

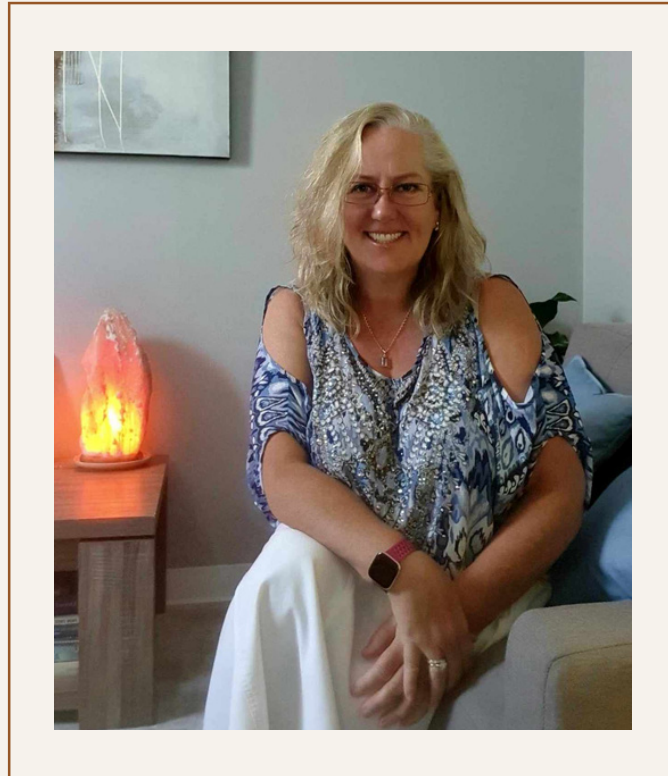
GRIEF AND LOSS TOOLKIT



ZAR WELLNESS
EMPOWERING MINDS
INSPIRING CHANGE



ZAR Wellness Counselling



MARYANNE ZARTH

www.zarwellness.com.au



My name is Maryanne and I am a Registered Counsellor, based in Mooloolaba on the Sunshine Coast, QLD.

At some stage in life we face challenges or difficulties which can leave us feeling overwhelmed, stressed, lost and/or alone. I am passionate about helping people, and by drawing upon my own lived experiences, professional experience, and knowledge, my goal is to help people find their inner strength and develop coping strategies to regain control, their sense of self and to live life to the fullest.



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ZAR WELLNESS

WELCOME

I love what I do and I take great pride in the quality of my services. ZAR Wellness is owner-managed and driven by a strong passion to help people.

I know how difficult it can be to take that step to see someone, and yes, I've been there and sat in the counselling chair so I have appreciation for what it's like and what it takes to take that first step.

I hold a safe space for my clients. Please know that I am non-judgmental, approachable and down to earth. My main focus is to make sure you feel comfortable, heard and understood. Together we will identify your goals and define a path forward.

Maryanne Zarth



INTRO+DUCTION+

“If there ever comes a day when we can’t be together, keep me in your heart, I’ll stay there forever”

WINNIE THE POOH



GRIEF AND LOSS

Grief and Loss are related concepts, but they are not the same thing. They are often used interchangeably, but there are distinctions between the two.

Grief is universal, but it is also very personal and unique to each individual. Everyone will encounter grief, but no two people will grieve the same way.

My hope is that this Grief Self-Help Toolkit will help you navigate your way through your grief.

WHAT IS GRIEF?

Grief is the emotional and psychological response to loss. Grief refers to the natural and often intense reaction we experience with our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours connected to the loss of something important or someone significant.

- Grief encompasses a wide range of emotions including sadness, anger, guilt, shock, confusion, and even relief. These emotions can be both intense and fluctuating.
- Grief is a process that people go through as they come to terms with the impact of the loss they have experienced in their lives. It can involve various stages, such as denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance, although not everyone experiences these states in the same way or order.
- Grief is not only an emotional and psychological experience but also one that can have significant impact on your physical well-being. The mind and body are intricately connected and when you're grieving, the emotional and psychological toll can manifest in various physical ways such as Fatigue, Sleep Disturbances, Physical Aches and Pains, Weakened Immune System, Gastrointestinal Issues, Respiratory Problems, Appetite Changes, Cardiovascular Effects.



WHAT IS LOSS?

Loss, in the context of grief and mourning, refers to the experience of being deprived of someone or something significant that held meaning and value in one's life.

- Loss can have a profound and multi-faceted impact on a person's life, affecting them emotionally, psychologically, socially and even physically. The extent and nature of these impacts can vary widely depending on the type of loss, the individual's personality, coping mechanisms, and support system.
- Loss can result from various circumstances, including death, the end of a relationship (such as divorce or separation), job loss, a serious illness or disability, the loss of a pet, loss of a friendship, loss of a home, loss of reputation, loss of belief system, a major life transition, loss of independence, addiction, loss of ability to have a child, miscarriage, global pandemic, loss of safety, loss of a dream, plus the loss of cherished possessions or a sense of security.
- Loss can be tangible (e.g., the physical absence of a person or thing) or intangible (e.g., the loss of trust, innocence, or a sense of purpose).

WHAT IS MOURNING?

Mourning is the outward expression of a person's private grief, usually informed by their religious, cultural, spiritual and societal beliefs and practices. It is a therapeutic process that pays tribute to the loss, symbolises the mourner's thoughts and feelings, and provides structure to their grief.

FOUR TASKS OF MOURNING

Psychologist William Worden proposed that grief does not progress through stages. He suggested that in order for someone to go through the grieving process, they must engage in four tasks.

1. **ACCEPT** the reality of the loss
2. **EXPERIENCE** and **PROCESS** the grief and pain
3. **ADJUST** to a world without the deceased
4. Find a way to **MAINTAIN A CONNECTION** to the person who died and **MOVE FORWARD** with your life

EXERCISE - Write about what each of the tasks might look like for you.

Accepting the reality of your loss:

Experiencing and process your loss

FOUR TASKS OF MOURNING

Adjusting to your loss

**Maintaining a connection to the deceased while moving forward
with your life**

***“Grief is like the ocean; it comes on waves ebbing and flowing.
Sometimes the water is calm, and sometimes it is overwhelming.
All we can do is learn to swim. - Vicki Harrison***

STAGES OF GRIEF

STAGE OF GRIEF DENIAL

"This isn't really happening."

Refusing
No
 Confused
SHOCKED Disbelieving
 DISCREDITING
 Disputing
OMG

COPING WITH LOSS WORKBOOK

STAGE OF GRIEF ANGER

"This shouldn't be happening to me!"

