



GRIEF AND LOSS: THE JOURNEY OF HEALING YOUR HEART

**A WEBINAR FOR EMPLOYEES FROM YOUR
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

May 10, 2023

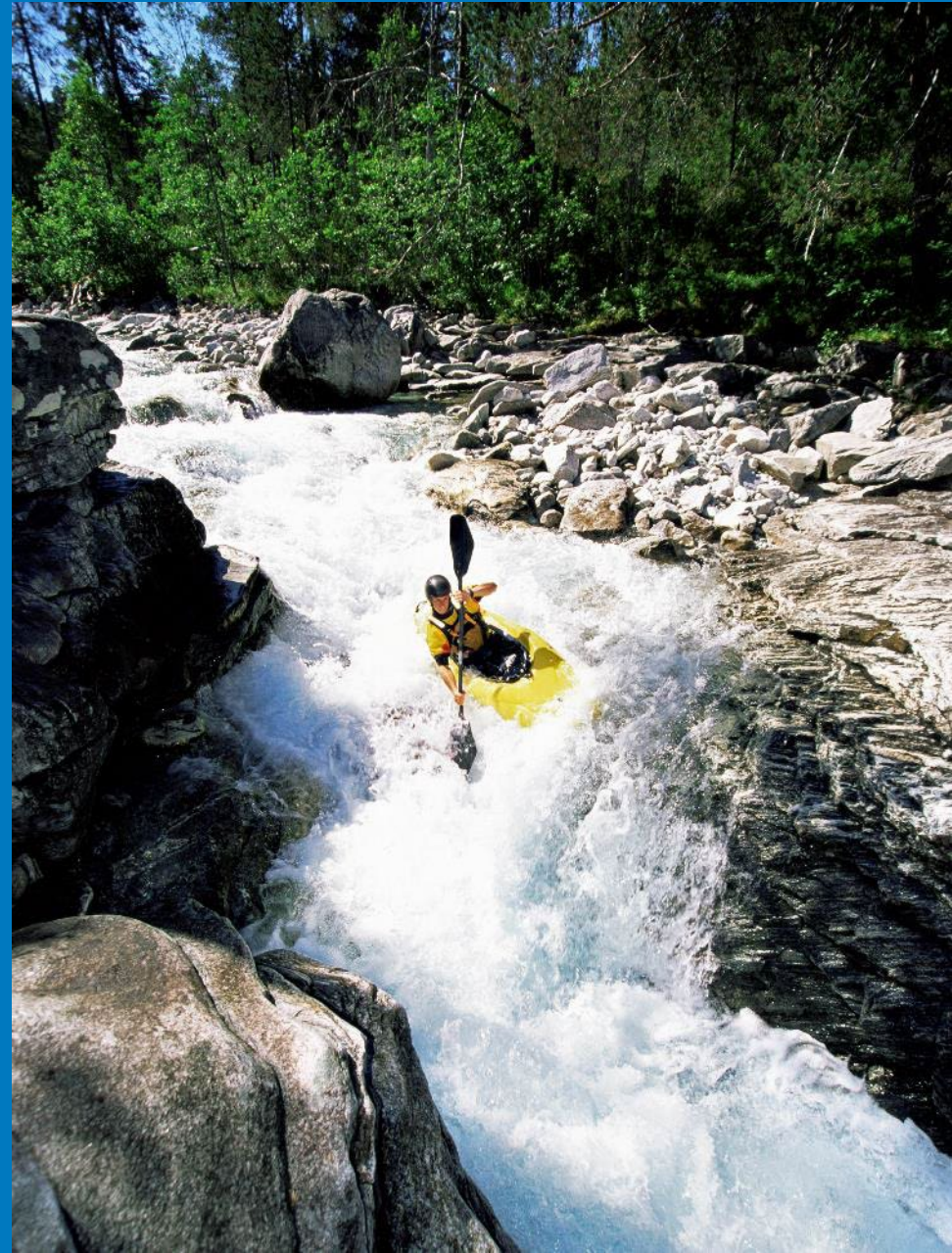
INTRODUCTION

“

“It is not the most intellectual of the species that survives; it is not the strongest that survives; but the species that . . . is able best to adapt and adjust to the changing environment in which it finds itself.”

