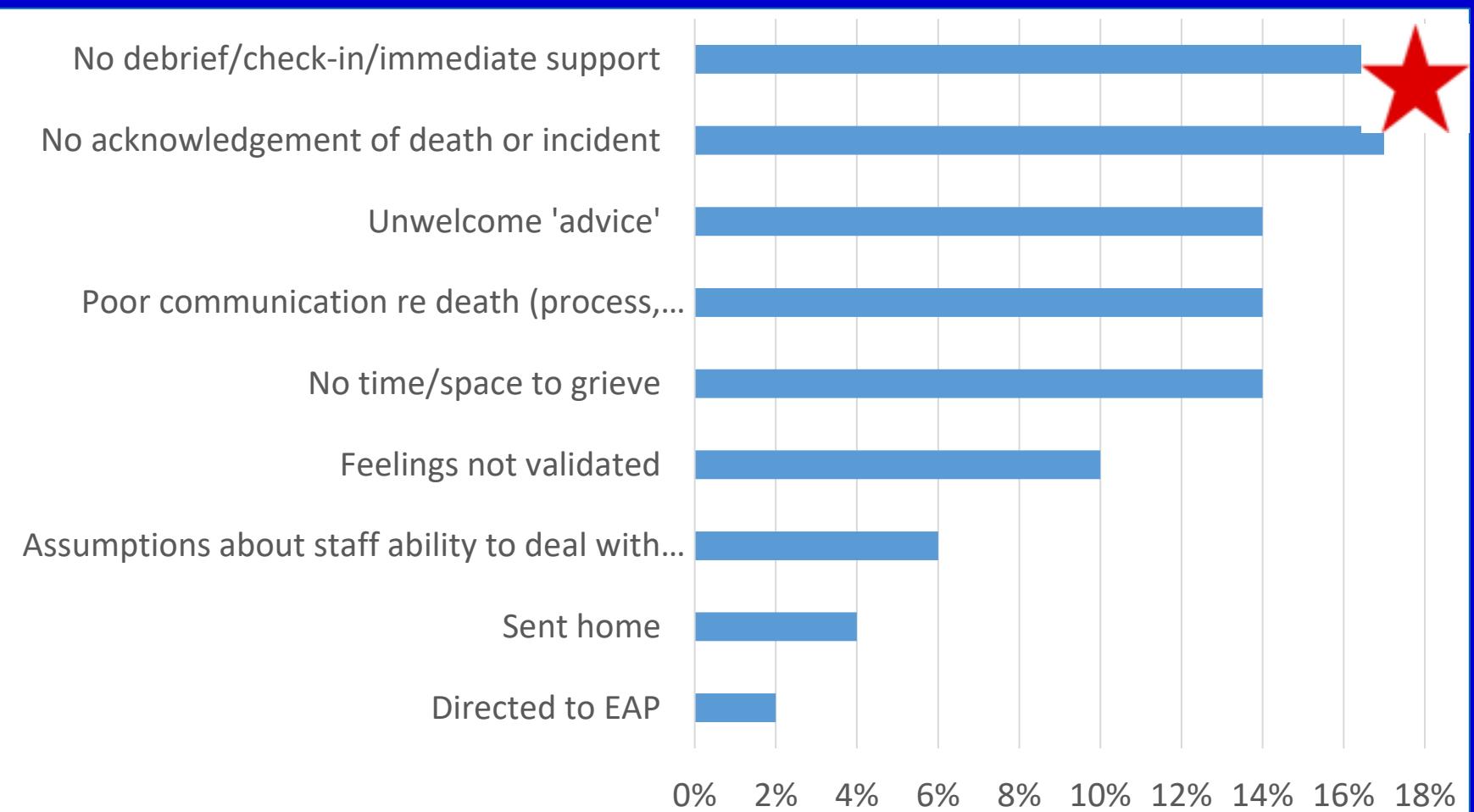
Good Grief Care Pilot – 2016-2018
*Responding to Loss in 8 Supportive Housing Agencies- Toronto 187 staff
Debriefing Circles, Training, Dialogue & Planning with Managers*

Challenges For Front-line Workers

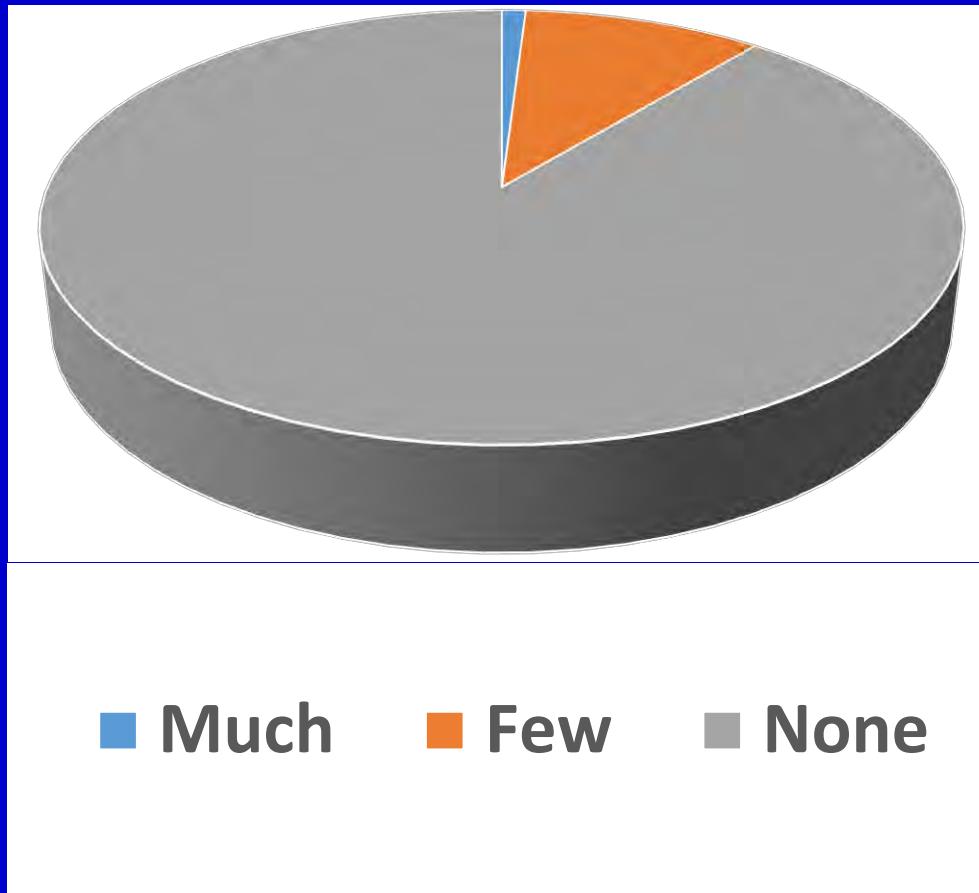
1. Seeing and Dealing with the Trauma
2. The Loss in community is immense
3. Under-resourced to deal with this crisis
4. Front Lines under-valued
5. Lack of will to address the problems
6. Resiliency has its limits
7. Stop the Stigma



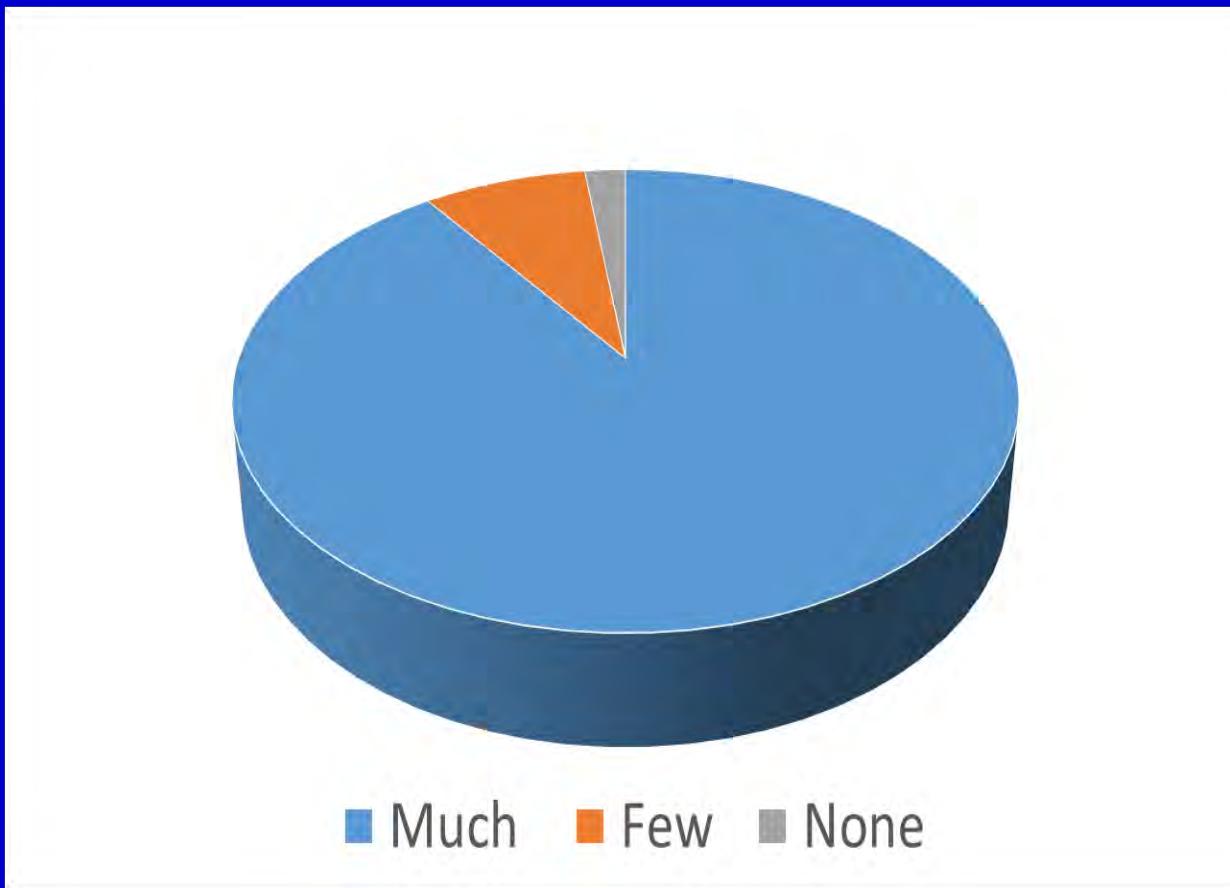
What has a Manager said or done that *has not* been helpful
when you had a death or non-fatal overdose of a client?
(n=48)