FURIOUS
 Disappointed Enraged
OUTRAGED DISTRESSED
 INFURIATED Disillusioned **Bitter**
UPSET
 Livid
 Horrified
 Hostile
RESENTFUL
 Spiteful Disturbed
Irritated

STAGE OF GRIEF DEPRESSION

"Everything is hopeless."

SAD Mournful
 Heartsick Inconsolable
HEARTBROKEN Cynical
 Morbid **SOMBER** DEVASTATED **HOPELESS**
 DESPONDANT Crushed
MELANCHOLY **BEREAVED** GRIM
 Bleak
 Despairing
Dejected
 Grief-stricken
Troubled
 Sorrowful
 SHAKEN

STAGE OF GRIEF BARGAINING

"I'll do anything!"

PLEASE
please

STAGE OF GRIEF ACCEPTANCE

"This is my reality. I choose to accept it and move forward."

peace
 breathe **serenity** **ACCEPTANCE**
 QUIET
calm
 → believe →

STAGES OF GRIEF

The Kubler-Ross Model

DENIAL

THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING
THERE MUST BE A MISTAKE

Individuals may refuse to accept the fact that the loss occurred.

ANGER

An individual may become angry at themselves or others following a loss

WHY IS THIS HAPPENING TO ME?
WHY - THEY WERE SO SELFISH

BARGAINING

I WON'T DO THAT AGAIN
I WILL STOP DRINKING

Individuals may refuse to accept the fact that the loss occurred to avoid the grief

DEPRESSION

The individual may isolate themselves and spend time crying and grieving. Depression is a precursor to acceptance.

WHAT'S THE POINT OF GOING ON AFTER THIS LOSS?

ACCEPTANCE

IT'S GOING TO BE OK

The individual understands the situation and has come to accept their loss, although they may still be in pain. Resumption of normal life activities

STAGES OF GRIEF

The Five Stages - denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance are a part of the framework that makes up our learning to live with our loss. They are tools to help us frame and identify what we may be feeling. - Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

- DENIAL
- ANGER
- BARGAINING
- DEPRESSION
- ACCEPTANCE

EXERCISE - Which of the 5 stages of grief have you experienced? check off each stage and then write about your experience with each stage.

DENIAL:

ANGER:

STAGES OF GRIEF

BARGAINING:

DEPRESSION:

ACCEPTANCE:

WHAT IS BEREAVEMENT?

Bereavement refers to the period of grief and mourning following a death. It can feel like time is standing still for the bereaved person as they get caught up in memories of their loved one rather than looking to a future without them.

PHYSICAL SENSATIONS

In addition to the emotions associated with grief and loss, there are also physical sensations that can happen during the grieving process.

Don't ignore your feelings hoping they will go away.

Pay attention to you - what you are feeling and what you need so you can take good care of yourself before physical symptoms appear.

COMMON PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:

- Emptiness in the pit of your stomach
- Tightness in chest and throat
- Muscle aches and pains
- Sleep disturbance
- Gastrointestinal distress
- Weakened immune system
- Shortness of breath
- Lack of energy
- Dry mouth
- Headaches
- Appetite changes
- Dizziness and faintness

TYPES OF GRIEF

- **Normal Grief:** also known as uncomplicated grief or typical grief, refers to the natural and expected response that individuals have to a significant loss. Grief is a universal experience, and it is a process that people go through as they adjust to life changes brought about by loss. It is crucial to understand that there is no singular, "normal" way to grieve, as the experience varies widely among individuals.
- **Absent Grief:** refers to a situation in which an individual does not display the expected or typical signs of grief following a significant loss. They show no feelings of grief or mourning, however, this lack of visible grieving does not necessarily mean that the person is not experiencing grief, rather, they may be expressing it in ways that are less apparent to others.
- **Complicated Grief:** also known as Prolonged Grief Disorder. Some individuals may experience an extended and intense form of grief that persists over an extended period, hindering their ability to resume normal life. Complicated grief may involve intense longing, preoccupation with the deceased, and difficulty accepting the loss.
- **Disenfranchised Grief:** grief that is not openly acknowledged or socially supported is termed disenfranchised grief. This can occur when the loss is not recognised as significant by society, such as the loss of a pet, a non-traditional relationship, or a secret relationship, a child surrendered for adoption, rape or pregnancy termination.

TYPES OF GRIEF

- **Collective Grief:** this type of grief is experienced by a community or society following a shared loss, such as a natural disaster, a mass shooting, or a public tragedy. Collective grief is characterized by a sense of shared sorrow and a collective mourning process.
- **Anticipatory Grief:** this type of grief occurs before the actual loss, often when individuals are aware that a loved one is terminally ill or facing an imminent death. Anticipatory grief provides an opportunity for individuals to begin the grieving process before the loss occurs.
- **Delayed Grief:** also known as unresolved mourning, refers to a situation in which an individual experiences a significant loss but does not fully engage with the grieving process at the time of the loss. Instead, the emotional response is postponed or suppressed, and the person may not confront or express their grief until a later time, such as following the funeral. An experience of grief may eventually be triggered by another loss or an event related to the original loss.
- **Abbreviated Grief:** refers to a shorter or less intense grieving process in response to a loss. In some cases, individuals may experience a more condensed period of acute grief, and the process of adjusting to the loss may be relatively brief compared to what is typically considered a "normal" grieving duration.
- **Ambiguous Grief:** grief that occurs when the person is physically present but psychologically or emotionally absent or changed. Examples: addiction, Alzheimer's, brain injuries, etc.

THE GRIEF JOURNEY

Grief is a journey, whether the loss was expected or sudden, and one that requires grieving and mourning. Grief is what you think and feel on the inside after someone you love and care about dies. Mourning is the outward expression of those thoughts and feelings.

EARLY GRIEF

In the days and weeks immediately following the loss, the bereaved might be in a state of disbelief. For some, the grief is so overwhelming they are numb to it. As the reality of their loss sets in, the pain can feel unbearable. They may find it challenging to regulate their emotions or keep up with daily routines, and they may start to withdraw from their family or social circle.

MIDDLE GRIEF

After a while, the griever might struggle with a sense of emptiness and finality. They may develop a desperate need for the return of what was lost. This can cause them to become preoccupied with telling their story of loss or saying the loved one's name.

LATER GRIEF

Later in the grieving process, the griever may start to adapt to an altered life, discovering new strengths and opportunities that weren't there before. Their life starts to have meaning again. They may even experience personal growth and a re-invention of who they once were.

