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THE CENTRE
FOR AWARENESS
& RESPONSE TO
END OF LIFE

Bereavement, grief and loss: supporting yourself and others

One Croydon Training Programme

Loss, grief and bereavement can be...

Sensitive topics

Check in

Name...

My role ...

Right now I'm feeling...

At the end of this session I would like to feel...



Session Agenda

What we will cover today

- An Introduction to Loss
- Supporting someone through loss
- Tender conversations
- Looking after ourselves



Group Agreement

- Allow silence when someone else is talking
- Respect it if somebody does not want to participate in that moment
 - Actively listen
- Please be sensitive to other peoples stories and experiences
 - Please be aware of language and terminology
 - Respect Confidentiality

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An Introduction to loss

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Loss

A loss can be a lot of things...

- Emotional
- Psychological
- Physical
- Spiritual

And it can be...

- Difficult to deal with
- Complex
- A relief
- Confusing



Loss

- Any loss can cause grief
- Loss includes a lot of different things including: relationship, health, income, family, friend, faith, home, employment..
- Loss causes different reactions in different people
- Loss is an inevitable part of life-everyone will experience it in some form

Grief

- Grief is our experience following a loss (of any kind)
- Grief is a feeling or emotion felt when we lose something
- The feeling of grief is often extreme after the loss of someone and whilst we learn to cope with the loss
- Grief is a normal and healthy response to Loss
- There is no right or wrong way to grieve

Bereavement

- Bereavement is a specific type of grief related to someone's death
- Bereavement is a state of being in grief
- Bereavement comes in different stages (the grief curve is often referenced)
- Bereavement process involves accepting the loss and learning to continue in life whilst carrying it-often however, the grief doesn't get smaller or larger-we just learn to live with it and around it

What do you think are common emotions and physical sensations that people experience after a loss?

Please may I ask you to write in the chatbox...

Cruse Bereavement table of responses



- **Disbelief**
- **Confusion**
- **Preoccupation**
- **Less preoccupations**
- **Sense of presence**

Cruse Bereavement table of responses

Behaviours



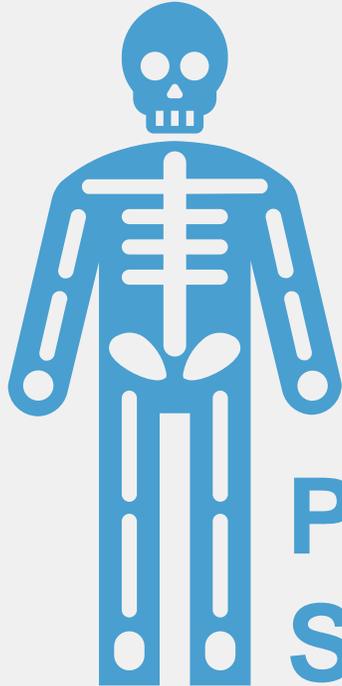
- Sleep disturbance
- Dreams/nightmares
- Loss of appetite
 - Searching
- Absent mindedness
 - Crying
 - Hyperactivity
- Avoid reminders
- Treasuring objects

Cruse Bereavement table of responses



- Sadness
- Relief
- Anger
- Helplessness
- Anxiety
- Numbness
- Shock
- Loneliness
- Guilt
- Tiredness
- Worthlessness
- Jealousy
- Yearning
- Fear
- Depersonalisation
- Emancipation

Cruse Bereavement table of responses



Physical Sensations

- Hollowness in stomach
 - Tightness in chest
 - Breathlessness
 - Lack of energy
 - Dry mouth
- Sensory Oversensitivity
- Increase in some traits
 - Pain

A lot of people will experience something called secondary loss after someone dies

Secondary Loss includes:

