



GOOD GRIEF! FOSTERING HEALTHY GRIEF IN OURSELVES AND THOSE WHO WE SUPPORT



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Topics

- Identify common myths and misconceptions about grief
- Current theoretical approaches
- Practical strategies for supporting a healthy grief process in ourselves and those who we are supporting
- Grief-specific resources

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Children's Grief Awareness Day™

Nov. 19 2020

Children's Grief Awareness Day is designed to help us all become more aware of the needs of grieving children — and of the benefits they obtain through the support of others. Children's Grief Awareness Day is an opportunity to make sure that grieving children receive the support they need.

[Read More ▶](#)

After my Mom died, I felt all alone like nobody understood what I was going through.

— 8-year-old



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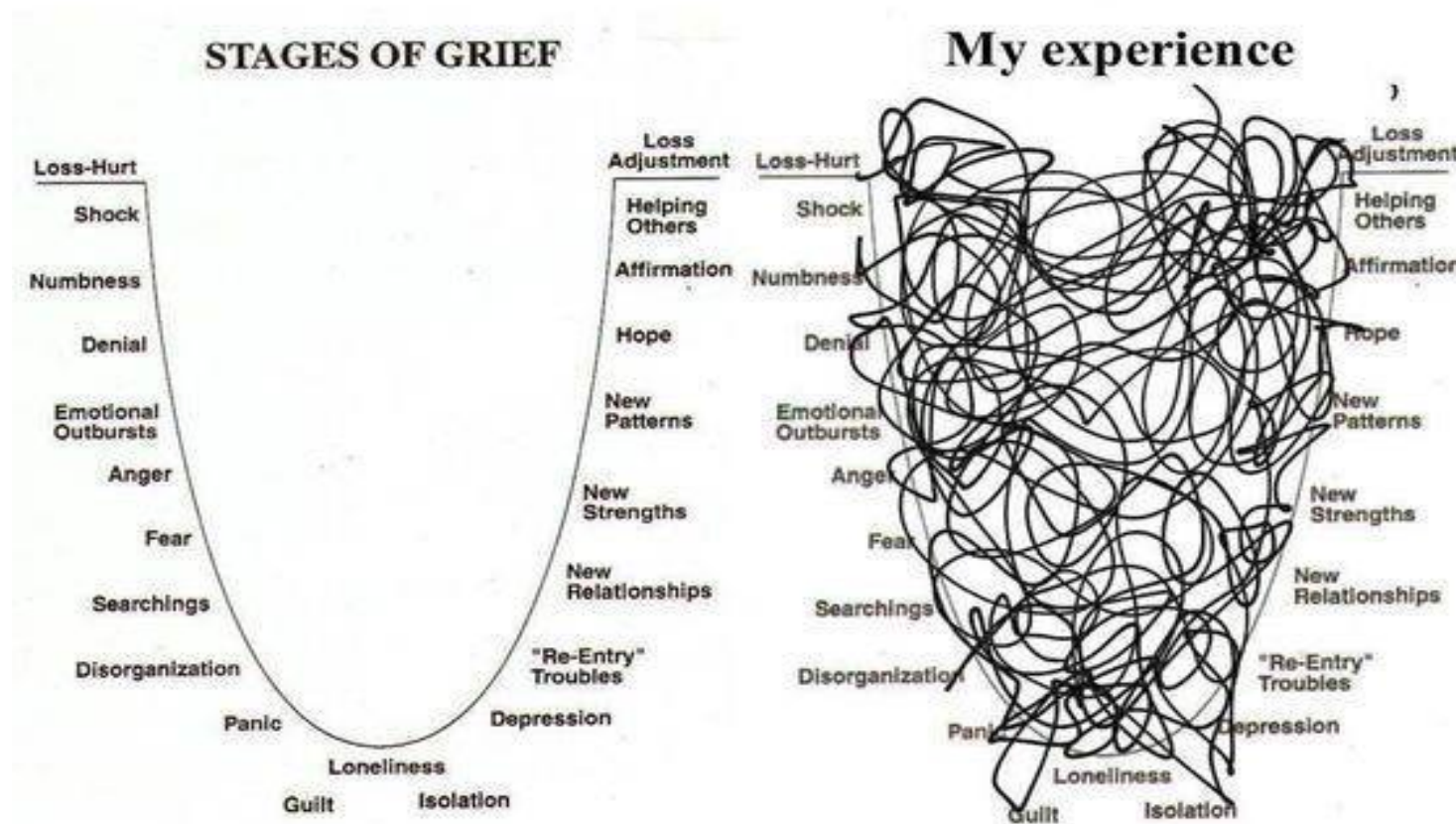