GRIEVING STYLES

Individuals use different cognitive, behavioural, and emotional strategies in their grieving process. 3 patterns of grieving have been identified which include intuitive grieving, instrumental grieving, and blended grieving.

Intuitive Grieving:

The natural and instinctive process that a person will go through when experiencing grief and loss. Heightened expression and people will respond to loss in their own individual ways, guided by their emotions, thoughts, and personal coping mechanisms.

Instrumental Grieving:

The style is characterised by a more cognitive approach, the desire to control emotion, and a focus on performing tasks and problem solving. Instrumental grievers show far less emotion than intuitive grievers and it is theorized that their emotions may even be less intense than those of intuitive grievers.

Blended Grieving:

Most people are blended grievers, meaning they utilise a combination of intuitive and instrumental grieving styles, but one style will be more assertive or dominant. Example: how to control their emotions rather than outwardly expressing them.

Intuitive	Instrumental
Bereavement experienced affectively.	Bereavement experienced cognitively.
Outwardly express grief.	Focus on mastering one's situation.
Share with others one's feelings.	General reluctance to discuss feelings.
Primary strategy: experience the distress bereavement produces.	Primary strategy is to problem solve and conceptualise.
Secondary strategy: care for others and fulfil responsibilities.	Secondary strategy allows for expressing feelings in private.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY LOSS

Primary loss and secondary loss refer to two distinct but interconnected aspects of the grief experience.

PRIMARY LOSS

Primary loss refers to the initial and direct experience of a significant change or absence. It is the main and most immediate source of grief. This type of loss is typically the one that directly triggers the grieving process. Examples include:

- Death of a loved one
- Divorce or relationship break up
- Job loss
- Health diagnosis

SECONDARY LOSS

Secondary loss refers to the additional losses or changes that result from the primary loss. These are often indirect consequences that emerge as individuals adapt to the new reality created by the initial loss. Secondary losses can complicate the grieving process and contribute to ongoing challenges.

- Financial changes
- Changes in identity/roles
- Altered social status
- Loss of future plans

TYPES OF GRIEF & LOSS EVENTS



- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Death of a loved one |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Divorce or marital separation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Infidelity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ending of friendship or romantic relationship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Loss of virginity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Dismissal from work or school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Loss of professional license |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Retirement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Graduation from high school or college |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Serious illness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Serious injury or loss of a limb |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Loss of safety after trauma |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Loss of driver's license or vehicle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | A family member's illness or injury |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Loss of a living parent to Alzheimer's or dementia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Entering addiction recovery (loss of a coping mechanism) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Incarceration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Incarceration of a loved one |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Significant move |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Significant financial loss |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Estrangement from family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Loss of closeness in a relationship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Birth of first child |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Young child starting school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Adult child leaving home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Miscarriage or abortion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | A child born with birth defects or a disability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Infertility |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Death of a pet |

TYPES OF GRIEF & LOSS EVENTS



<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Aging
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss related to a traumatic event
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of home to fire or natural disaster
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss or destruction of sentimental possessions
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of a personal dream or goal
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of reputation
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of credit
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Uncovering a devastating secret
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of an important role
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Personality changes due to illness (self or loved ones)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of intellect
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of belief in God or religion
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of hope
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:

GRIEF REACTIONS

Grief reactions vary, and different people grieve differently. Some of the most common grief emotions and experiences are listed below. You may notice that you had similar reactions in the three loss events you just reflected on.

EXERCISE: Check off the reactions that you are currently experiencing (or have experienced in the past month). Circle or highlight ones that are particularly strong or that you experience more frequently.

THOUGHTS

- CONFUSED THINKING
- DIFFICULTY CONCENTRATING
- DIFFICULTY MAKING DECISIONS
- DISBELIEF
- DISSOCIATION
- FORGETFULNESS
- HALLUCINATIONS, SEEING &/OR HEARING THE DECEASED
- HAVING OBSESSIVE THOUGHTS ABOUT THE DECEASED
- SELF-BLAME
- SENSING THE PRESENCE OF THE DECEASED
- THINKING THE DECEASED IS STILL ALIVE
- TIME DISTORTIONS

ACTIONS/BEHAVIOURS

- ABSENT-MINDEDNESS
- ACCIDENT-PRONE BEHAVIOR
- AVOIDING REMINDERS OF THE DECEASED
- AVOIDING TALKING ABOUT THE DECEASED
- CRYING
- DREAMING ABOUT THE DECEASED
- EATING TOO MUCH OR TOO LITTLE
- DECREASED INTEREST IN ACTIVITIES THAT USED TO BRING PLEASURE
- MOOD SWINGS
- PASSIVENESS
- RECKLESS OR SELF-DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR
- RESTLESSNESS
- SCREAMING
- SEARCHING & CALLING FOR THE DECEASED
- SIGHING
- TREASURING OBJECTS THAT BELONGED TO THE DECEASED
- TROUBLE SLEEPING
- VISITING PLACES ASSOCIATED WITH THE DECEASED
- WITHDRAWAL

FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

- AGGRESSION
- ANGER
- ANXIETY
- APATHY
- BITTERNESS
- DESPAIR
- EMPTINESS
- FATIGUE
- FEAR
- GUILT
- HELPLESSNESS
- IRRITABILITY
- LONELINESS
- NUMBNESS
- REGRET
- RELIEF
- SADNESS
- SELF-PITY
- SHOCK
- YEARNING

MY GRIEF



EXERCISE - describe your current situation

Who/what are you grieving? What happened? When did it happen?

What are your thoughts and feelings surrounding the loss?

MY GRIEF

EXERCISE - describe your current situation cont.

How have you been coping with the loss?

Are there any complicated or unresolved issues related to your loss? Explain.

What do you hope to gain from this workbook?

MY GRIEF



EXERCISE - describe your current situation

What grief reactions are the most uncomfortable for you? Why?

Are you letting yourself experience your emotions, thoughts, etc. freely as they come? Why or why not?

GRIEF MISCONCEPTIONS

Myth #1: Grief progresses in linear stages.

Reality: While it's sometimes true that we progress through stages as we grieve, this is not always the case. Grief is a unique process and is experienced as so.

Myth #2: There are "right" and "wrong" ways to grieve.

Reality: There are many, many different ways to grieve. Grief experiences vary, and there isn't a single right or wrong way to grieve. However, there is a difference between normal or common grief and atypical grief. Also, there are healthy and unhealthy ways to cope.

Myth #3: Time heals all wounds.