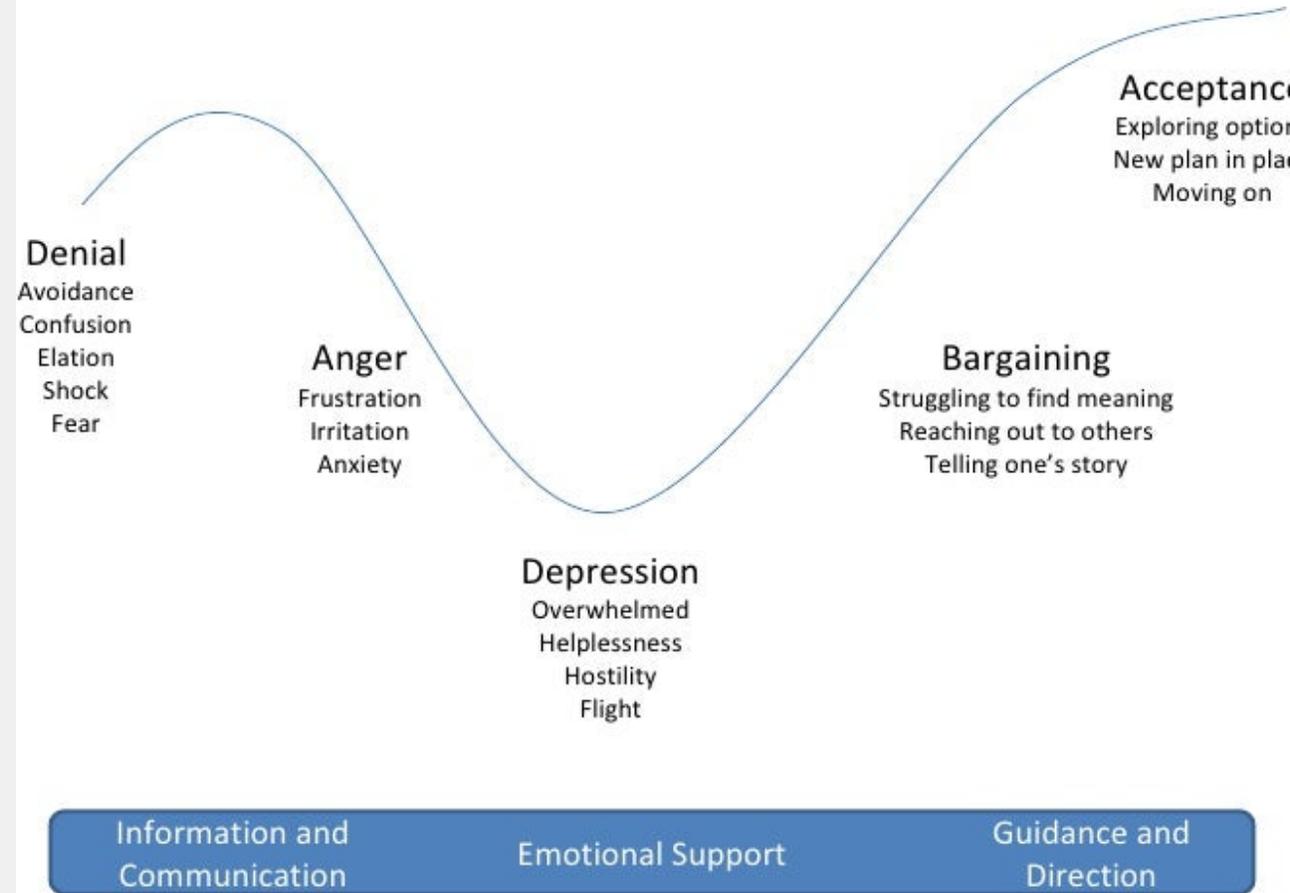
- **Loss of identity**
- **Loss/change in relationship**
- **Loss of home**
- **Loss of memories**
- **Loss of finances**
- **Loss of friendships**
- **Loss of traditions**
- **Loss of faith**
- **Loss of hope, dreams, plans**



What does grief look like?