How much support do you get from your managers?



How much support do you get from your peers?



As a Front Line worker



I am not an Energizer Bunny....who just need new batteries. Workers become replaceable. Get a new bunny. But workers themselves are the tools. The resource we bring to people is based in our ability to connect as we stay emotionally regulated. Not easy when we're overwhelmed.

State of today's world



I. I AM WASHING MY FACE BEFORE
BED WHILE A COUNTRY IS ON FIRE.

IT FEELS DUMB TO WASH MY FACE,
AND DUMB NOT TO.

IT HAS NEVER BEEN THIS WAY, AND
IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THIS WAY.

SOMEONE HAS ALWAYS CLINKED A
COCKTAIL GLASS IN ONE HEMISPHERE
AS SOMEONE LOSES A HOME IN
ANOTHER WHILE SOMEONE FALLS IN
LOVE IN THE SAME APARTMENT BUILDING
WHERE SOMEONE GRIEVES. THE FACT
THAT SUFFERING, MUNDANITY, AND BEAUTY
COINCIDE IS UNBEARABLE AND REMARKABLE.

How are you doing – *really*???

- Physically?
- Emotionally?
- Mentally?
- Spiritually?

**When people ask how
life is going**



10 minutes



Pick report- back
person- we'll hear
from some groups

Questions?
Comments?

Transition to break

TIME
FOR A
BREAK



Grief and Loss Processing

Types of Grief:

Prolonged,
Anticipatory,
Masked,
Disenfranchised,
Secondary,
Cumulative,
Inhibited,
Ambiguous,
Complicated,
Normal,
Traumatic,
Abbreviated,
Exaggerated,
Absent,
Collective...

What's in *your* grief-aware toolkit?



- Tools that help you understand what's happening *and* how to work with loss comprehensively – *updated Kubler-Ross's model! Holistic Framework*
- *We use William Worden's Task model, Parkes & Bowlby's Attachment theories, Neimeyer's Continuing Bonds, and Rando's Traumatic Grief framework*
- Must include both complex loss and traumatic bereavement *and* a process that offers grieving people *possibility and purpose*

Grief and Loss



- A Human Experience- *about attachment/meaning making*
- We attach, we lose = we mourn.
- Tangible & Intangible
- No timetable; not linear
- Current loss will resurrect old losses

GRIEF ISN'T JUST FOR DEATH

it's also for

FRIENDSHIPS THAT HAVE ENDED

1

LOSING YOUR COMMUNITY

2

MISSING THE CERTAINTY
YOU ONCE HAD

3

QUESTIONING YOUR JUDGMENT

4

RELEASING WHO YOU ONCE WERE

5

FEELING LOST AND UNANCHORED

6

LOSING TRADITIONS YOU LOVED

7



Social Context for loss

Rituals of Mourning

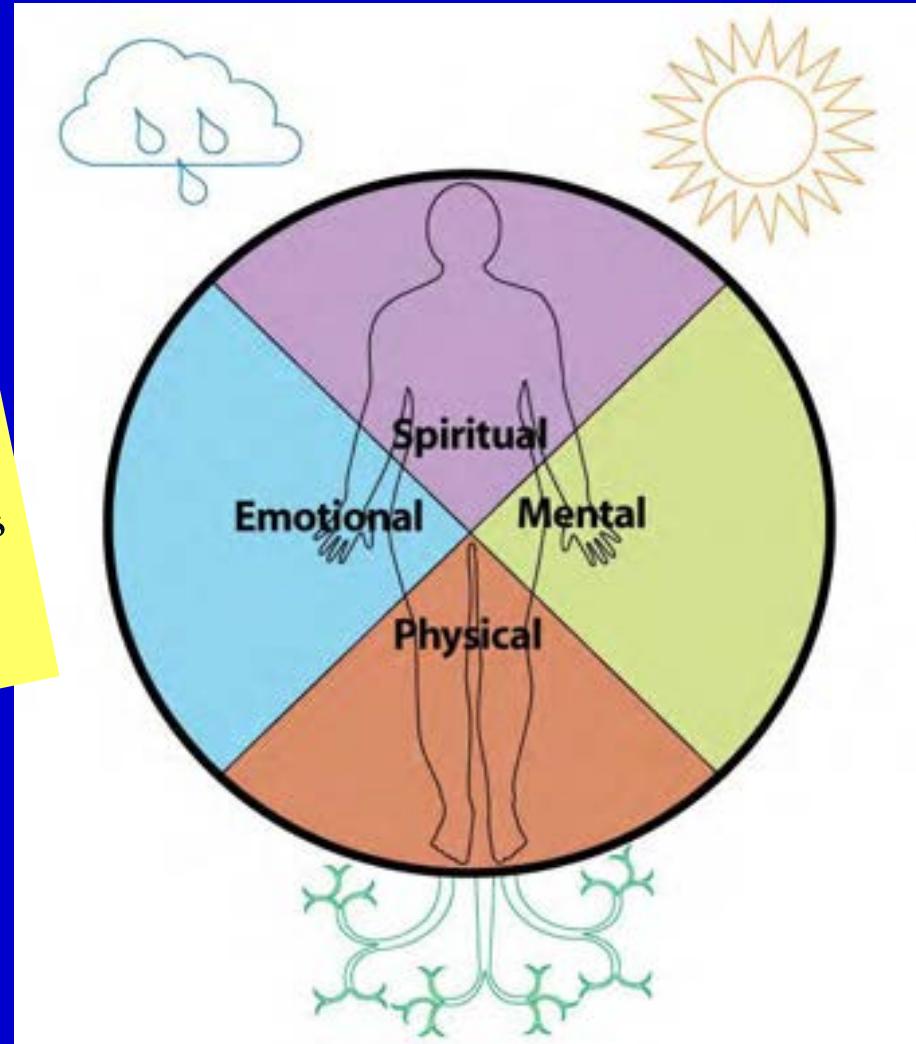
Grief Responses

Fact of Being Bereaved

Loss Responses are Layered

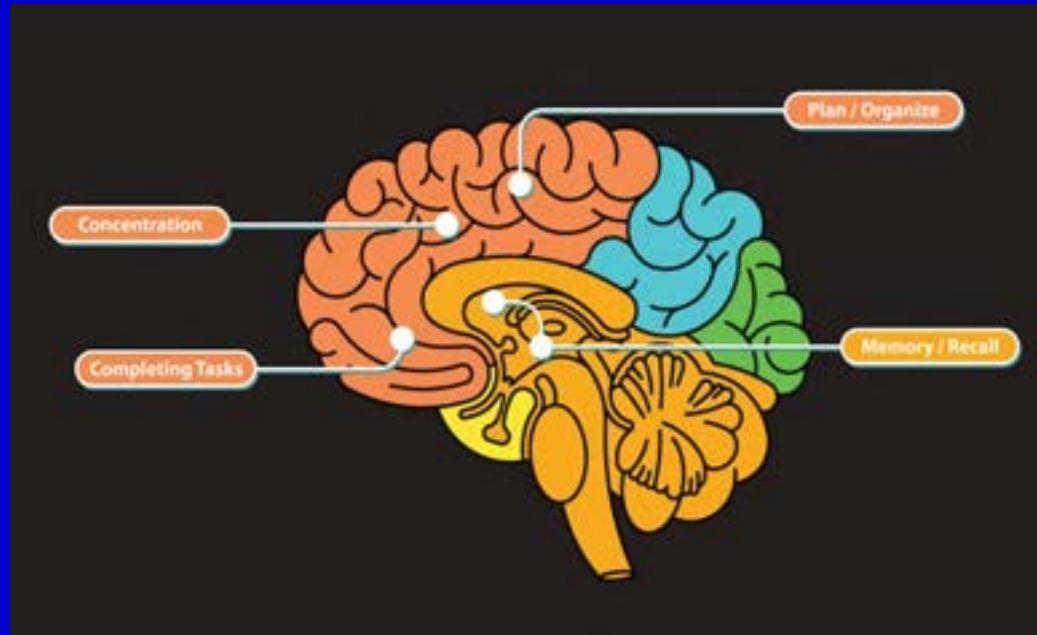
Grief is disruptive and traumatic.