Reality: Grief is not bound by the parameters of time; it changes, but doesn't disappear. We adjust and carry on, but the grief (less raw now) remains as it becomes a part of us.

Myth #4: Everything happens for a reason.

Reality: This may be your personal belief, but it is not everyone's truth. Saying this to a person who is grieving, especially when the loss is senseless or particularly horrific, may undermine their grief.

Myth #5: "Don't cry, you need to be strong for [the deceased/your kids/mom, etc.]"

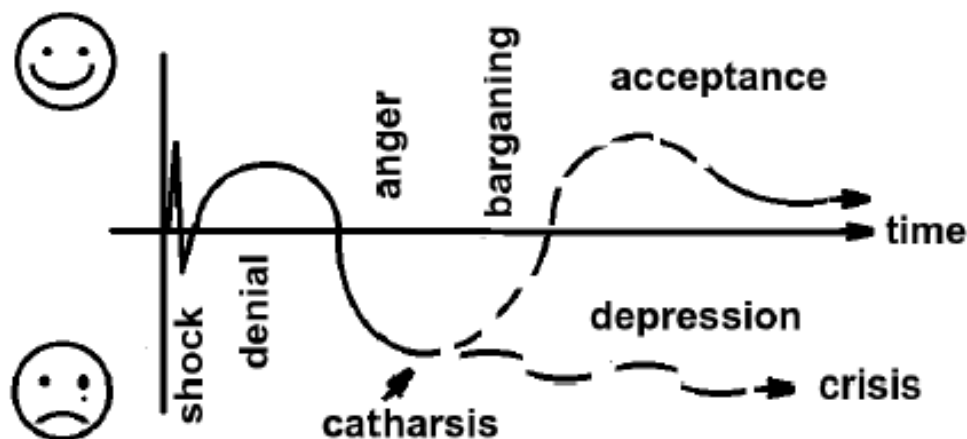
Reality: Not only do you *not* have to be "strong," the idea that mental "strength" is a measure of how well a person suppresses or ignores their emotions is **false**. If anything, it's *more* difficult to go through the process of grief and feel the pain. To share your suffering with another is to be human... and two humans together are stronger than one. Not allowing yourself to grieve is harmful, not strong.

GRIEF IS UNIQUE

The experience of grief is highly unique to the individual grieving. Responses to grief are diverse. Your grief may look completely different from someone else's, but that doesn't mean you are doing it wrong. There is no right or wrong!

"THE PROCESS OF GRIEF AND LOSS IS AS UNIQUE AS YOUR PERSONAL DNA (DEOXYRIBONUCLEIC ACID); NO TWO INDIVIDUALS WILL HAVE THE SAME EXPERIENCES OR RELATIONSHIP TO GRIEF."

Asa Don Brown



Source: Kübler Ross's stages of grief.png. (2020, November 23). *Wikimedia Commons, the free media repository*. Retrieved July 14, 2021 from https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:K%C3%BCbler_Ross%27s_stages_of_grief.png&oldid=514545088.

BENEFITS OF GRIEF COUNSELLING

Grief counselling is a specialised form of therapy aimed at helping individuals cope with and navigate the complex emotions associated with loss. Whether it's the death of a loved one, the end of a significant relationship, or any other form of major life change, grief counselling provides support and guidance during the mourning process. Several techniques are commonly employed by grief counselors to assist clients in coping with their grief:

- **Active Listening:** Active listening is a fundamental skill in grief counseling. Counselors provide a safe and non-judgmental space for clients to express their feelings and thoughts. By actively listening, counselors show empathy and validate the grieving person's experiences.
- **Validation of Emotions:** Grief can evoke a wide range of emotions, and individuals may feel guilt or confusion about their feelings. Grief counsellors validate these emotions, assuring clients that there is no "right" or "wrong" way to grieve. This validation helps clients accept and process their feelings.
- **Cognitive Behavioural Techniques:** CBT focus on identifying and challenging negative thought patterns associated with grief. This approach helps individuals reshape their perspectives, manage intrusive thoughts, and develop healthier coping mechanisms.

BENEFITS OF GRIEF COUNSELLING

- **Mindfulness and Relaxation:** Mindfulness practices, such as deep breathing exercises and meditation, can help individuals stay present and manage overwhelming emotions. These techniques promote relaxation and can be valuable in reducing anxiety and stress associated with grief.
- **Setting Realistic Goals:** Grief counselling often involves helping clients set realistic and achievable goals for themselves. This could be related to daily routines, self-care, or long-term aspirations, providing a sense of purpose during a challenging time.
- **Psychoeducation:** Counsellors often provide information about the grieving process, helping clients understand that grief is a natural response to loss. Explaining the different stages of grief can empower individuals to navigate their emotions more effectively.
- **Support Groups:** Group therapy brings together individuals who have experienced similar losses. Sharing experiences within a supportive group setting helps normalise grief, reduces isolation, and provides a sense of community.

TECHNIQUES IN GRIEF COUNSELLING

Continuing Bonds: Grief counselling may emphasise the concept of "continuing bonds," acknowledging that individuals can maintain a connection with the deceased, or significant loss, in meaningful ways. These connections can be both symbolic and emotional, helping individuals integrate the memory of the person or experience into their ongoing lives. This perspective can help clients find ways to honor and remember their loved ones.

Examples include:

- **Creating a Memory Space:** Designating a specific area in the home as a memory space, with photos, mementos, and items that belonged to the deceased, can serve as a tangible reminder and a place for reflection.
- **Carrying a Memento:** Carrying a small item that belonged to the deceased, such as a piece of jewelry or a keepsake, can provide comfort and a sense of closeness.
- **Continuing Traditions:** Upholding traditions or activities that were shared with the deceased, such as cooking a favorite meal, celebrating special occasions and anniversaries, or continuing a shared hobby, helps keep the person's memory alive.
- **Talking About the Person:** Regularly incorporating stories and memories of the deceased into conversations helps keep their presence alive in the minds and hearts of those who knew them and saying their name.

TECHNIQUES IN GRIEF COUNSELLING

Memory Book: Both memory books and continuing bonds are therapeutic approaches used in grief counselling, but they serve slightly different purposes in helping individuals cope with loss.

Memory Book:

A memory book is a tangible and often creative compilation of memories, experiences, and mementos related to the person who has passed away. It's a concrete and visual representation of the relationship and the impact the deceased had on the individual's life. The memory book can include photographs, letters, drawings, and any other artifacts that hold personal significance. The creation of a memory book is a therapeutic process in itself, allowing the grieving person to actively engage with memories and create a tangible keepsake.