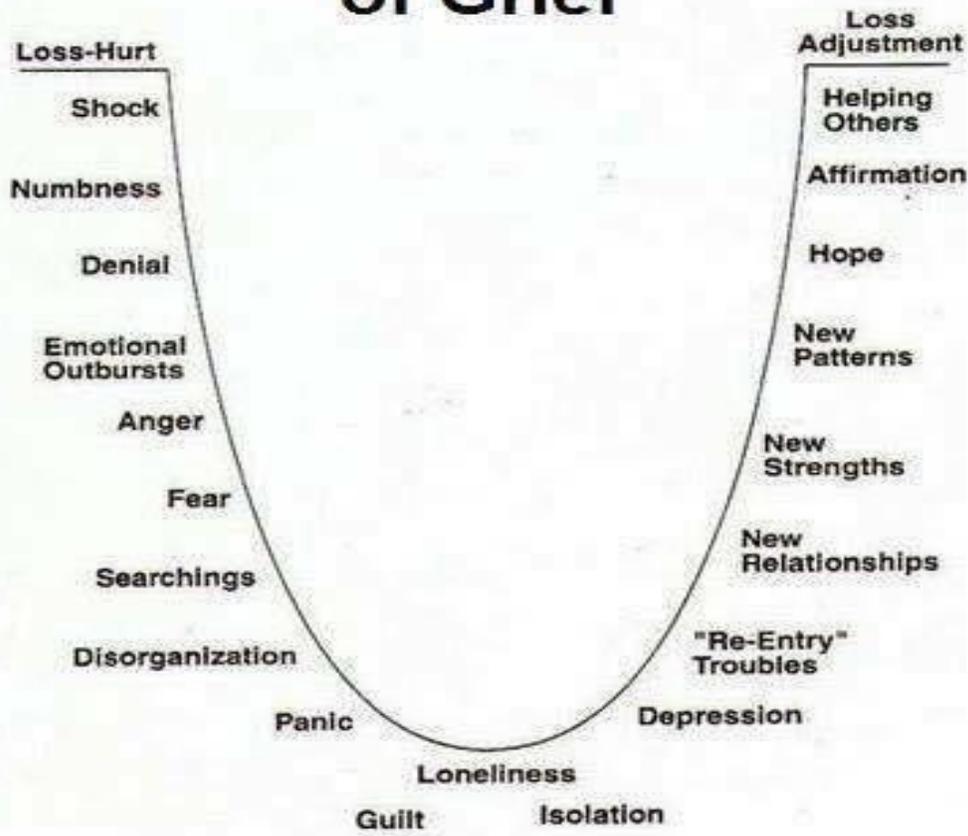
- The grief curve is typically what was 'taught' in terms of understanding grief and how it presents
- However, there is no sequential order of grief- how and when people grieve will differ
- There are likely to be some of these aspects that we are familiar with and recognise in grief and loss