Myths & Misconceptions

Myth # 1: Grief is a Predictable Set of Stages



What Grief Actually Looks Like



Grief Affects Every Part Of Our Being

New Grief

+

Old Grief

Spiritual

- *Lean on faith*
- *Question faith*

Physiological

- *Pain in the body*
- *Headaches*
- *Sleep disturbances*

Social

- *Who shows up? Who doesn't?*
- *Isolation*

Behavioural

- *Self Medicating*
- *Anger*
- *Dependent behaviour*

Psychological

- *Inability to concentrate*
- *Will I ever be able to function at the level I did before?*



“No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear. I am not afraid, but the sensation is like being afraid. The same fluttering in the stomach, the same restlessness...” C.S. Lewis

Myth # 2: There's No Utility In Experiencing Grief





tiny beautiful things

Advice on love
and life from
Dear Sugar

Cheryl Strayed

Bestselling author of *Wild*

"Let yourself be gutted. Let it open you. Start here."

***"Let yourself be
gutted. Let it open
you. Start here."***

Cheryl Strayed

Myth # 3: The Goal of Grief is to “Get Over” It



***Grief is A process –
not an event***



Death Does Not End A Relationship

Some Theoretical Perspectives

Worden's Tasks of Mourning

Task #1



To Accept the Reality of the Loss

To Work Through the Pain of Grief

Task #2



Task #3



To Adjust to an Environment in Which the Deceased is Missing

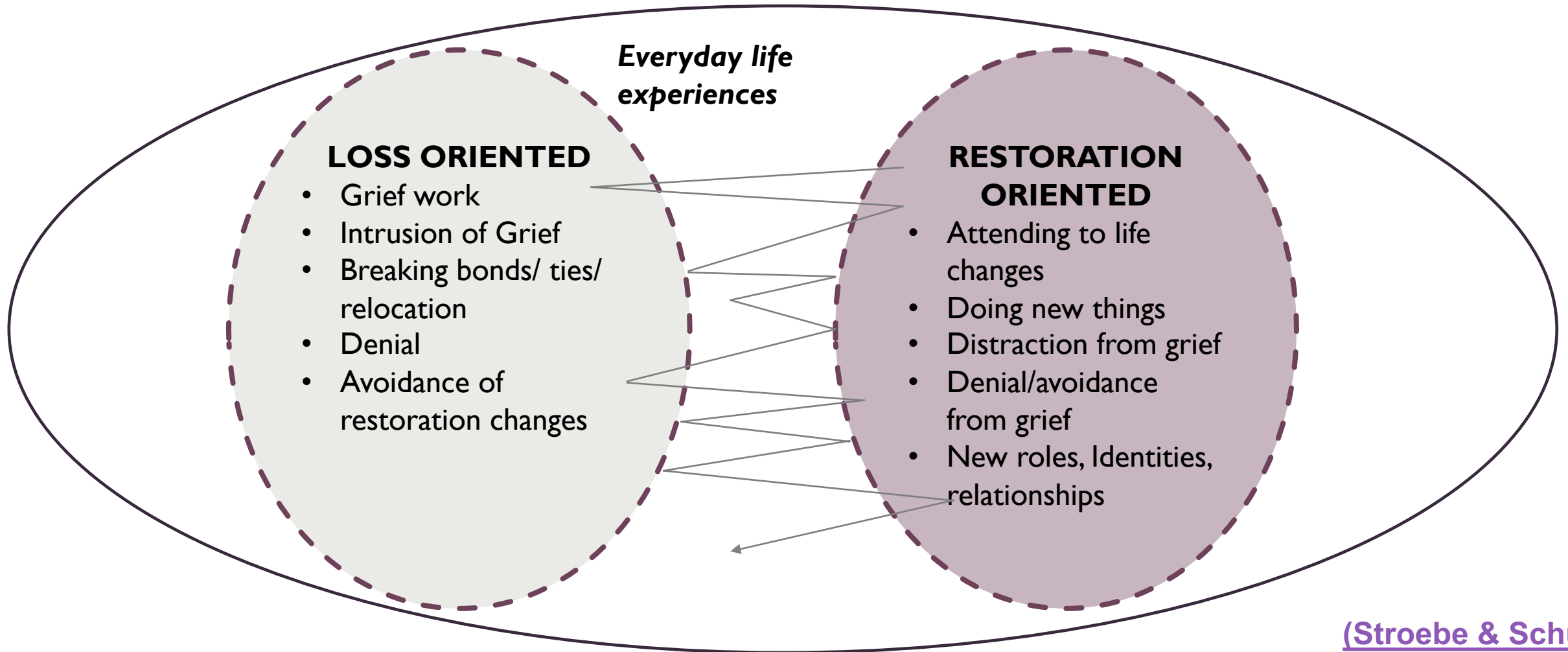
To Find an Enduring Connection with the Deceased While Embarking on a New Life