Key Characteristics:

1. **Tangible Representation:** Memory books are physical items that individuals can touch, flip through, and revisit.
2. **Focus on Specific Memories:** Memory books typically center around specific memories, events, and aspects of the relationship with the deceased.
3. **Individual or Collaborative:** The creation of a memory book can be an individual endeavor or a collaborative project involving friends and family.

TECHNIQUES IN GRIEF COUNSELLING

Expressive Writing: Expressive writing for grief can be a powerful tool for processing emotions and facilitating healing. It involves putting one's thoughts and feelings onto paper, allowing for a sense of release and self-reflection. Here are some prompts and examples of expressive writing for grief:

1. **Letter to the Deceased:** Write a letter to the person who has passed away. Share your thoughts, feelings, and anything you wish you could have said. Express your love, gratitude, or any unfinished business.
2. **Unsent Letters:** Write unsent letters to the deceased, expressing your emotions, regrets, and hopes. These letters are a private space to communicate with your loved one without the intention of sending them.
3. **Conversations Never Had:** Imagine conversations you wish you could have had with the person who passed away. Write down what you would say and how you imagine their responses.
4. **Processing Guilt and Regret:** If you're struggling with guilt or regret, write about these feelings. Explore the reasons behind them and consider ways to forgive yourself.
5. **Expressing Anger:** If you're feeling angry about the loss, write about it. Allow yourself to express anger, resentment, or any other challenging emotions.

TECHNIQUES IN GRIEF COUNSELLING

Cognitive Restructuring: Cognitive restructuring in grief counselling involves identifying and challenging maladaptive thought patterns that contribute to distress. This approach involves fostering a more balanced and adaptive perspective, promoting emotional well-being and resilience as individuals cope with the profound impact of loss and helps individuals reframe their thoughts in a more balanced and realistic way.

Maladaptive Thought	Cognitive Restructuring
Identifying Catastrophic Thinking:	
I'll never be able to go on without them. My life is ruined.	While life without them feels incredibly difficult right now, I have the strength to adapt and find new sources of meaning and joy.
Addressing Guilt and Regret	
If only I had done something differently, they might still be here.	I did the best I could with the information and resources available at the time. It's natural to feel regret, but I can't change the past. I can focus on honouring their memory moving forward.
Challenging 'Should' Statements:	
I should be handling this better. I shouldn't be so emotional.	It's ok to feel a range of emotions during grief. There is no 'should' in how I should grieve. Each person's journey is unique
Coping with 'All or Nothing' Thinking	
If I can't get through this without breaking down, then I am a failure.	Grieving is a process, and it's normal to experience ups and downs. I don't have to be strong all the time, and my emotions are valid.
Balancing Positive and Negative Thoughts	
I can't find joy in anything anymore	While it's challenging, there are moments when I can experience positive emotions. It's ok to find pockets of happiness amidst the grief.
Challenging Catastrophising Thoughts	
I'll never recover from this loss.	Grief is a painful and transformative process, but many people find ways to rebuild their lives and find meaning after a significant loss. Recovery is a gradual journey
Identifying Personal Strengths	
I am weak for not handling this better.	Grieving is a testament to the depth of my love and the strength it takes to face loss. Acknowledging my emotions and seeking support are signs of resilience, not weakness.
Examining 'What-if' Scenarios	
What if I had done something differently. Could I have prevented this?	It's natural to wonder 'what if', but dwelling on hypothetical scenarios won't change the reality. I can learn from the past, but I can't change it.
Encouraging Self-Compassion	
I should be over this by now.	Grief doesn't follow a timeline, and everyone processes loss differently. I deserve patience and self-compassion as I navigate this challenging journey.

REMEMBERING YOUR LOVED ONE

Letter to the departed:

Exercise: write a letter to your loved one. Include in the letter anything you wish you could have said while they were here. Express lingering emotions, including anger and/or hurt. Indicate how you will cope with these negative emotions as you seek closure. Lastly, write about any regrets.

Additional Ideas for a letter:

- Your grief experience
- What you wish you could talk about this very moment
- Significant events that occurred since the loss/death
- Things that happened at their funeral or memorial service
- Your response to things left unsettled
- A secret
- How much they meant to you
- Apologies for past hurtful behavior
- Your plan for a life without them
- Something they would find amusing
- How you will honor their memory
- Something sentimental or meaningful (photos, magazine articles, a poem, pressed leaves/flowers, art, a recipe card, etc.)

When you are finished with the letter, you can:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Throw it away | <input type="checkbox"/> Put it in an unaddressed envelope and drop it in a mailbox |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do nothing | <input type="checkbox"/> Share it in a support group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read it aloud | <input type="checkbox"/> Frame it |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Burn it | <input type="checkbox"/> Save it to read in the future (holiday, anniversary of death, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Give it to a friend or family member, stamped and addressed with your address, and ask them to mail it to you in a year | <input type="checkbox"/> Bury it |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leave it in a public space | <input type="checkbox"/> Post it to social media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shred it and place the shreds in a pot and then add soil and grow a plant | <input type="checkbox"/> Read it to a therapist or trusted person |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Keep it in a scrapbook |

GRIEF EXERCISES, ACTIVITIES & TIPS

GRIEF SELF-CARE ASSESSMENT

To assess for self-care deficiencies in four areas: physical, emotional/social, intellectual, and spiritual, read each statement and mark the option that is the most accurate. Your answers should reflect your *current* state (the present or within the past week), not previous or typical functioning. This is important to understand the impact of your grief and to determine what actions to take.

Score your answer: Almost Always = 3 Usually = 2 Sometimes = 1 Rarely or Never = 0

PHYSICAL

1) I exercise for 30 minutes or longer at least five days a week.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

2) I avoid fast food restaurants.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

3) I drink plenty of water (about half an ounce per pound of body weight) throughout the day.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

4) I avoid foods and beverages with added sugar (including soda).

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

5) I don't smoke cigarettes or use tobacco products.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

6) I avoid alcohol or drink moderately (one or fewer drinks per day).

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

GRIEF EXERCISES, ACTIVITIES & TIPS

PHYSICAL (CONT.)

7) I don't use drugs recreationally.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

8) I eat multiple servings of fruits and vegetables most days.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

9) I avoid processed foods.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

10) I avoid red meat.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

11) I avoid fried foods.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

12) I eat moderate portions and don't overindulge.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

13) I drink black coffee and/or unsweetened tea.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

14) When taking medication, I take as prescribed (or as directed).