Charles Darwin

”



OBJECTIVES

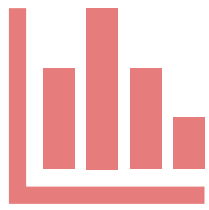
- Define bereavement, grief, and mourning
- Review popular models of grief
- Explain the role of emotions
- Discuss strategies that facilitate the grief process and coping

DEFINITIONS

Bereavement: The state or fact of being deprived of something or someone

Grief: Deep or intense sorrow or distress, especially due to the death of someone

Mourning: The act of sorrowing, a period during which signs of grief are shown



POLL 1

When I picture someone mourning, I picture:

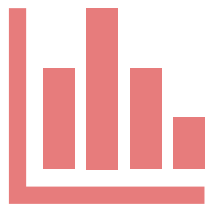
SOURCES OF GRIEF AND LOSS

Examples

- Graduation
- Move/relocation
- Relationship changes
 - New partner/break-up
 - Marriage/divorce
- Having a child
- Changes at work
 - Job loss/promotion
 - Reorganization
 - Retirement



- Financial crises
- Illness and/or caregiving
- Missing the moment when a loved one dies
- Death
 - Of a loved one, pet, or colleague



POLL 2

Healthy grieving the loss of a loved one should last:

SECTION 1

MODELS OF GRIEF

KUBLER-ROSS' 5 STAGES OF GRIEF



Denial

Shock and disbelief that the loss has occurred



Anger

Being furious that someone we love is no longer there



Bargaining

Contemplating what-ifs and ruminating over regrets



Depression

Sadness from the loss



Acceptance

Acknowledging the reality of the loss

BONANNO'S PATTERNS OF BEREAVEMENT

– Chronic or prolonged grief pattern

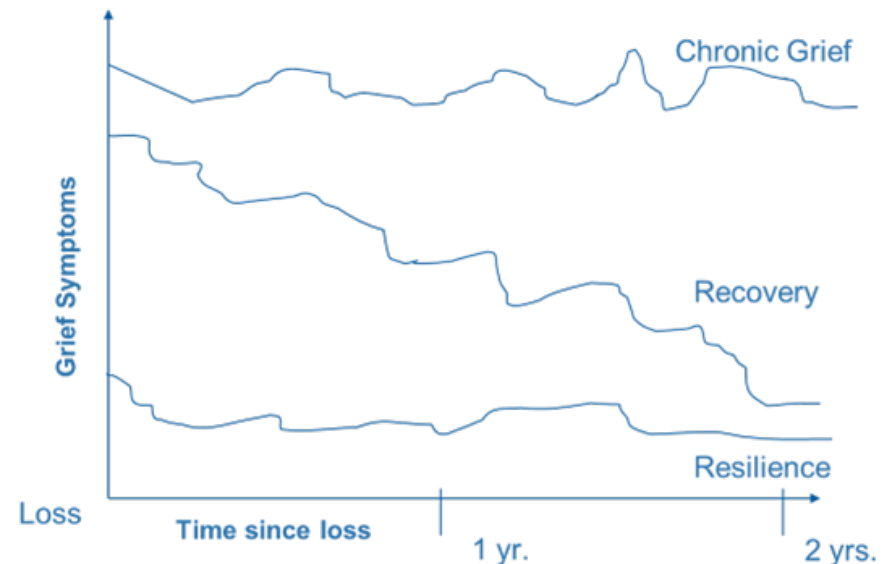
- Ongoing struggle without relief
- Worsens over time

– Recovery pattern

- Intense suffering for a few months to a year
- Gradually recover to feel more like they did, although the hurt is still felt