For a period of time, a significant loss/grief results in dysregulation at all levels of one's being- some aspects more intensely than others



Important to Know....

How Grief affects our whole being



Grief results in a “broken brain” as much as in a “broken heart”

Video *6 ways Grief Impacts Us* (7 minutes)

- Grief as a Holistic Experience:
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tFf3cRT4lnk>

Determinants of Grief

- Who was the person?
- Nature of the attachment?
- Mode of Death: NASH /M
 - *Natural; Accidental; Suicide; Homicide; Maid*
- Geographical location?
- Historical: how person grieved past losses
- Social variables: cultural, ethnic, religious subcultures; rituals; social supports

There is a process....

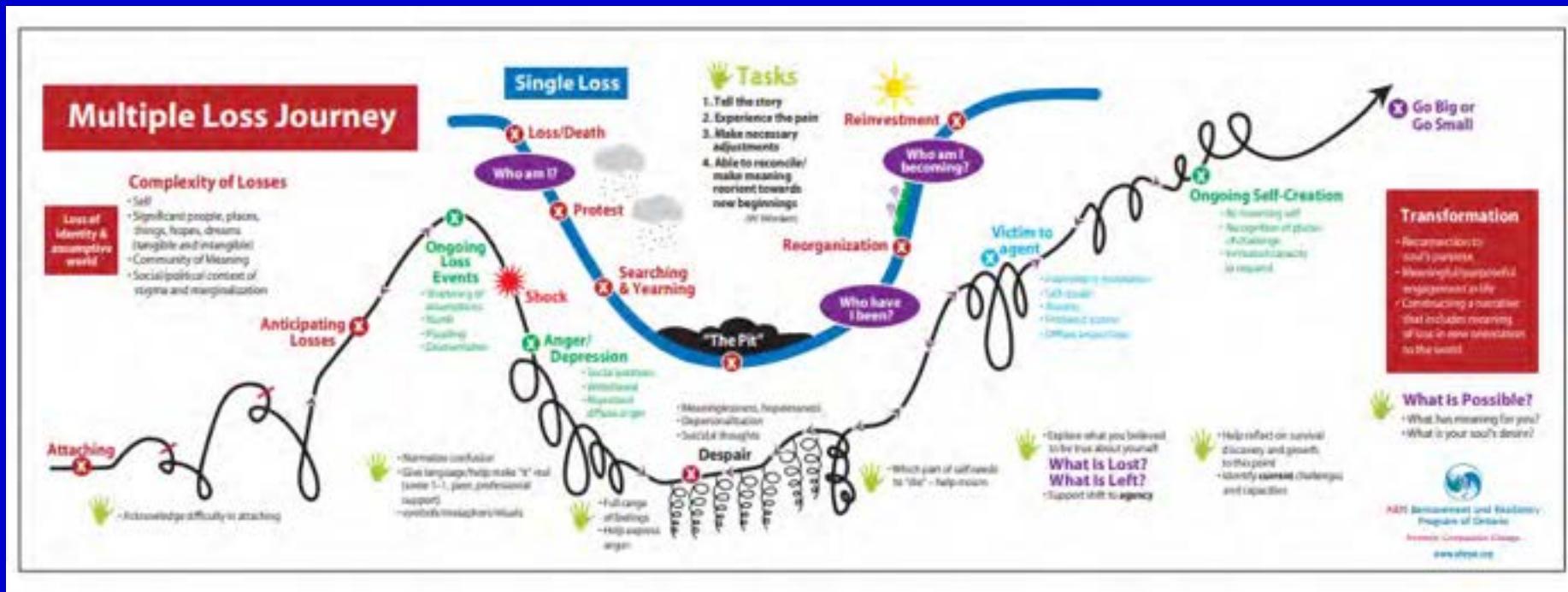


That we move through uniquely

But the impact of prolonged avoiding?



Developed by long term survivors HIV/AIDS



3 foundational questions:

What's Lost? What's Left? What's Possible?

How we actually process grief



Figure 1. The Dual Process Model of Coping with Bereavement (Stroebe & Schut, 1999).