Kübler-Ross Grief Cycle

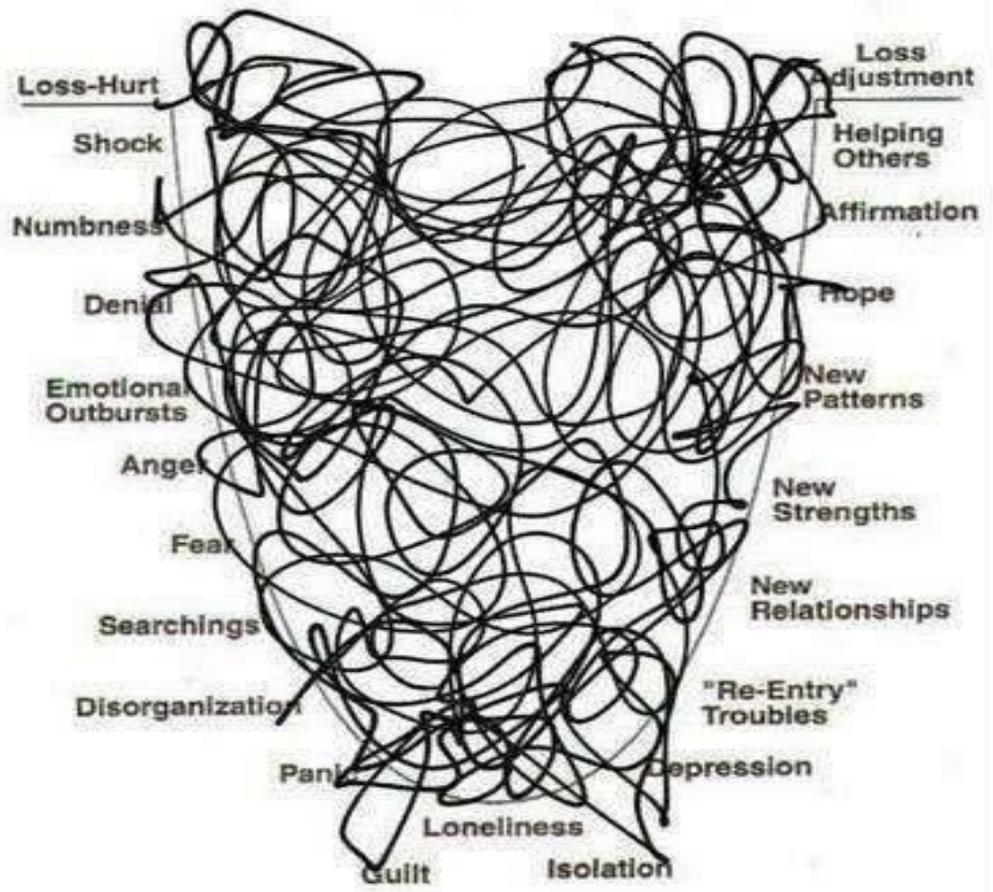


In reality it looks more like this...

Textbook Stages of Grief



Reality of Grief



A visual model of grief – the Tonkin Model



People tend to believe that grief shrinks over time



What really happens is that we grow around our grief

Common types of loss and the differences

- **Anticipatory Loss-** Grief that is felt in anticipation of someone's death-often starts when someone receives a diagnosis
- **Secondary Loss** – Losses that happen after someone dies (such as a loss of community, worldview, faith, sense of self, finances etc..)
- **Ambiguous Loss-**Happens when you're grieving someone who is still living.
- **Cumulative Loss-** The experience of suffering a new loss before you have a chance to grieve the first loss, or experiencing multiple losses in quick succession