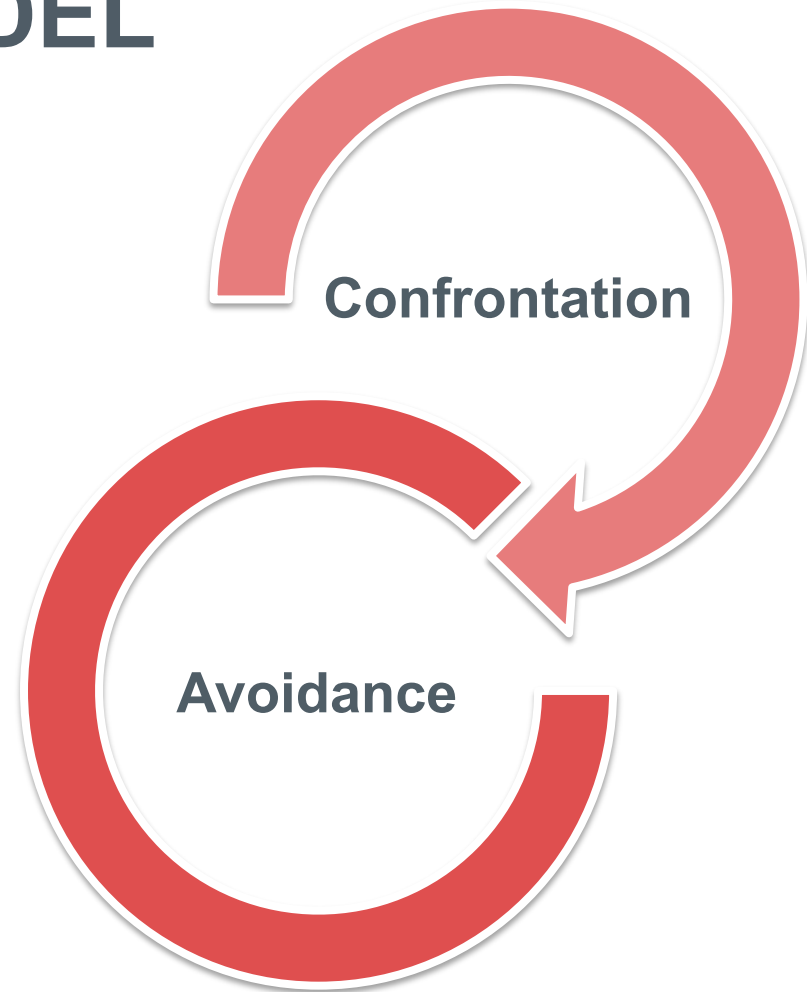
– Resilience pattern

- Acute pain for a few days to weeks, then subsides
- Still care and grieve but can go on successfully with daily life



STROEBE AND SCHUT'S OSCILLATION MODEL

- Theorizes that the bereaved move back and forth between **confronting** grief and **avoiding** grief related tasks
- This **confrontation-avoidance** allows the bereaved to take a break from the stress increasing their drive towards restoration



THE FOUR TASKS OF THE MOURNER



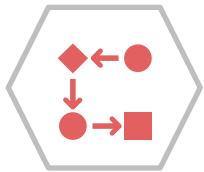
Accept the reality of the loss

No longer fighting against the new reality



Adjust to the world without the deceased

Filling roles left empty by the deceased



Process the pain of grief

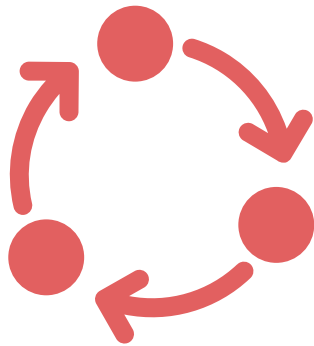
Coping with grief-related emotions such as sadness, anger, and guilt



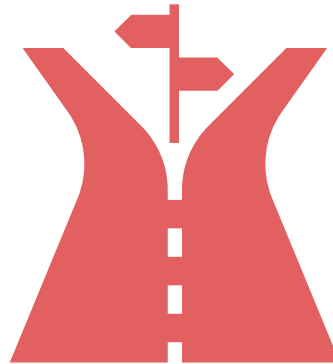
Find a place for the deceased in their emotional life

Feeling connected with their loved one and allowing themselves to continue living and find joy again

WHICH MODEL APPLIES TO YOU?



Models are meant to explain and describe processes



Understanding the path of grief will not speed up the process or make it easier



It is the experience of bereavement and all it entails that leads to healing

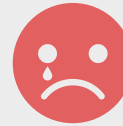
SECTION 2

THE ROLE OF EMOTIONS IN GRIEF

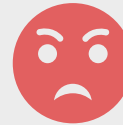
THE ROLE OF EMOTIONS IN GRIEF

Emotions:

- Are necessary for our survival as a species
- Help us adapt to the loss
- Are necessary in order to heal