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

15) I see a medical provider for an annual physical exam or as recommended.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

16) I go to bed and get up around the same time every day.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

GRIEF EXERCISES, ACTIVITIES & TIPS

PHYSICAL (CONT.)

17) I have enough energy to complete daily tasks and duties.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

18) I take care of myself when ill (i.e., staying home from work/school, getting plenty of rest, going to the doctor, etc.)

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

Total Score for Physical: _____

EMOTIONAL/SOCIAL

19) I trust and can count on close friends and family members.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

20) I talk about the things that are bothering me.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

21) I have healthy coping skills to manage stress.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

22) I am honest and authentic.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

23) I treat others with courtesy and respect.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

24) I am optimistic.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

25) I feel good about myself.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

GRIEF EXERCISES, ACTIVITIES & TIPS

EMOTIONAL/SOCIAL (CONT.)

26) I know what my values are and I live my life accordingly.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

27) I communicate assertively (not aggressively, passively, or passive aggressively).

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

28) I (respectfully) express my wants and needs in relationships.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

29) I am flexible and adapt in new situations.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

30) I can be alone without feeling lonely and I take time to myself when needed.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

31) I am able to problem-solve and make effective decisions.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

32) I accept feedback in a non-defensive manner.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

33) I experience a wide range of emotions, but am not controlled by them.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

34) It's okay when others disagree with me.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

35) I am not defeated by my mistakes and am able to learn from them.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

GRIEF EXERCISES, ACTIVITIES & TIPS

EMOTIONAL/SOCIAL (CONT.)

36) I set and manage realistic expectations for myself and others.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

Total Score for Emotional/Social: _____

INTELLECTUAL

37) I spend less than one hour per day watching television.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

38) I take on tasks that challenge me.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

39) I enjoy my work, a hobby, and/or classes at school.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

40) I am open to trying new things.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

41) I am open to learning new skills.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

42) I read for leisure.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

43) I engage in meaningful activities.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

44) I have a variety of interests.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

GRIEF EXERCISES, ACTIVITIES & TIPS

INTELLECTUAL (CONT.)

45) When given the opportunity, I volunteer to take the lead or work with a group.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

46) I keep up with local and/or world news.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

47) I am open to traveling to different countries and/or learning about different cultures.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

48) I single-task (as opposed to giving divided attention to multiple things).

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

49) I have short-term educational, vocational, or intellectual goals.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

50) I have long-term educational, vocational, or intellectual goals.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

51) I am able to learn and grow from different perspectives.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

52) I am able to form my own opinions about things.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

53) I use critical thinking skills when faced with a dilemma.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

GRIEF EXERCISES, ACTIVITIES & TIPS

Grief Self-Care Assessment

INTELLECTUAL (CONT.)

54) I am curious about many things.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

Total Score for Intellectual: _____

SPIRITUAL

55) I believe in something greater than myself.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

56) I meditate or practice mindfulness on a daily basis.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

57) I regularly spend time outside, in nature, or in green spaces.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

58) I feel a sense of connection to others, the world, and/or a higher power.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

59) I engage in religious or spiritual services or practices (including creative expression through art, poetry, dance, music, etc.)

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

60) I pray or journal.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

61) I believe life is meaningful.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

62) I believe I have a purpose.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

GRIEF EXERCISES, ACTIVITIES & TIPS

SPIRITUAL (CONT.)

63) I enjoy contributing and helping others.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

64) I hope to leave the world a better place.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

65) I practice gratitude.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

66) I am compassionate and empathetic.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

67) I feel in tune with my body, emotions, desires, and needs.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

68) I have personal standards and morals in life.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

69) I am generous.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

70) I take regular breaks from social media and electronic devices.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

71) I practice self-compassion and kindness.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

72) I have a desire to live up to my full potential in life.

___ Almost Always ___ Usually ___ Sometimes ___ Rarely or Never

Total Score for Spiritual: _____

GRIEF EXERCISES, ACTIVITIES & TIPS

SCORING:

Almost Always = 3 Usually = 2 Sometimes = 1 Rarely or Never = 0

Add up the points in each section for 4 separate scores, specific to life area, and record them below. The highest you can score for any individual section is 54.

Physical: _____ Emotional/Social: _____ Intellectual: _____ Spiritual: _____

46 or higher = Excellent self-care

31-45 = Above average self-care with some inconsistencies

16-30 = Limited to average self-care with some inconsistencies or deficits

15 or lower = Poor self-care with severe deficits

Which area(s) did you score high? _____

Low? _____

For areas you scored low, consider increasing self-care practices and/or engaging in them more regularly. (To determine *specific* behaviors to modify/eliminate, refer to any "Rarely" or "Never" responses on the assessment.)

Are there patterns in your self-care habits? ___ Yes ___ No

If so, what are they? (For example, you may consistently exercise and eat well, but ignore medical advice, or you may address emotional needs while neglecting your potential for intellectual growth.) _____

Next, for your overall self-care score, add the totals from each section together and record the number below. A higher score indicates better self-care. (Additional scoring information is provided on the following page.)

My Overall Self-Care Score: _____

GRIEF EXERCISES, ACTIVITIES & TIPS

SCORING (CONT.)

180 or Higher

You have an advanced awareness of and engage in regular self-care, even as you grieve. Overall, you strive to make healthy choices for yourself to increase your capacity to heal, although it's not always easy. You generally have a positive regard for yourself and others, along with a desire to thrive and grow. Although at times you feel overwhelmed with grief and despair, you consciously choose not to give in to or suppress negative emotions.

135-179

Your self-care is above average. However, there may be one or more areas in which you do not engage in self-care or a single area with severe deficits. In your grief, you have given up on some of the things you used to do to take care of yourself. This limits your capacity to process your grief and heal. While you sometimes make healthy choices for yourself, there is room for improvement.

90-134

You sometimes practice self-care in some areas, but are not taking care of yourself in other ways. There may be one or more areas with severe deficits. Strive to take better care of yourself and to be more consistent.

45-89

You are not taking care of yourself or may be causing harm in most areas. You have unmet or unrecognized needs and wants. There are severe deficits in all or most life areas. When you ignore your self-care needs, you deter the process of healing grief.

44 or Lower

Your self-care is lacking severely. Some of your most basic needs are going unmet and you're causing yourself harm. You may be overwhelmed with grief and feel as though things will never get better. If you find you are unable to implement better self-care as time goes on, seek outside support. You won't be able to heal from your grief until basic needs are met.

