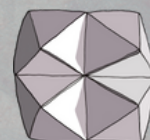


# SHOWING UP for GRIEF

## Grief knowledge for everyday use

Simple tips that normalise grief as a natural part of life.



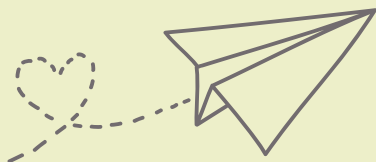
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# SHOWING UP for GRIEF

Grief knowledge for everyday use

Grief is an unavoidable and natural process that highlights our shared humanity! And yet we can still be uncertain, uncomfortable and cautious in our responses to those grieving. So many people end up grieving in the shadows, quietly and without the simple, everyday recognition, care and support they would benefit from.

**COMMON EXPERIENCES OF GRIEF:** Relieved, glad suffering is over, deep sadness, withdrawal, anger, hard to sleep, hard to concentrate, hard to get back to work/housework/ school, thoughts about how the person died, talking to the person, setting a plate at the dinner table for them, regret, guilt, wishing they could change it, fatigue, weeping, shock, numbness, avoidance, loneliness, despair, confusion, poor memory, panic, sobbing, getting on with life, laughing, appetite loss, detached, strong sense of justice, restlessness, irritability, strong sense of peace, talking about the person a lot...



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Take note! Reflective exercises:

1. How is grief expressed in YOUR community?
  2. What helpful or unhelpful experiences have you had with grief?
  3. Why is it important to you to show up?
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# WHAT IS GRIEF?

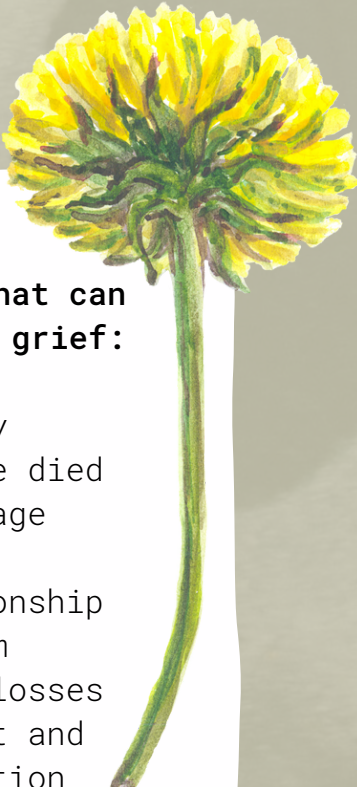
**Bereavement** is our experience of loss, the experience of being deprived of something or someone that you were connected to, loved or were attached to, usually due to a death.

**Grief** is the reaction to loss – our thoughts, feelings, physical reactions. Our social, cultural and community experiences, and spiritual or religious experiences. We can grieve in response to death, but to other losses in life as well.

**Loss** is the experience of having something or someone leave or be taken away from you, a feeling of grief when something is gone. An example of loss is when someone dies, when you lose a job or when your pet dies.

**Anticipatory grief** is a feeling of grief that can occur before an impending loss, typically the death of someone due to an illness, but it can also be in response to the potential loss of independence and abilities.

**Disenfranchised grief** is grief that a person experiences when they incur a loss that is not, or cannot be openly acknowledged, publicly mourned or socially supported, such as after a termination in pregnancy, or death of animal companion. Suicide grief can often go unacknowledged.



## Factors that can influence grief:

- The way someone died
- Their age
- Your relationship to them
- Other losses
- Support and connection
- Knowing it is "normal"

## SHOWING UP for GRIEF

# SKILLS to practice

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*"When I see my neighbour walking down the street, I feel awkward and quickly duck inside so she doesn't see me. She keeps telling me about her Mum dying in the hospital and I just don't know what to say to her."*

**SELF KNOWLEDGE:** Part of being a good supporter in grief is knowing how to identify and understand our own

- thoughts,
- feelings and
- behaviours.

**Self Awareness** is about knowing who we are. What energises or motivates me? What upsets me? What are my values?

**Self Reflection** is the practice of checking in with ourselves. How am I feeling? What is this reaction I am having to what that person said? What is going on for me right now?

**Self Care** is the practice of looking after ourselves. Attending to our values, concerns, needs etc. When we feel refreshed, congruent, we do a better job of helping others.



### ACTIVE LISTENING IS KEY:

Listening to understand versus listening to respond.

### USING COMPASSIONATE STATEMENTS:

**Empathetic** "I can see how difficult this is for you"

**Validating** "that is such a common experience"

**Exploratory** "Can you tell me more about that?"



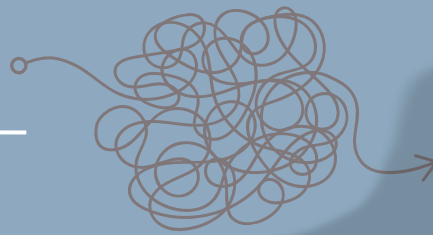


Grief knowledge for everyday use

# 'MODELS' of GRIEF

**Learning about widely accepted models of grief provides us with a map to guide us in what to expect with grief and how to support each other.** There are common threads in all these models that reveal; 1. there are no timeframes for grieving, 2. everyone grieves in their own way and 3. there are many individual and cultural differences.

Many of us have been taught that we grieve in 5 neat stages, when in reality it is more like this...



## HELPERS OF GRIEF (BASED ON THE TEAR MODEL)

We tend to benefit from having *opportunities* and *support* to experience some of the following 'tasks' when we are grieving:

Having support and company to **ACCEPT** the reality of the loss; using the person's name; viewing their body, understanding how someone died...