Grief work involves change and anxiety as dominant themes

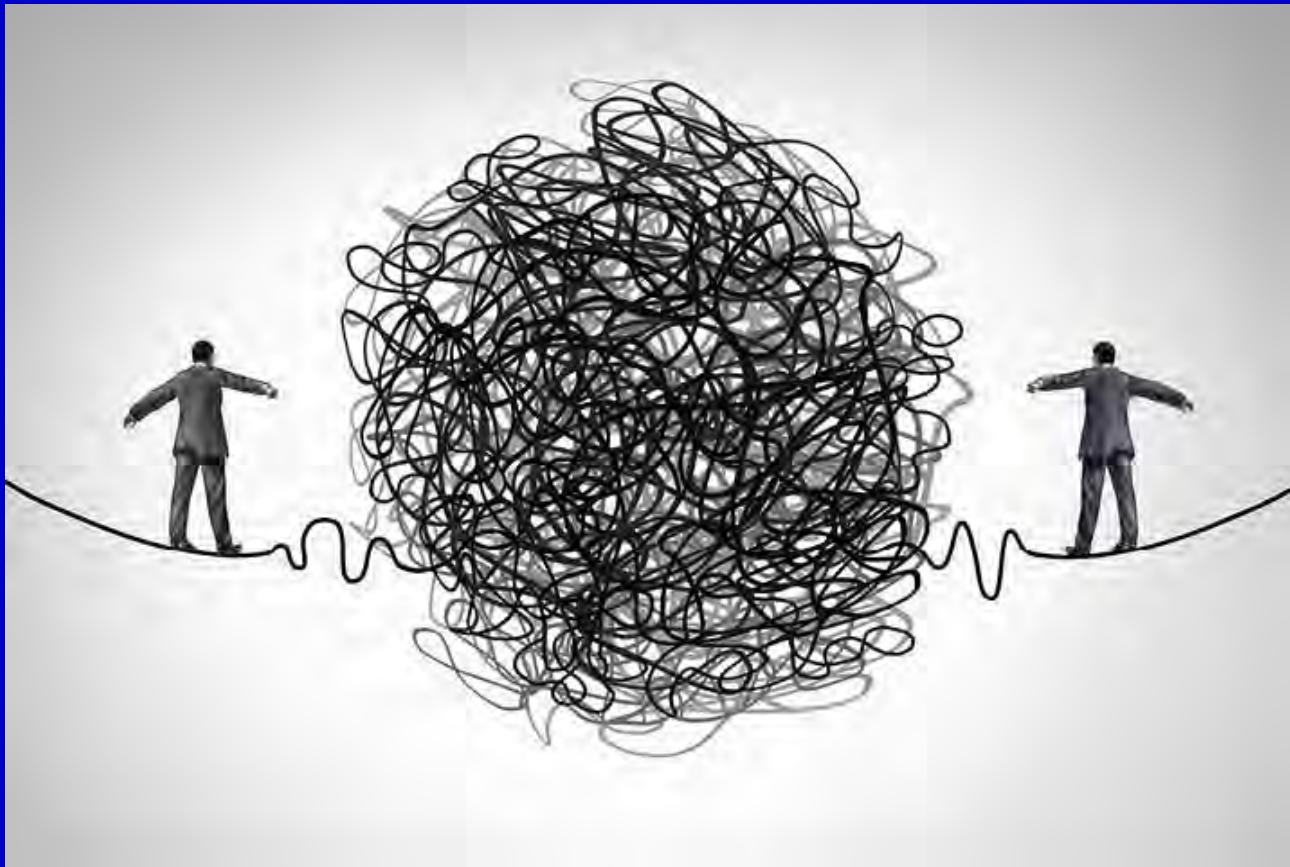


**People tend to believe grief
shrinks over time**

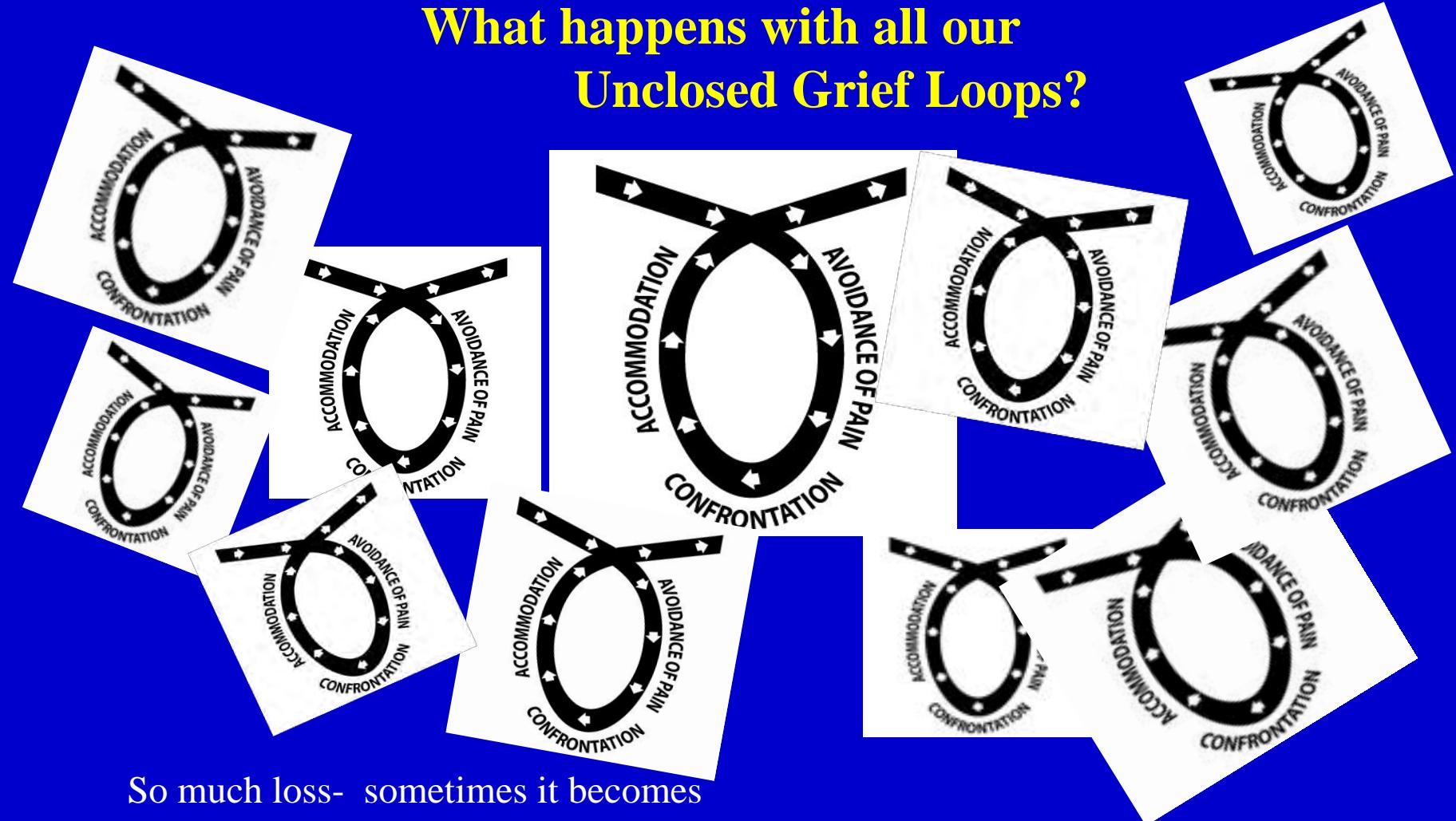


**What really happens is we
learn to grow around our grief**

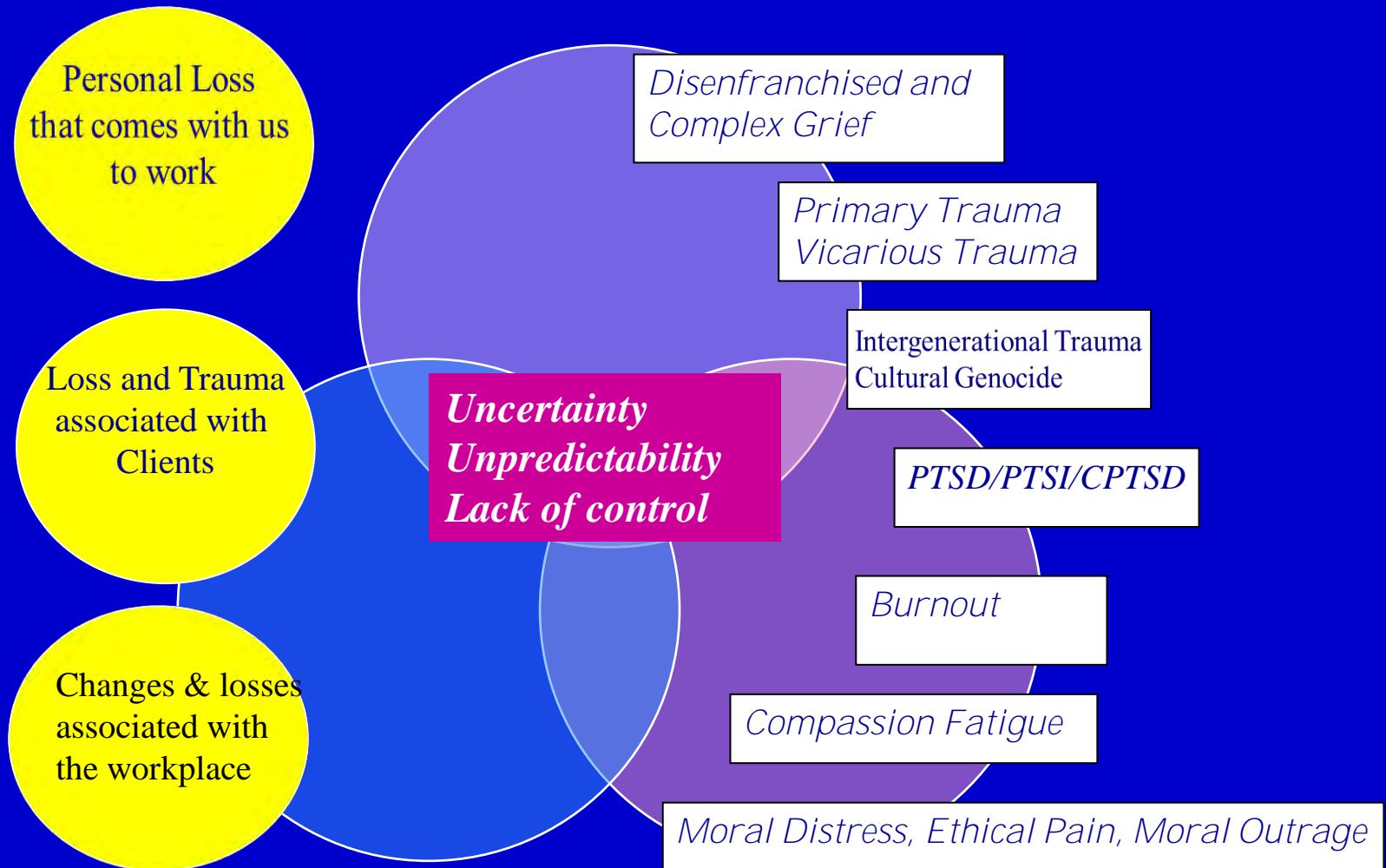
When Grief is Complicated



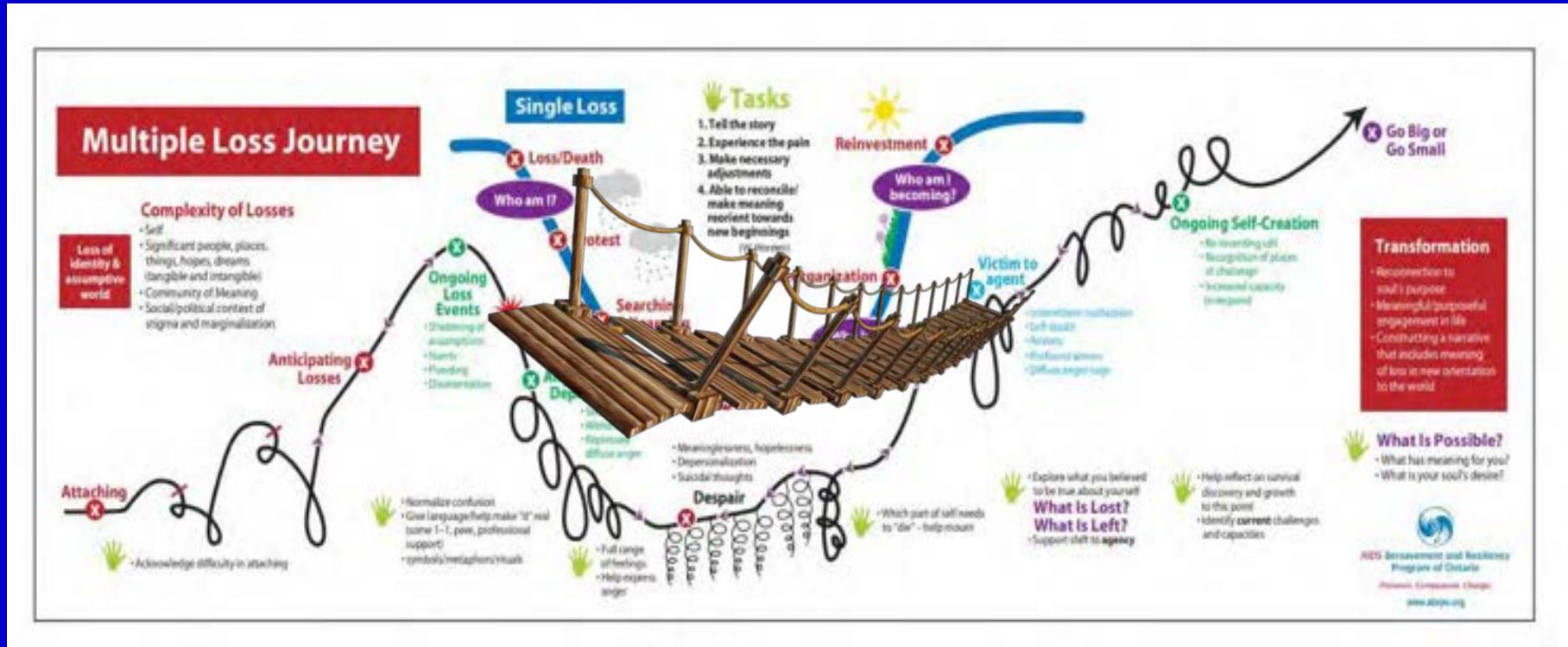
What happens with all our Unclosed Grief Loops?