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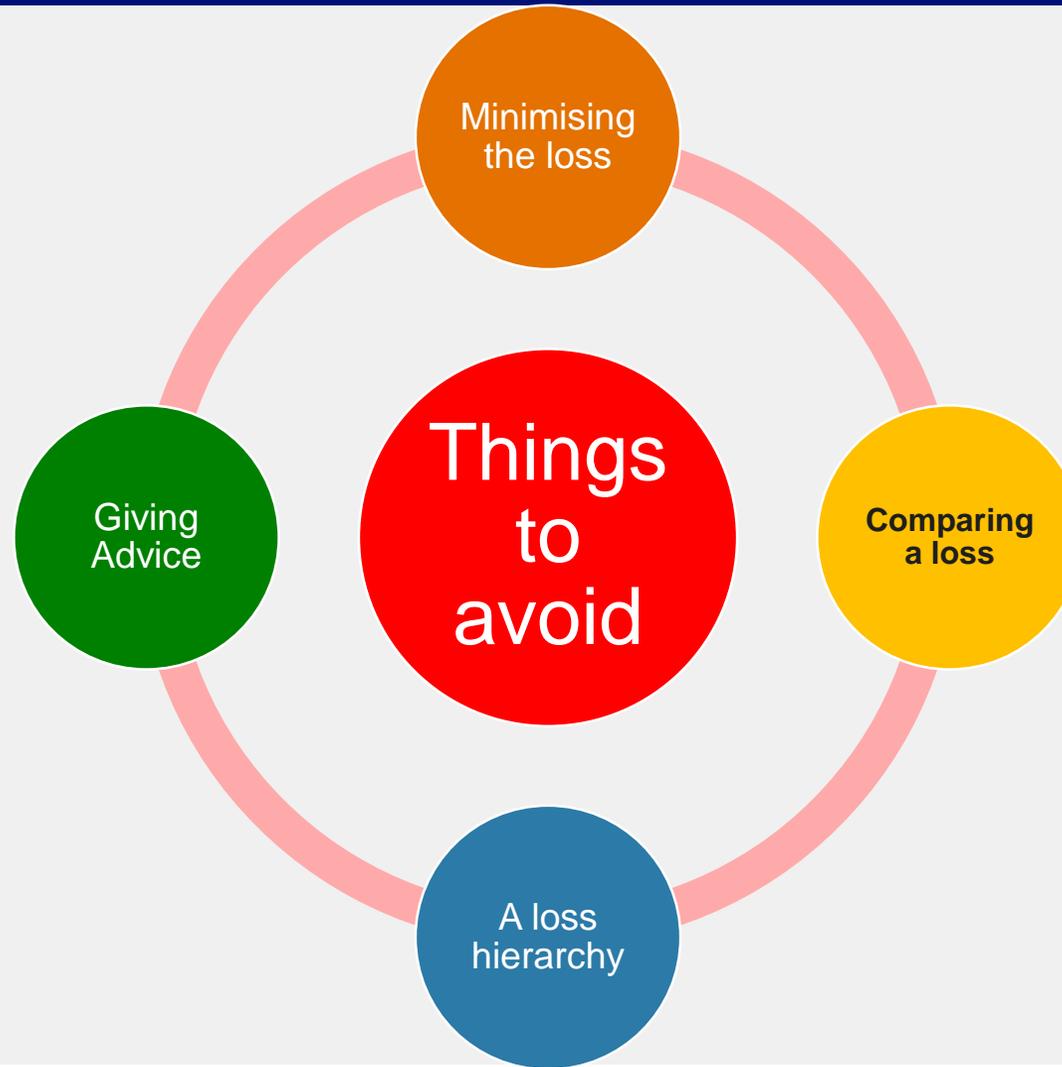
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Supporting someone through a loss

What to avoid when supporting someone through a loss



Common statements that can be unhelpful

Soon you
will move
on

Stay
strong!

Be grateful
for what you
have

They
wouldn't
want you to
be sad

They're in a
better place

Everything
happens
for a
reason

Some things to be mindful of..

Do's	Don'ts
Respect their choices	Resort to platitudes (everything happens for a reason, they're in a better place...)
Give someone space to feel whatever it is they need to feel	Expect people to "get over it"
Include others in your plans	Ignore a loss
Encourage them to go out	Avoid talking about the loved one who died
Offer to help out with practical things or take me out for a walk	Tell people not to cry
Respect someone's choice if they don't want to talk about them	Avoid them because you're awkward
Mention the person who died and ask questions	Take things personally (e.g. if someone is behaving in a certain way)

Common reasons why we might not actually be helping

We know what helped us and think it will help someone else

We might find certain beliefs we hold are comforting to us (but they may not be to others!)

We may have our own values that we live by but that don't align with somebody else's values

We might not know what to say so fill silences out of awkwardness

What we can do to support

Give time and space if they need it

Let them know you are thinking about them and are there to listen when they are ready

Talk about their person

Reach out even if they don't respond immediately

Things you may hear people saying...

- When will I stop grieving?
- I think there's something wrong with me as I feel relief that X died...
- I don't think it's helpful to talk about my grief/loss. I need strategies to move on
- I should feel "normal" by now, shouldn't I?
- I feel depressed do you think I should ask my GP for antidepressants?
- I can't seem to move on...When will my life return to 'normal'?
- It sounds crazy, but I still talk to them/her/him.
- When will I stop feeling sad/depressed/angry?
- I don't want to live without them/her/him.

Have you ever...

...avoided a conversation because you thought:

OH NO! THIS IS GOING TO BE TOUGH AND I WON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY!

Have you ever...