SELF-CARE IDEAS

- = I've tried it
 = I want to try it

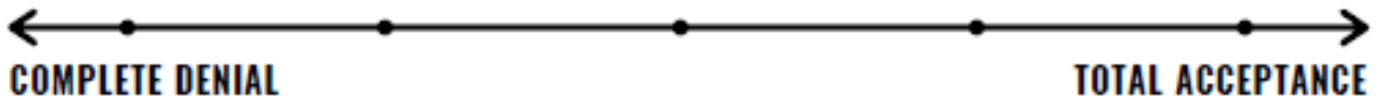
QUICK TIPS	SENSATIONS & SELF-SOOTHING	INDULGE
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Scroll through photos of happy memories on social media	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Use scented oils, lotions, candles, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Send yourself a bouquet at work
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Step outside and spend a few moments in nature	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Put on fuzzy socks	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Plan (and take!) a vacation
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Complete a (not-too-difficult) task that you've been putting off	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Apply a heating pad to your neck	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Buy yourself that thing you've been wanting, but that's not something you would normally buy for yourself
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Tell someone how you're <i>actually</i> feeling instead of saying "fine"	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Heat your towels or bathrobe in the dryer	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Redecorate your workspace
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Do something playful	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Use shower steamers (alternative to bath bombs!)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Spend a night at a hotel, order room service, and relax!
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Stretch	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Chill your face lotions/products in the fridge before using	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Take the day off work or school and spend it in a park
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Replace self-defeating thoughts with optimistic reframes	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Repetitively tap chest or shoulders	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Upgrade your cell to the latest model
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Wink at someone	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Walk with a book balanced on your head	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Buy a piece of furniture that makes you happy
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Keep fresh flowers in your office/home or wear them in your hair	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Drink cucumber or fruit-infused water	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Declutter your life or hire someone to haul junk that's taking up space
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Use your favorite pens to write	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Put something cold on your forehead	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Treat yourself to a facial, massage, or other relaxing spa treatment
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Share your self-care plans with someone and brainstorm new ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Go to an aquarium and watch the fish	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Buy yourself a new outfit
	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Relax in a sauna	
	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Go an entire day without speaking	
	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> Buy and use colored lightbulbs in different rooms	

EMBRACING YOUR PAIN

Working towards acceptance:

What does acceptance mean to you?

Where are you in your acceptance? Draw a line or **X** below.



How can you find acceptance in the face of loss?

FINDING MEANING

Enhance Spirituality

What is your personal definition of spirituality?

Spirituality refers to the “higher self”. It involves your values and morals. It also involves the relationship and activities in your life that bring you meaning, purpose and direction. Additionally, spirituality involves your belief in a higher power and may include your religious practices.

What relationship or activities bring you meaning and purpose?

Further Questions for Developing & Exploring Spirituality:

- How do I want to be remembered?
- What morals guide my life?
- Who am I?
- What is the meaning of life?
- What lessons is life teaching me?
- What does spiritual growth look like?
- How can I connect more deeply with others and the world?

FINDING MEANING

Post Traumatic Growth

Post-Traumatic growth (PTG) is the experience of finding new meaning and a deeper appreciation for life in the aftermath of trauma. This transformation yields newfound personal strength while fostering the desire to help others.

PTG differs from resilience in that resilience is the ability to quickly bounce back, PTG, on the other hand, happens when you struggle to survive and as a result, find new meaning and enthusiasm for life, beyond what existed prior to the loss.

An individual who is resilient is less likely to experience PTG because they are not as profoundly impacted by the trauma. PTG is what occurs when a person is essentially forced to reevaluate their core beliefs as they try to make sense of what happened.

PTG has a significant positive impact on:

- Appreciation of life
- Relationships with others
- Believing in new possibilities in life
- Personal strength
- Spirituality

Factors that contribute to PTG include:

(Check the ones that you want to develop or improve)

- Social support
- Self-efficacy (believing in your own abilities)
- Deliberate reflection
- Forgiveness
- Religion/spirituality
- Optimism
- Ability to regulate emotions
- Good health and wellness practices

FINDING MEANING



Strategies for Enhancing Post-Traumatic Growth

How can I utilise my social supports?

How can I develop or enhance self-efficacy?

How can I practice meaningful reflection?

FINDING MEANING

Strategies for Enhancing Post-Traumatic Growth

Who do I need to forgive? Why? How?

What can I do to feel connected to a higher power?

How can I develop a more optimistic worldview?

FINDING MEANING



Strategies for Enhancing Post-Traumatic Growth

What are some ways to manage intense emotions without being ruled by them?

What health (mental or physical) issues am I struggling with now and what steps must I take to improve my health?

How can I achieve optimal wellness?

GRIEF-RELATED PTSD SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:

- Persistent, invasive, and/or intrusive and distressing memories of the loss
- Frequent disturbing nightmares about the loss
- Re-experiencing the loss as though it is happening (i.e., flashbacks)
- Persistent or intense distress when things, events, or thoughts remind you of the loss
- Intense physical reactions to things, events, or thoughts that remind you of the loss
- Avoiding (or attempting to avoid) anything that reminds you of the loss, including:
 - Memories
 - Thoughts
 - Emotions
 - People
 - Places
 - Things
 - Conversations
 - Activities
 - Situations
- Difficulty remembering certain aspects of the loss
- Negative thoughts/beliefs about self, others, and/or the world
- Blaming self or others
- Persistent negative emotional state
- Inability to experience positive emotions (such as happiness, joy, satisfaction, love, etc.)
- Loss of interest in things and/or events you once enjoyed
- Inability to connect with others
- Irritability, aggression, and/or angry overreactions
- Reckless or self-destructive behavior
- Constantly feeling on edge and alert
- Over-exaggerated startle response
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty falling or staying asleep