Task #4



Adapted from Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy 4th ed by J. William Worden (2008)
<http://whatisyourgrief.com>

The Dual Process Model of Coping with Bereavement



Different Styles of Grieving

Intuitive Grief



Instrumental Grief



We do not all grieve alike, some grieve in an emotional way, while others are more cerebral.

Practical Strategies For Supporting A Healthy Grief Process



Barriers

Defining “Grief”

MEANINGLESS

RELIEF

SAD

ANGER

NOT FAIR

“GRIEF” is all the different thoughts and feelings that occur when experiencing a big loss in life.

WORRIED

CONFUSED

ALONE

HAPPY

RESENTMENT

HELPLESSNESS

STRANGE

REGRET

SHAME

FEAR

WHY??

GUILT

Talking to Children About Terminal Illness

New guidelines call for speaking openly with children when they or their parents face life-threatening diseases.

By Perri Klass, M.D.

March 18, 2019



“One of the most difficult things we ever have to do is to tell a child he or she has a very serious condition and may not survive it, or that a parent has a condition they may not survive,” said Dr. Alan Stein, a professor of child and adolescent psychiatry at the University of Oxford.

Dr. Stein is the senior author on [two articles published last week in the British medical journal The Lancet](#), which suggested guidelines for talking to children about life-threatening illness, one on [when the illness is the child’s](#) own and the other on [when a parent is ill](#).

The doctors and other health care providers who are treating a parent with a serious illness often don’t see this as their job, Dr. Stein said, but it can make a tremendous difference. Children are sensitive to changes in their parents’ behavior, he said, and profoundly aware of parental mood and family atmosphere.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/18/well/family/talking-to-children-about-terminal-illness.html>

Avoid Roadblocks To Communication

1. The Fix-It Trap

2. Advising, Giving Solutions

3. Praising

4. Reassuring

(E. Causton, MSW)

Try To Avoid

1. The Fix-It Trap

"Everything happens for a reason..."

"At least he's not suffering anymore."

2. Advising, Giving Solutions

"You just need to..."

3. Praising

"You are so strong."

4. Reassuring

"Time heals all..."