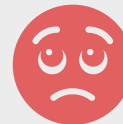
Sadness



Anger

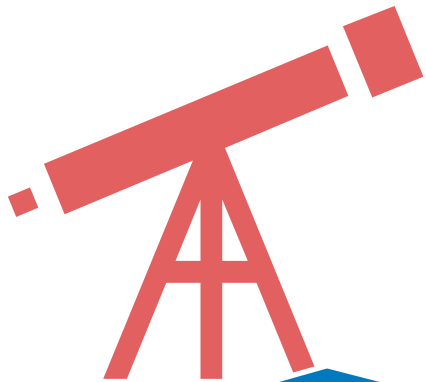


Loneliness

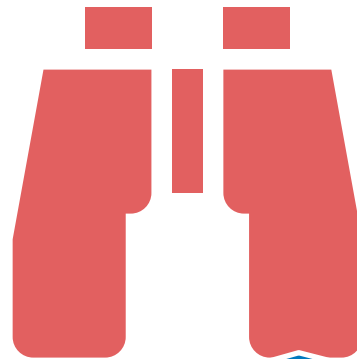


Guilt

THE ROLE OF SADNESS



Sharpens
perceptions

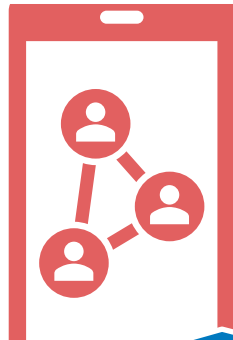


Promotes focus



Reduces bias

THE ROLE OF ANGER



Shifting social relations



The medical system



Insensitive friends and family

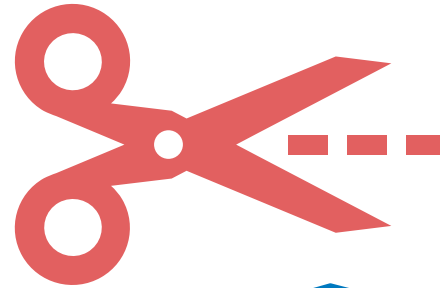


Feeling betrayed by faith

THE ROLE OF LONELINESS



Natural part of grief



Isolation and separation



Being in the world bereft



Feeling abandoned by your loved one

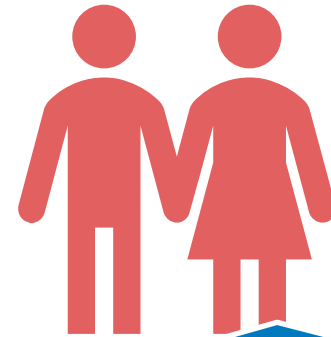
THE ROLE OF GUILT



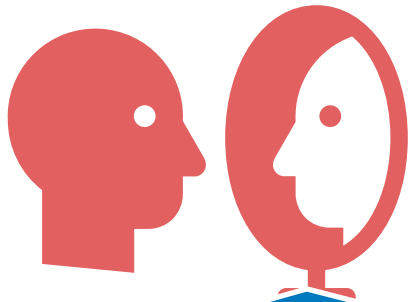
Causation



Moral



Role



Survivor



Grief



Recovery

COPING WITH SADNESS, ANGER, LONELINESS, AND GUILT



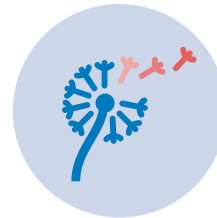
Name the emotions you're feeling



Do something tangible



Normalize your emotions



Explore your spiritual beliefs

SECTION 3

MAKING MEANING AS THE SIXTH STAGE OF GRIEF

MAKING MEANING

“

“In the depths of winter, I finally learned that within me lay an invincible summer.”

Albert Camus

”

- Embrace the potential to live
- Discover and connect to new interpretations of the loss
- Search for meaning to help with suffering and healing

WAYS TO CREATE MEANING

Examples:



Donate money to a foundation important to the deceased



Participate in an activity the deceased loved (e.g., a hobby or pastime)



Make a quilt out of the deceased's clothing



Create a ritual (e.g., light a memorial candle on an anniversary or the deceased's birthday)



Plant a tree or name a star in their honor



Say prayers, do meditations



Meet the recipient of a loved one's organs



Spend time in nature remembering your loved one

GRIEF NEEDS A WITNESS

Feeling validated without judgement in the presence of loved ones

Viewings



Masses

Memorial celebrations



Sitting shiva

Scattering of ashes



Celebrations of life

IS MY GRIEF NORMAL?

Understand that it's a common concern

Revisit the grief models for guidance

Feeling your grief leads to healing

GRIEF VS. DEPRESSION

THEY AREN'T THE SAME

Grief-related sadness ebbs and flows in response to triggers

Sadness felt during grief is not a diagnosable mood disorder

Clinical depression remains constant and intense

SECTION 4

STRATEGIES TO HELP OURSELVES WHEN GRIEVING

STRATEGIES TO HELP OURSELVES WHEN GRIEVING



Trust in the process



Bond with pets



Be physically active



Get sleep



Maintain a healthy diet



Engage in spirituality



Stay social



Mind your health

CONCLUSION



RESOURCES

Books

- ***Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief***
 - D. Kessler, 2019
- ***It's OK that You're Not OK***
 - M. Devine, 2017
- ***The Year of Magical Thinking***
 - J. Didion, 2006

Apps

- Healing with David Kessler
 - grief.com/podcasts
- What's Your Grief?
 - whatsyourgrief.com/grief-podcast

Websites

- American Association of Suicidology
 - suicidology.org
- Elisabeth Kubler-Ross Foundation
 - ekrfoundation.org
- David Kessler
 - grief.com
- Pet Loss Support Page
 - pet-loss.net
- The Compassionate Friends - Support Group
 - compassionatefriends.org

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