So much loss- sometimes it becomes
“What has died?” (*assumptive world and core beliefs*)
rather than a list of “who has died?”



In a time of relentless losses, uncertainty and being “in the trenches” : smart practice of building a suspension bridge



Purpose: support and stabilization

Through predictable, consistent, meaningful supports & rituals that acknowledge loss and help people regroup and move forward

“Is It Okay for You to Be Okay?”
“Is it Okay for You NOT to Be Okay?



- To remain connected while moving into the new
- **Resilience:** *Doesn't mean it didn't matter*

Give people realistic expectations

When a reaction seems to come out of nowhere

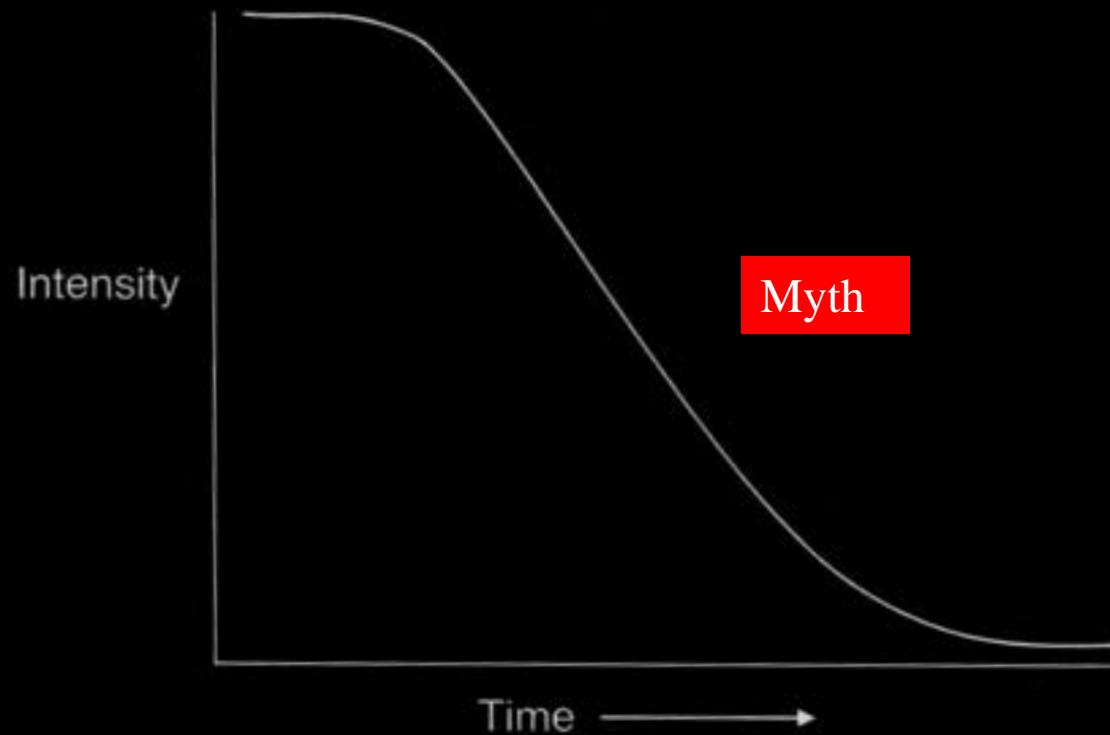
STUG

Sudden/Subsequent
Temporary
Upsurges of
Grief



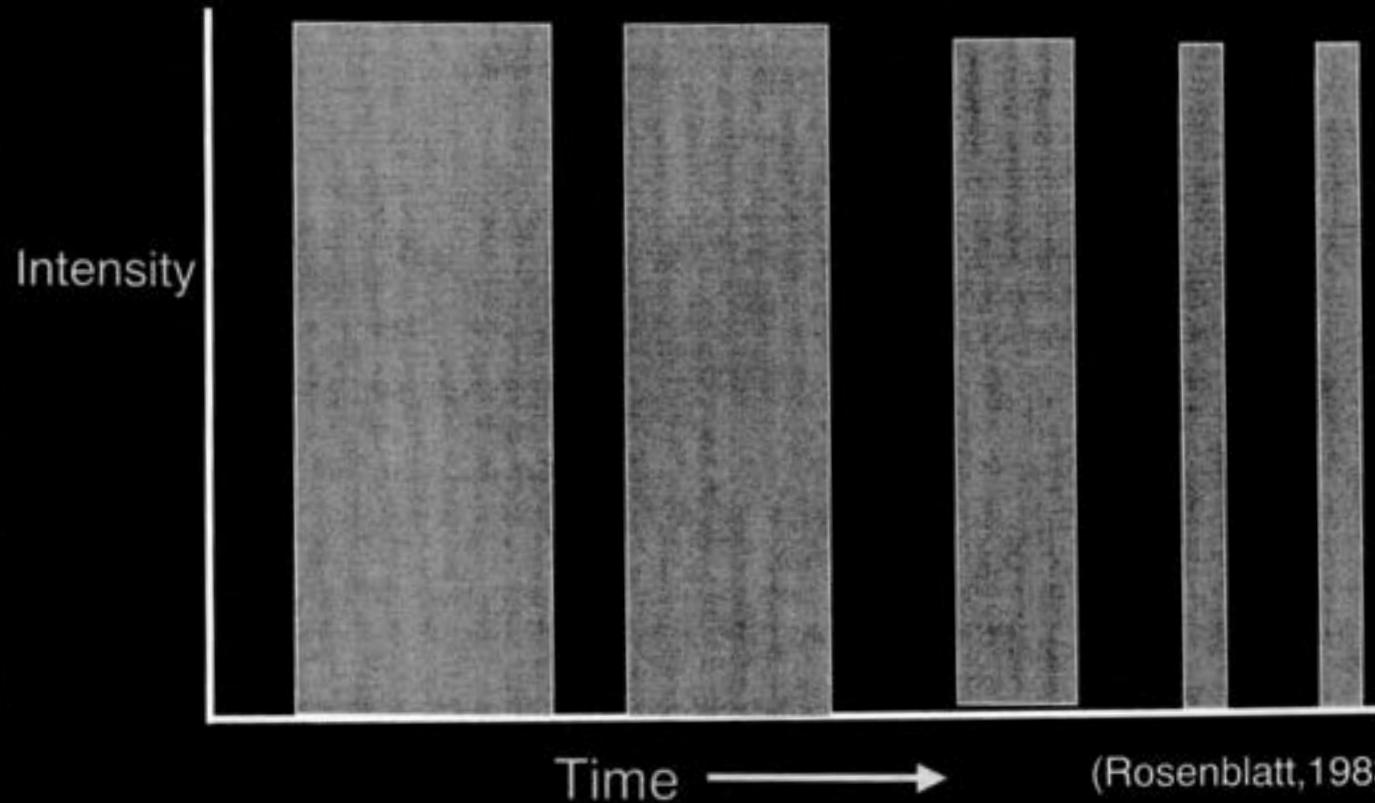
Therese A. Rando

Grief and Time



Grief and Time

STUG





The Trauma Envelope

The diagram consists of a large blue circle labeled "The Trauma Envelope" in white, curved text at the top. Inside this is a smaller pink circle labeled "The loss" in white text. The two circles overlap, representing the concept of traumatic grief.

Traumatic Grief

Not only *who* died
but *how* they died

Grief resulting from loss in a traumatic situation-
“how” the loss occurred has traumatic elements:
natural, accidental, disaster, violence, terrorism, etc

Trauma and the Nervous System: A Polyvagal Perspective

<https://youtu.be/ZdIQRxwT1I0>

<https://thetraumafoundation.org/>

Support: work with the ANS to help people be in present time and able to manage symptoms. Our own emotional regulation, tone of voice, compassion, grounded presence helps settle/regulate others' ANS. Unconsciously.