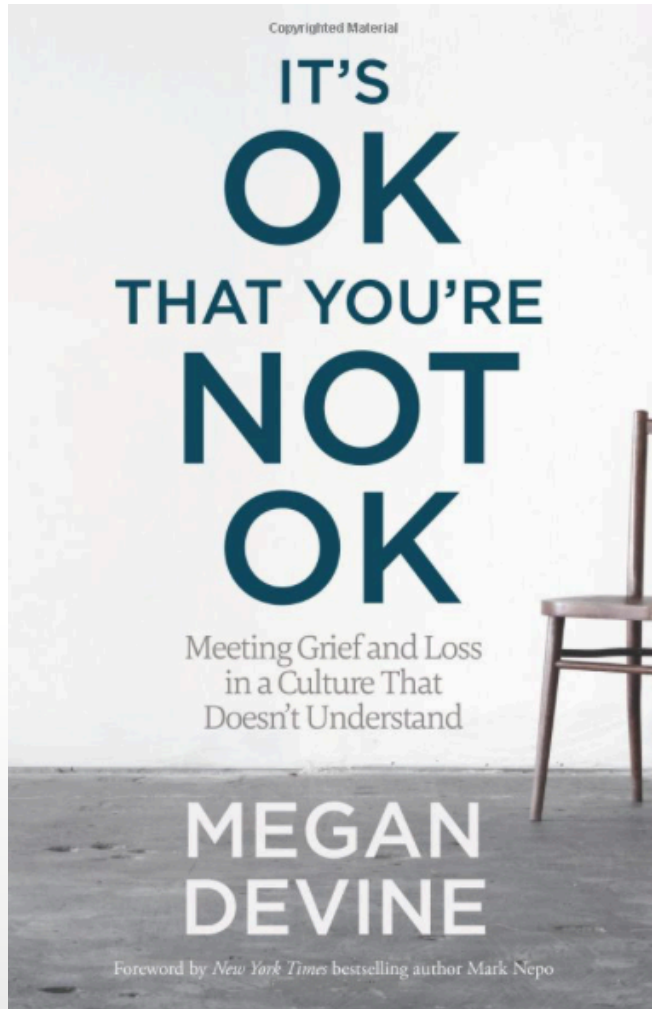
"You aren't given more than you can bear..."

"You are going to be okay..."

How to Help a Grieving Friend (M. Devine)



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





Bear Witness

Supporting Ourselves



Sympathy

Feeling FOR someone and remaining disengaged from their emotional experience.

“I am sorry that you’re sad”

Empathy

Feeling WITH someone and taking on their emotional experience as our own.

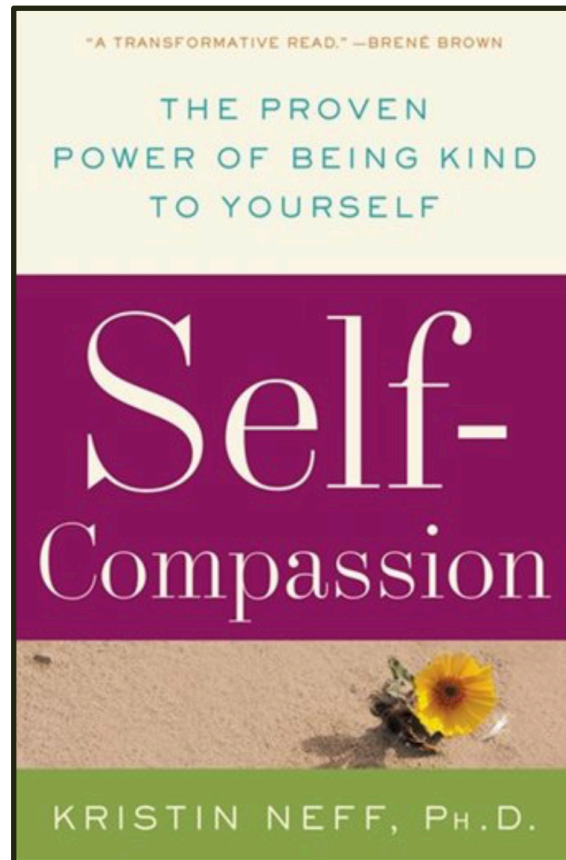
“I feel your sadness as if it’s my own”

Compassion

RECOGNIZING and UNDERSTANDING the emotions of another, engaging with care and kindness while still knowing it is not our experience to carry.

“I see your sadness and care for you. What can I do to support you?”

Self-compassion (Dr. Kristin Neff)




[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=5HCHN9KMRNM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5HCHN9KMRNM)

March 27, 2020

Brené on Comparative Suffering, the 50/50 Myth, and Settling the Ball

We have collectively hit weary. This is especially true for the brave folks on the front lines of this pandemic and for the people who love and support them. And, it's also true for all of us. In this episode, I talk about strategies for falling apart, staying connected + kind, and giving ourselves permission to feel hard things.