Opportunities to **EXPERIENCE** the pain of loss; looking at photos together, crying, talking about the person...

**ADJUSTING** to the new reality with your acknowledgement and presence; this may mean learning new skills, moving house, making new friends...

**RE-INVESTING** in the future; time and support to find an ongoing connection with the deceased while embarking on a new life.

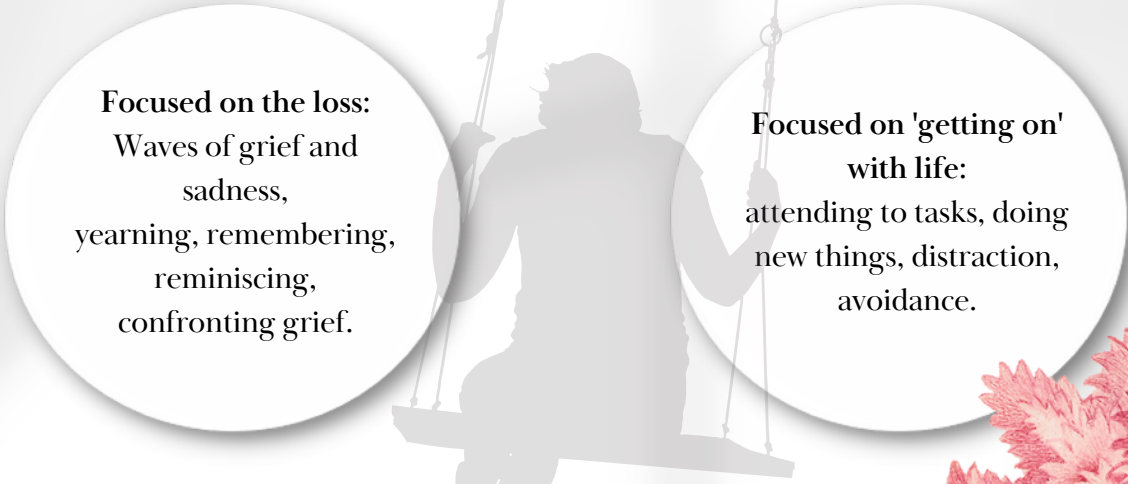
### CONTINUING BONDS

Cultivating an ongoing relationship with the person can be very helpful. Thinking about and remembering them, talking to them and wondering what they would do in a situation can support us in growing around grief.

## Grief knowledge for everyday use

### DUAL PROCESS OF GRIEF

Oscillating between the “doing” and the “feeling” is very common. How would it be if we stayed in one process or the other all of the time??? Exhausting! As we oscillate, we begin to integrate our grief.



**Focused on the loss:**  
Waves of grief and sadness, yearning, remembering, reminiscing, confronting grief.

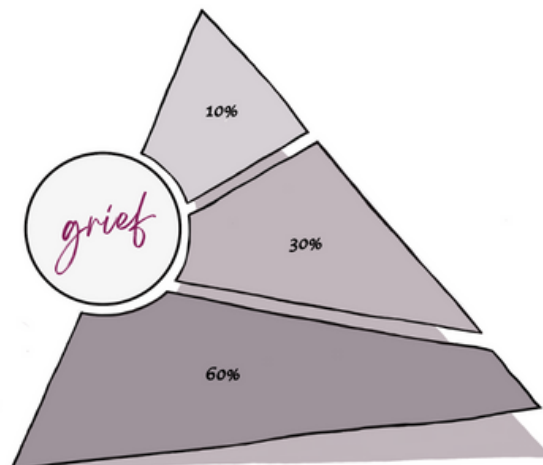
**Focused on 'getting on' with life:**  
attending to tasks, doing new things, distraction, avoidance.

### COMPLICATED GRIEF

Persistent regret or guilt that is directed towards your self, a deep sadness that won't let up, a prolonged avoidance of the reality, no relief from sharing stories and pain.

### TRUTH IS

We all need the support from family, friends and other people around us to carry our grief, and for 60% of us, it's ALL we need! 30% of people will need a little extra support from bereavement groups, volunteer services etc. For 10% of people their grief is going to require the support of a qualified counsellor or bereavement specialist.





## PUTTING IT ALL INTO PRACTICE

People in grief often say things like...

*"When will the grief go away?"*

*"I can't imagine my life without them."*

*"I can't eat or sleep – I feel like I'm losing my mind."*

*"I'm so tired."*

*"I can't stop to think about my grief, or I'll fall apart."*

*"This is not real; I cannot believe it."*

*"How will I ever be able to work or just be normal again?"*

...knowing now about what is common and helpful, about contemporary models of grief and factors that can influence us, how can you **show up** to support your friends, families, neighbours, colleagues etc when they are experiencing loss and bereavement?

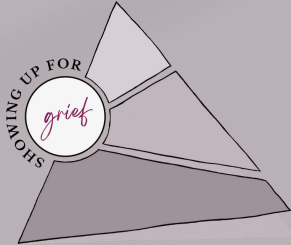
Who can you practice active listening skills with, and compassionate statements, will you reflect differently upon your own experiences now?



**Take note! Reflective exercises:**

1. What will you do differently now?!
2. What do you think your next steps could be to *show up* for someone in grief?





# SHOWING UP for GRIEF

## Grief knowledge for everyday use

Simple tips that normalise grief as a natural part of life.

Showing Up for Grief is the sister project to the Bereavement Companions Program developed through an International collaboration between Mission Better Tomorrow and Institute of Palliative Medicine in Kerala, India, and the Death Literacy Institute in Australia. While rolling out here in Australia, India and Bangladesh, it is being adapted for Thailand too.

### CONTACT US

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