Traumatic Grief shows up as an activated ANS (autonomic nervous system) How do we respond? *Overwhelmed? Numb? Enraged? Brittle? Catastrophic Thinking? Fear? Flashbacks? Protective Coping Denial?*



Minimize



Freeze



Flight



Fawn

Enforced
Positivity



Disenfranchised Grief

“A loss that cannot be socially sanctioned, openly acknowledged or publicly mourned”

~ Kenneth Doka

Contexts

- Loss is not acknowledged
- Relationship is not recognized
- Griever is not recognized
- Stigma around how someone died
- Ways individuals grieve



NEURODIVERGENT UMBRELLA*

ADHD

ASPD

BPD

DYSLEXIA

DYSPRAXIA

SENSORY PROCESSING DISORDER

PTSD

DYSCALCULIA

DYSGRAPHIA

DID & OSDD

NPD

CPTSD

BIPOLAR

AUTISM

OCD

TIC DISORDERS

SCHIZOPHRENIA

MISOPHONIA

DOWN SYNDROME

SYNTHESIA

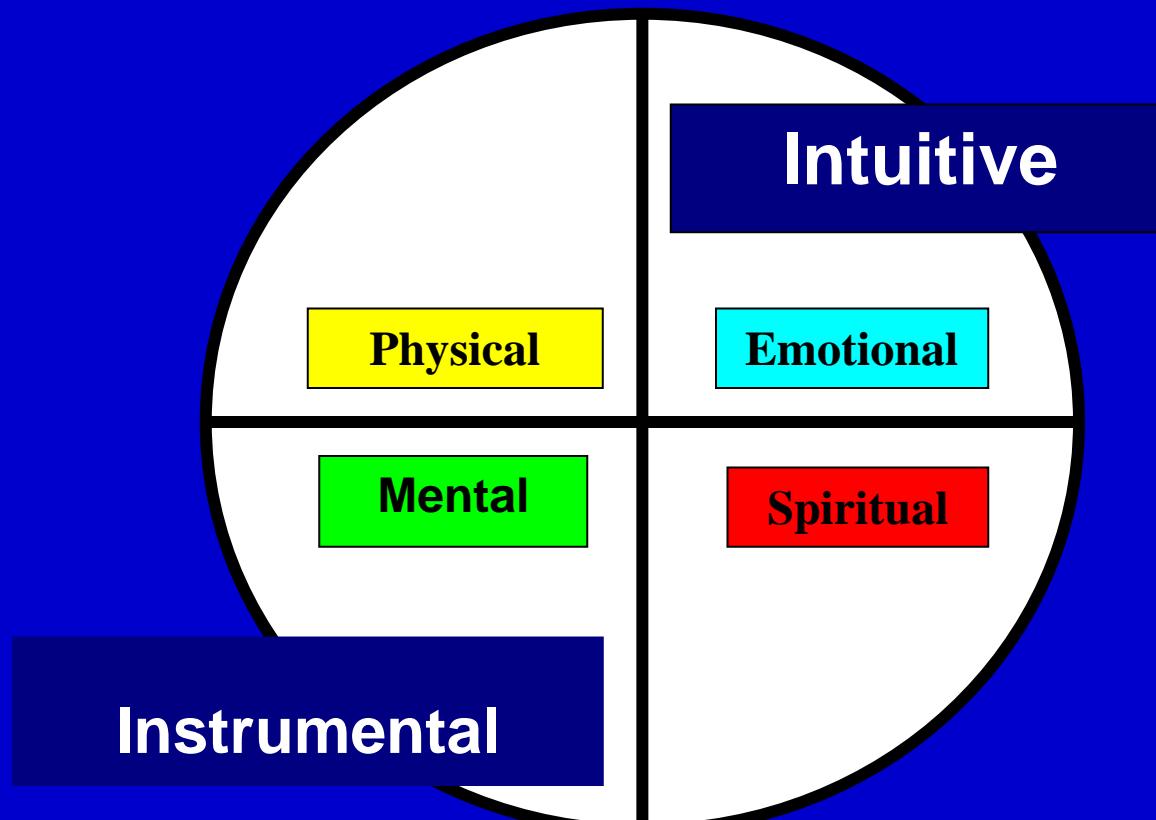
EPILEPSY

ABI

HPD

*NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST www.livedexperienceeducator.com @livedexperienceeducator

We are not all the same in our responses



Martin and Doka





Grieving Styles



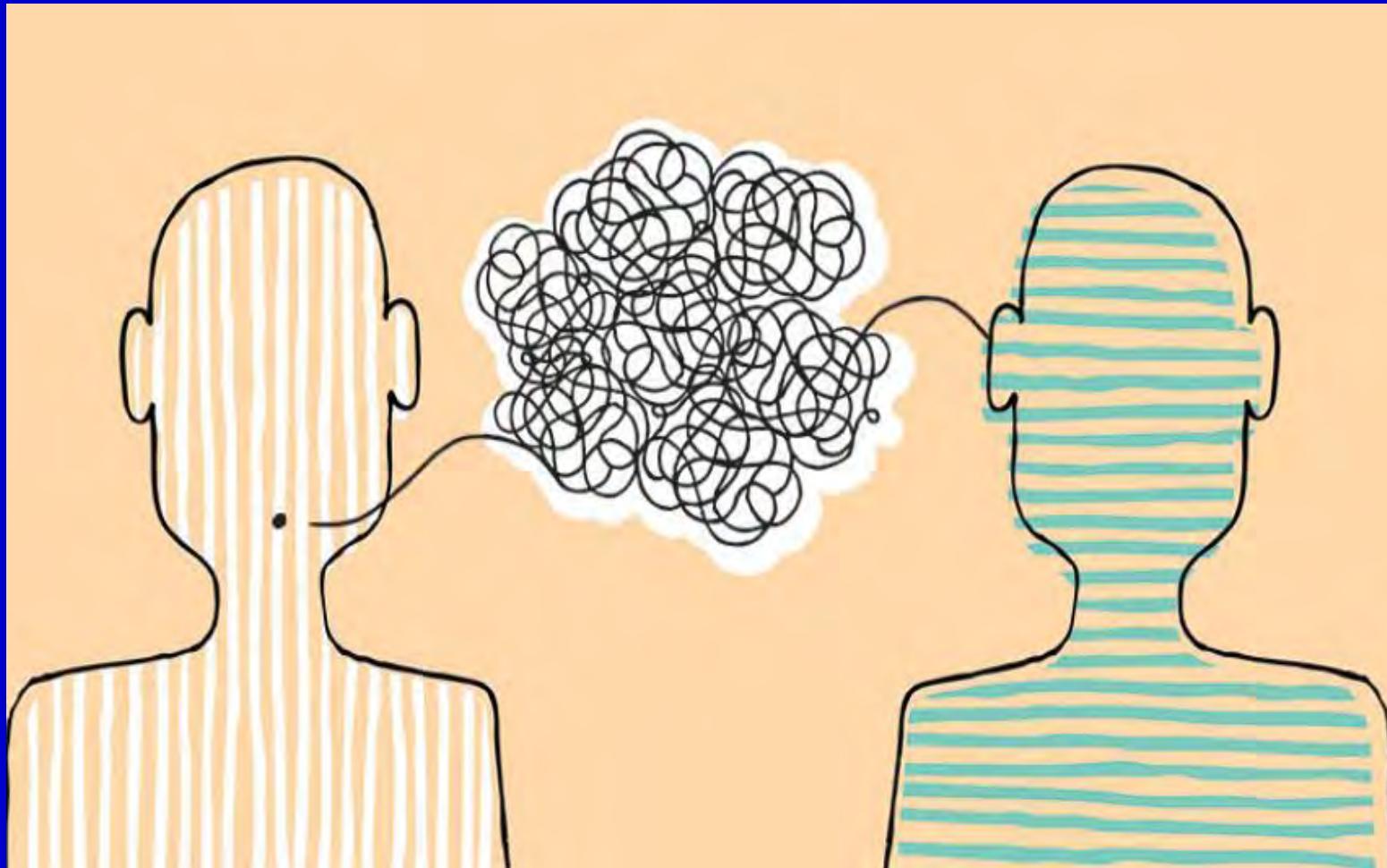
Intuitive Grief

- Experienced as waves of emotion
- Expression mirrors inner feelings and emotions
- More feeling than thinking
- Focused on exploring and expressing feelings and processing emotions