Listen



Brené
ON COMPARATIVE SUFFERING,
THE 50/50 MYTH, AND SETTLING THE BALL

Unlocking Us with Brené Brown

Brené on Comparative Suffering, the 50/50 Myth, and Settling the Ball

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Taking Care Of Ourselves


- Working with our own suffering in order to cultivate our capacity to be with the suffering of others
 - Know that we can't fix this. Can't keep windstorms from happening, can't keep people from feeling heartbroken. We're not supposed to.
 - Grieve. Without acknowledging our own emotional struggles, we can't maintain our capacity to support others.
 - Connect with one another. *It's better to do this together than alone.*
 - Make time to engage in activities that refill the well – play, have fun...


What Refills Your Well?


 Get plenty of sleep


 Enjoy sunshine

 Cook

 Write or draw (think out loud)


 Talk to myself

 Cuddle cats


 Walk or bike (esp. in a park)


 Tidy

 Read

 Read about people whose lives are more complicated

 Garden

 Get a hug

 Talk to select people

Resources



MyGrief.ca

Because losing someone is hard...

MyGrief.ca helps you to understand and work through your grief.

- Confidential
- Access in the privacy of your own home
- Developed by families and grief experts
- Stories from people who have "been there"
- A resource for professionals





KidsGrief.ca

“How do I tell the kids?”

Helping parents help kids

- Developed by families and grief experts
- A resource for healthcare providers, educators and others who support families

 CANADIAN
VirtualHospice



Monthly Webinar Series



presents

KidsGrief Q&A

National children's grief expert,
Andrea Warnick answers
your questions. To register email:
KidsGriefQA@virtualhospice.ca



Literary Resources

An Exact Replica of a Figment of My Imagination: A Memoir (E. McCracken)

A Year of Magical Thinking (J. Didion)

Being Mortal (A. Gawande)

Being with Dying: Cultivating Compassion and Fearlessness in the Presence of Death (Joan Halifax)

Die Wise: A Manifesto for Sanity and Soul (S. Jenkinson)

It's Okay That You're Not Okay: Meeting Grief and Loss in a Culture that Doesn't Understand. (M. Devine)

The Grieving Garden: Living with the Death of a Child (Redfern, S. & Gilbert, S.)

The Heart Does Break: Canadian Writers on Grief and Mourning (J. Baird)

The Mourners Dance (K. Ashenberg)

The Wild Edge of Sorrow: Rituals of Renewal and the Sacred Work of Grief (F. Weller)

When Breath Becomes Air (P. Kalanithi)

FAMILY

All the Things We Have to Mourn Now

Six experts explain how to recognize the many new faces of grief during a pandemic.

JOE PINSKER MAY 1, 2020



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Spare a Moment for Sorrow

JOHN DICKERSON



<https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2020/05/grief-mourning-death-pandemic/610933/>


Grief in Times of a Pandemic Resources

- [*A New Way to Mourn \(The New York Times - The Daily Podcast\)*](#)
- [*Canadian Virtual Hospice COVID-19 Resources*](#)
- [*Funerals in Times of a Pandemic: A Toolkit for Children and Families*](#)
- [*Funerals in the Times of Coronavirus; Thoughts for Families \(Alan Wolfelt\)*](#)
- [*Supporting Adults Bereaved Through Covid – 19: A Rapid Review of the Impact of Previous Pandemics on Grief and Bereavement \(Journal of Pain and Symptom Management\)*](#)
- [*When Hugs Can Kill: Mourning Nova Scotia's Mass Shooting in a Pandemic \(The New York Times\)*](#)
- [*When You Can't be With a Dying Family Member \(Whats Your Grief\)*](#)

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Supporting Grieving Children, Youth, and Adults, through Education and Counselling

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*“grief is crazy-making, feels like a psychosis, is implosive, explosive, arbitrary, unjust, **but is as basic to the human condition as love and joy**”*

(Bertman, 1999)