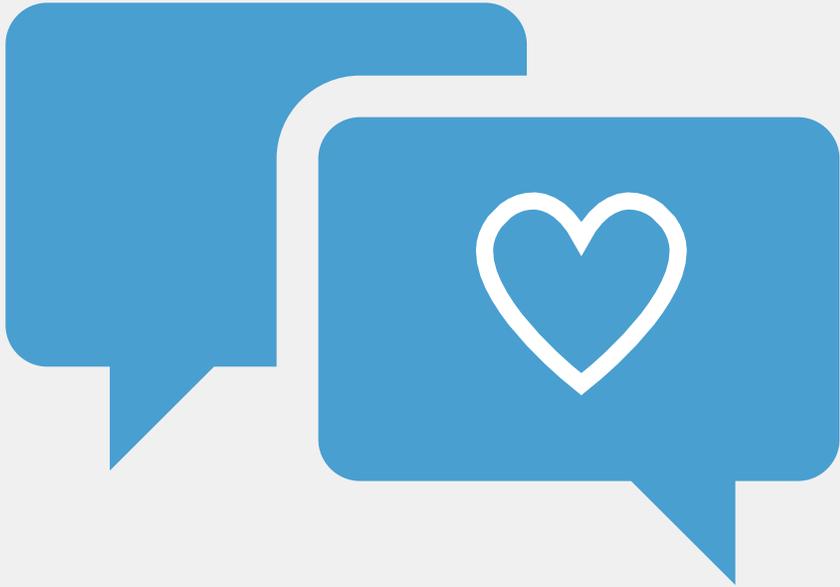
...had the feeling that someone avoided a conversation with you because you were emotional or grieving or bereaved?

Have you ever...

...felt frustrated when you want to talk about something and the person kept suggesting solutions to the situation while you just want to talk about how you were feeling?

Or said: “at least...” “look at the bright side...”

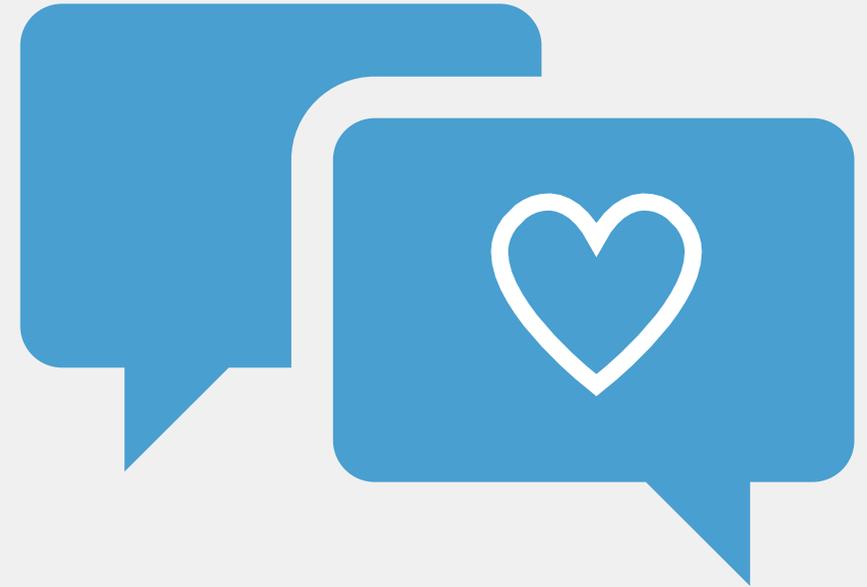
Tender conversations and the power of listening



- Have you ever...
- Tender conversations concept
- Why we believe these conversations are important for everyone?

Key principles to have tender conversations

- Invite, don't insist
- Be curious and not opinionated
- Sit with distress without trying to make it better
- Support, don't fix
- Listen



Empathy vs Sympathy

Self-care

What are your self-care strategies?

**Self-care can be many things:
physical, psychological,
emotional, spiritual, professional**

Rituals and continuing bonds

Check in with yourself

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