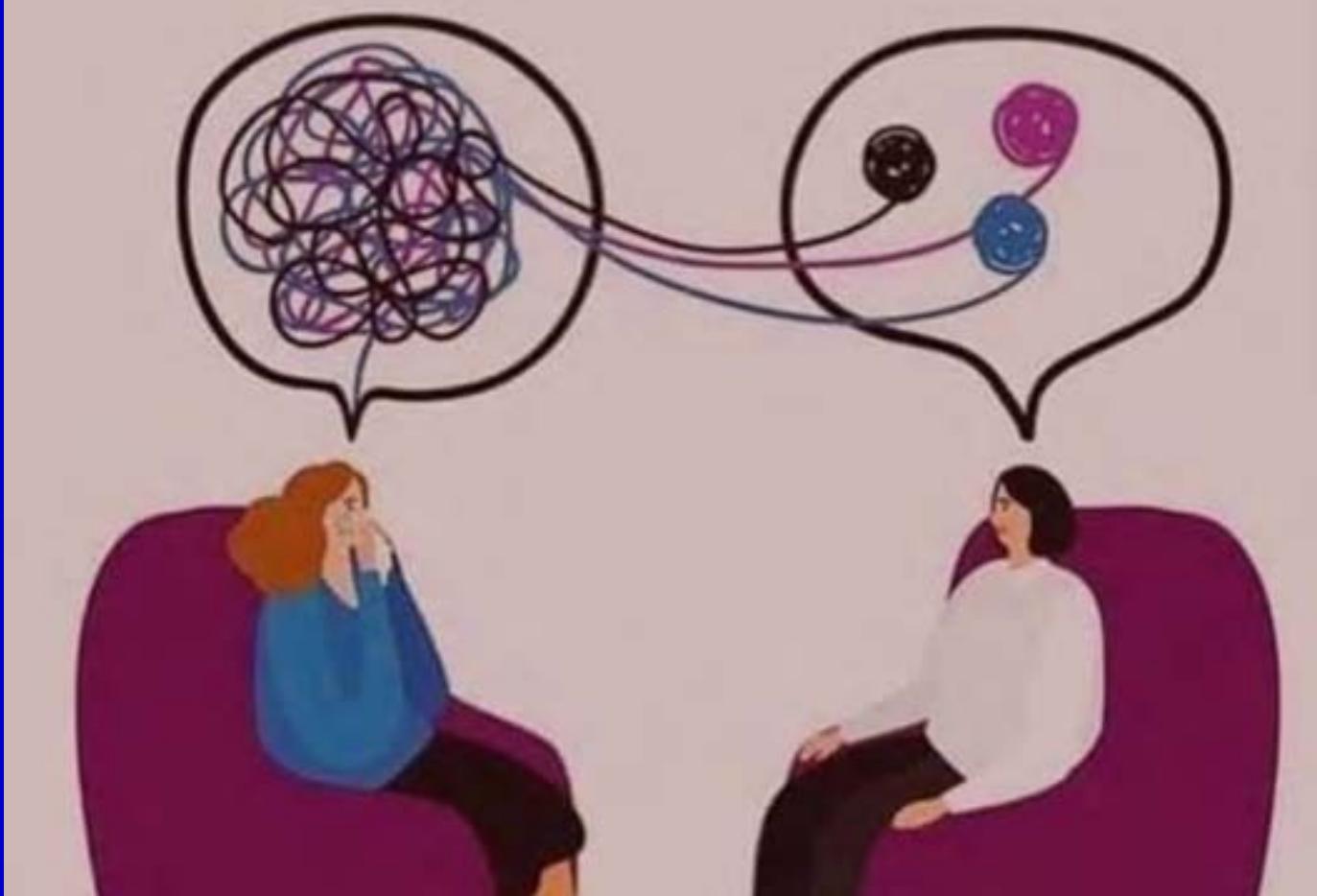
Instrumental Grief

- Experienced in more physical or cognitive ways
- Expression is more physical, cognitive or behavioural
- More thinking than feeling
- Focused on doing and more actively responding to grief

How we cope- *we stay connected*



Self care & Collective Care-including Agencies



Caring for Workers- Structurally

1. Personal care practices:

- Speaking *real*, listening, stress relief, rituals for saying goodbye, encourage peer supports, counseling
- Use workplace supports: training, debriefing, EAP (specialized)

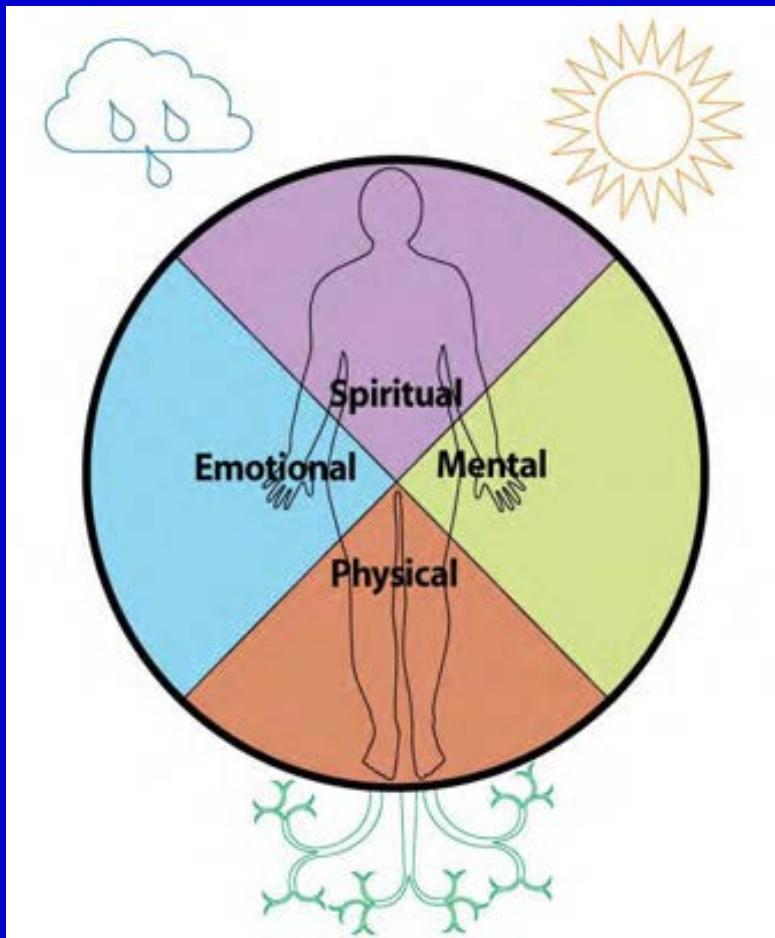
2. Workplace:

- What are the structures in place:
 - death notification protocols;
 - support after critical events;
 - memorials?
- *Informal Debriefing* with peers at work
- *Impact Debriefing* after loss/stressful events
- *Incident Debriefing* after critical incidents
- *Organizational Legacy: how do you remember?*



■ Supports:

- ✓ That offer grief and trauma awareness
- ✓ That acknowledge complex attachments
- ✓ That offer a range of activities for the whole person
- ✓ That provide peer based mutual support groups
- ✓ That invite people to connect with larger meaning & purpose (social justice) activities as part of legacy



A foundational tool



- 1. Informal- *supporting colleagues in effective “discharge” of emotions & coming back into balance*
- 2. Impact – *low impact debriefing to help workers give and receive mutual support*
- 3. Incident – *version of CID: what did we do well? What did we miss? How can we improve our practice?*

Debriefs work because:

They help teams learn from their experiences and self-adjust over time

In a sense, debriefs are *experiential learning accelerators*

Debriefnow.com

They are practices of self and collective care

Group Debriefings not effective

- When there are outstanding grievances
- Team culture is toxic
- When significant organizational change is taking place



Acknowledge Loss & Transition



What are your personal
memorial rituals/practices?
How do You Remember?

Role of rituals

“By doing something concrete and visible, such as engaging in ritual, we can begin to create symbolic mastery over events. Ritual allows a reorganization of community and continuity in a chaotic time.

Collectively, it offers a reassurance that while we cannot control the tragedy itself, we have reasserted control in its aftermath”.

Doka



Saying a Good Goodbye to....