Exercise: Traumatic Grief Assessment

1. Were you with your loved one when they died or was the death sudden, violent, or accidental?

Yes No

2. Are you experiencing any symptoms of PTSD? (See page 74)

Yes No

3. If you are experiencing PTSD symptoms, are they causing significant distress or impairment in your life?

Yes No N/A

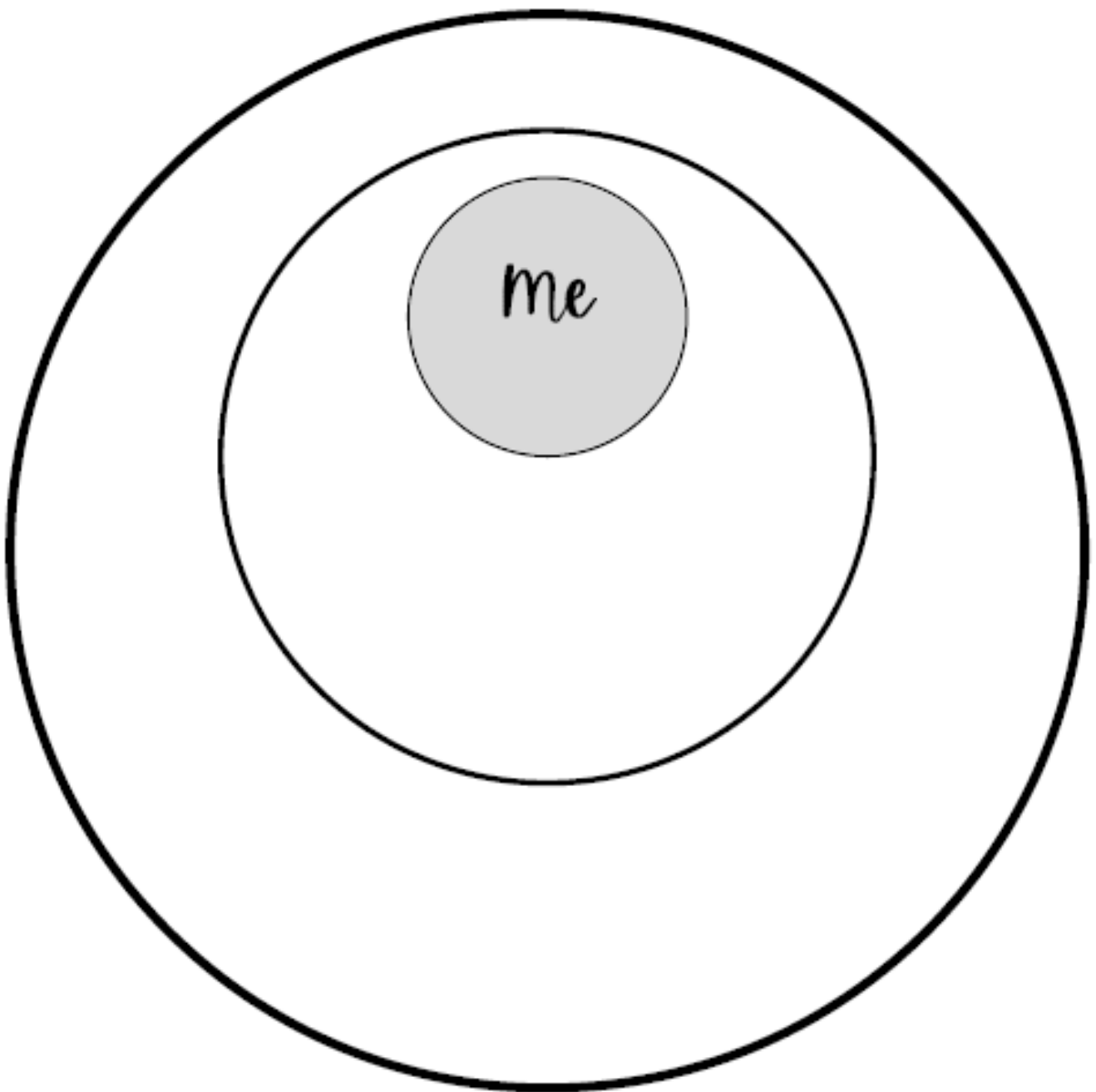
4. If you are experiencing PTSD symptoms, have they been occurring for a month or longer?

Yes No N/A

If you answered "Yes" to at least one of the above questions, you may want to consider further assessment. If you answered "Yes" to all of the above questions, strongly consider further assessment and/or consult with a licensed mental health professional (therapist, counselor, social worker, psychologist, or psychiatrist).

CIRCLE OF SUPPORT

Who is in your circle? Write down the names of people in your support network. Include an inner, middle, and outer ring. The inner ring is for you and the middle ring is for the people you are closest to and can count on the most (family and close friends). The outer ring is for supplemental supports including co-workers, online grief communities, church members, etc.



MY SUPPORT NETWORK



Use the space below to write the names of people from your network who you can reach out to when you're struggling.

"The reality is that you will grieve forever. You will not 'get over' the loss of a loved one; you will learn to live with it. You will heal and you will rebuild yourself around the loss you have suffered. You will be whole again but you will never be the same. Nor should you be the same nor would you want to."

ELIZABETH KÜBLER-ROSS

SELF CARE ACTIVITIES MONTHLY PLANNER

Losing a loved one is one of life's most challenging experiences, and navigating through the grief that follows can feel overwhelming. In the midst of mourning, it's easy to neglect our own well-being as we focus on processing emotions and coping with the loss. However, amidst the chaos of grief, prioritising self-care is not just important but essential for our mental, emotional, and physical health.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY

NOTES:

YOUR THOUGHTS

DAILY JOURNAL

DATES :

MOOD :

GOAL

-
-
-
-
-
-
-

TO DO LIST

-
-
-
-
-
-
-

ADDITIONAL TIPS

- Socialize
- Take breaks from your grief and sadness
- Show others photos of the deceased or sentimental items
- Identify emotions as you experience them
- Schedule time-limited mourning sessions each day
- Talk about your loved one
- Express your grief
- Come up with a plan (and backup plans) for managing holidays, anniversaries, and other difficult times
- Schedule time for self-care or pleasant activities
- Let your emotions out
- Replace unrealistic thoughts with reality-based statements
- Stick to a regular schedule as much as possible and structure your days
- Explore negative emotions
- Utilize a variety of coping skills
- Engage in activities/hobbies you previously enjoyed or try new ones
- Practice self-forgiveness
- Make a list of your regrets and share with a trusted person
- Use positive self-talk and affirmations
- Talk to others who have experienced loss and ask them how they got through it
- Visit the gravesite of the deceased
- Commit to reengaging with family, friends, and colleagues

My aim in crafting this toolkit was to offer you a compassionate companion on your path towards healing and understanding.

Remember, grief is a unique journey for each individual, and there is no right or wrong way to grieve.

I encourage you to be gentle with yourself and to seek support when needed, whether it be from loved ones, support groups, or professional counselling.

May you find comfort in knowing that you are not alone, and that your emotions are valid.

I hope that you've found this guide to be a source of comfort, guidance, and empowerment as you continue to navigate the complexities of grief and embrace the journey towards healing and resilience.

Maryanne Zanth



ZAR Wellness Counselling
Empowering Minds, Inspiring Change

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