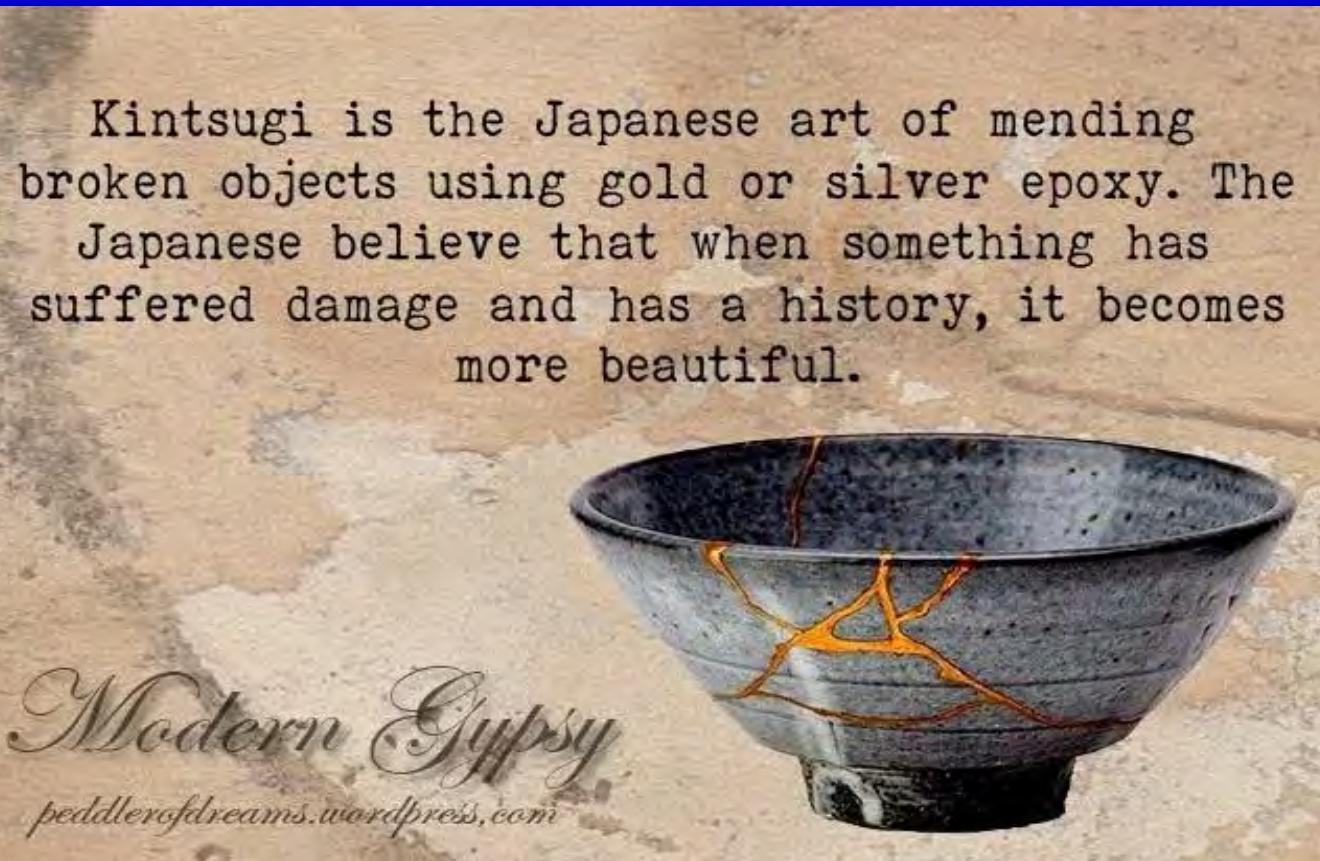


What are your personal, team, agency and Community Goodbyes? How do you Remember? *In remembering others, we remember ourselves ~ who we were with them*



Community memorials

Role of arts-based activities



Kintsugi is the Japanese art of mending broken objects using gold or silver epoxy. The Japanese believe that when something has suffered damage and has a history, it becomes more beautiful.

Body-based practices

A self-care tool for dealing with emotions

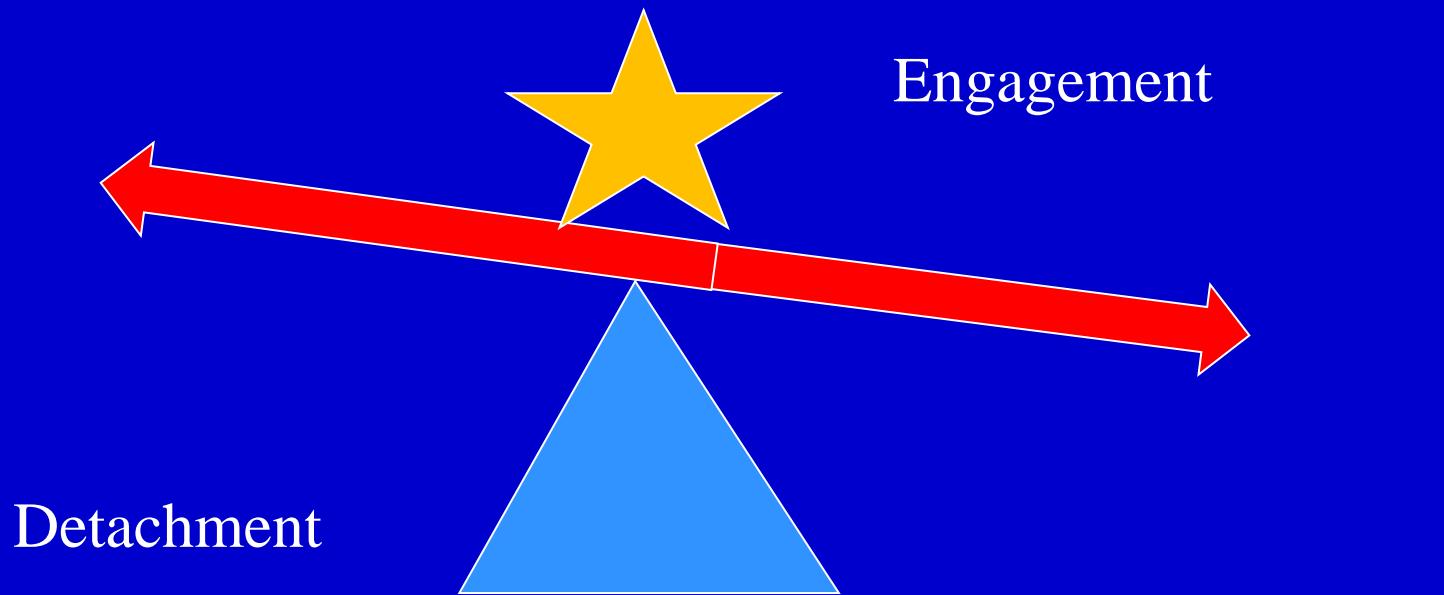
Self-Acupressure

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3-07gPsQK0&t=1s>



Our Smash Room

Your goal: A Zone of Fabulousness (Vikki Reynolds)



Finding Functional Balance and
Zone of connection: collective ethics, collective care & hope

What are you like in your Zone of Fabulousness?





4 minute video Grief support is and isn't

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2zLCCRT-nE&vl=en>

Principles of Emotional Harm Reduction

- ✓ I matter
- ✓ My well being matters
- ✓ It is okay to not be okay
- ✓ And it is okay to be okay
- ✓ I have a right and a responsibility to maintain my vitality
- ✓ I learn from experience
- ✓ I care for others



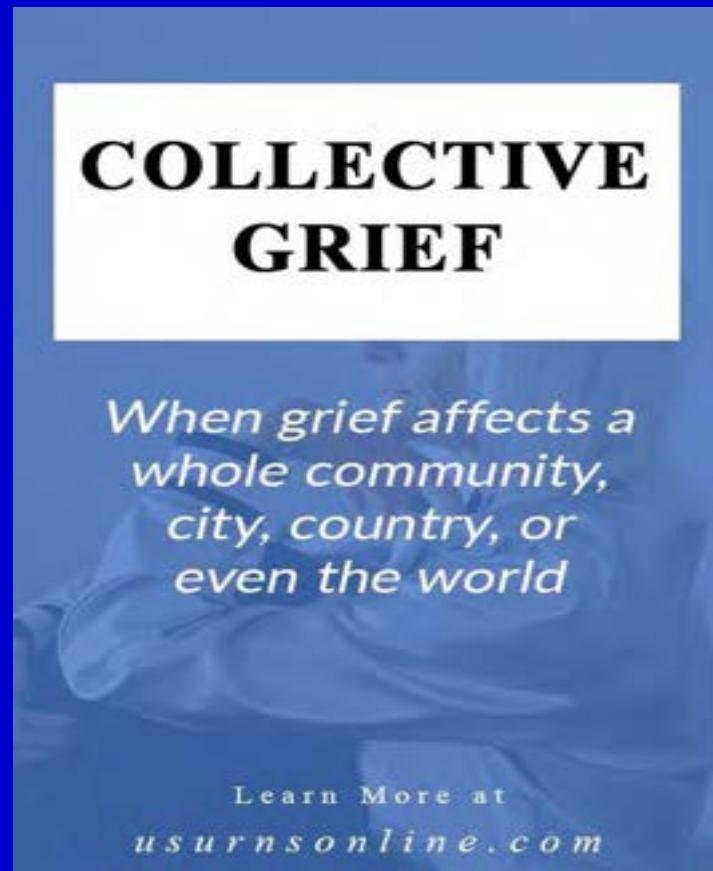
#1. We Tell our Stories

“ If you don’t tell your story,
who will? ”

#2 We make space to hear one another



#3 We acknowledge our individual & collective grief



#4. We honour our fierce commitment to the work & we celebrate any & all successes



Value of Mutual Support



Work mates in AIDS sector since 1985-
Windsor workshop 1994



40 years of working together at lifeeach other's “go to people”

Who are your go-to people?

Our Lives Matter

We come together from the diversity of our grieving,
to gather in the warmth of this community
giving stubborn witness to our belief that
in times of sadness, there is room for laughter.
In times of darkness, there always will be light.

May we hold fast to the conviction
that what we do with our lives matters
and that a caring world is possible after all.



-- M. Maureen Killoran

Personal Memorials & Community Goodbyes



Who are you
Remembering
Today?

Closing Circle



One thing you are taking away?

Collective Care



<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/XLE5EAteXZE> ***

Turtle Youtube
16 seconds

Available from Good Grief Care

www.goodgriefcare.ca/resources





Yvette & Cathy
Good Grief Care Consultants



www.goodgriefcare.ca

