

# FROM GRIEF TO GRATITUDE

By James Campbell

# WHO AM I AND WHY AM I HERE?

Objectives:

Participants in this training will:

- ◉ Identify diverse types of loss and common experiences related to each.
- ◉ Explore differing models of the grief process.
- ◉ Examine the specific impact of grief on substance use disorders and recovery.
- ◉ Gain practical tools to assist others in healing following loss.

# WHY TALK ABOUT GRIEF?

- ◉ Change happens!
- ◉ To live is to experience loss
- ◉ “Little deaths”
- ◉ ***“Change is Inevitable—Growth is Optional.”***  
-Walt Disney

# DEFINING GRIEF

- Grief is a **normal process** of reacting both internally and externally to the perception of loss.

# KINDS OF LOSSES

- ◉ Loss of Life: Family/Friends
- ◉ Invasion of Body
- ◉ Loss of Limb/Physical Capability
- ◉ Loss of Beauty/Self-Image
- ◉ Loss of Memory
- ◉ Loss of Sensorial Perception
- ◉ Loss of Material Goods: Money, Property, Pets, Home, Car
- ◉ Intangible: Trust, Faith, Identity, Connection to the Future, Time, Values, Will to Live, Feeling, Innocence, Hope

# MYTHS ABOUT GRIEF

- ◉ The pain of the loss will go away faster if I ignore it.
- ◉ It's important to be “be strong” in the face of loss.
- ◉ If I don't cry, it means I'm not sorry about the loss.
- ◉ Grief lasts about a year.

# GRIEF RESPONSES

Bio-psycho-social-spiritual persons have

- ⊙ Biological
- ⊙ Psychological
- ⊙ Social
- ⊙ Spiritual

...responses to loss

# GRIEF REACTIONS

## ◉ **Biologically**

Physical reactions can include sleep difficulties, appetite changes (decreased or increased), physical pain, or illness.

Grief also causes a decrease in serotonin.

## ◉ **Psychologically**

Emotions can range from, and often include, all of the following: Anger, guilt, anxiety, sadness, and despair.

# GRIEF REACTIONS

## ◉ Socially

Worries about how to take care of others in the family, the desire to see (or not to see) family or friends, concern about grieving properly in front of others, or the inclination to return to work.

## ◉ Spiritually

May find comfort and peace in spiritual beliefs that help with cognitive reframes (or not). May also become angry or blame God/their Higher Power. Awe and Wonder may seem hard to come by.

# COPING STYLE AND COPING SKILLS

- Some psychologists suggest that resilience is a personality trait, and that some people are able to cope with difficult situations with more ease, and “bounce back” quicker. This does not mean that people with strong coping skills will not be as devastated as anyone else, but they will be able to recover from the death of a loved one more quickly. In general, individuals who have difficulty coping with minor setbacks, often have more difficulty recovering from the death of a loved one.

# LIFE EXPERIENCES

- Life experiences - The experiences a person has in life, both positive and negative, can affect the grieving process. Also, if it is the first time the individual has lost a loved one, s/he usually goes through a slightly different grieving process, than if that person has dealt with death before.

# SOCIAL SUPPORT SYSTEM

- Perhaps one of the most important factors in making the grieving process easier for anyone is having people you can rely on for support. However, it is important that those in a person's social support system do not underestimate the depth of the grief for the individual. People are often more inclined to offer sympathy and support when a person loses an immediate family member. However if the death of a very close friend or cousin is downplayed, it can increase feelings of loneliness and isolation. To the grieving, how old a person is, or how much blood they do or do not share does not matter. It hurts just the same.

# ANTICIPATORY GRIEF

- In cases of a prolonged illness or serious memory impairment, loved ones may begin grieving the loss of the individual's "former self" long before death occurs.

**This is what is known as anticipatory grief.**

# COMMON GRIEF CHARACTERISTICS

- ◉ Somatic distress - body complaints (chest pains)
- ◉ Preoccupation with the image of the deceased (difficulty concentrating on anything else)
- ◉ Guilt - (“it’s my fault!”)
- ◉ Hostile reactions - (anger at friends and family when attempting to be cheered up)
- ◉ A loss of the usual patterns of conduct (disregard for personal grooming)

# MOURNING

- ◉ While the term mourning is often used interchangeable with grieving, its actual meaning refers to a different, but often parallel process.
- ◉ Mourning is generally used to describe culturally related behaviors in which the bereaved participate or are expected to participate.

# BEREAVEMENT

- Another term related to grief is bereavement. Bereavement refers to the period of time after a loss during which grief is experienced and mourning occurs.

# WHAT IS AN APPROPRIATE BEREAVEMENT PERIOD?



# STAGE MODELS OF GRIEF

- Essentially, all developmental models that have been developed about stages that human beings go through are based on theory, and cannot be applied to everyone. Grief is no exception. **Therefore, it is important to not assume that everyone who is experiencing grief will go through any, let alone all of the grief stages in a particular order.**
- That being said, these models can still be very useful when working with the grieving. Learning a few of the stage models of grief can help you better understand some of the phases that a grieving individual may be going through at a particular time.

# KUBLER-ROSS STAGES OF GRIEF

- ◉ Denial
- ◉ Anger
- ◉ Bargaining
- ◉ Depression
- ◉ Acceptance

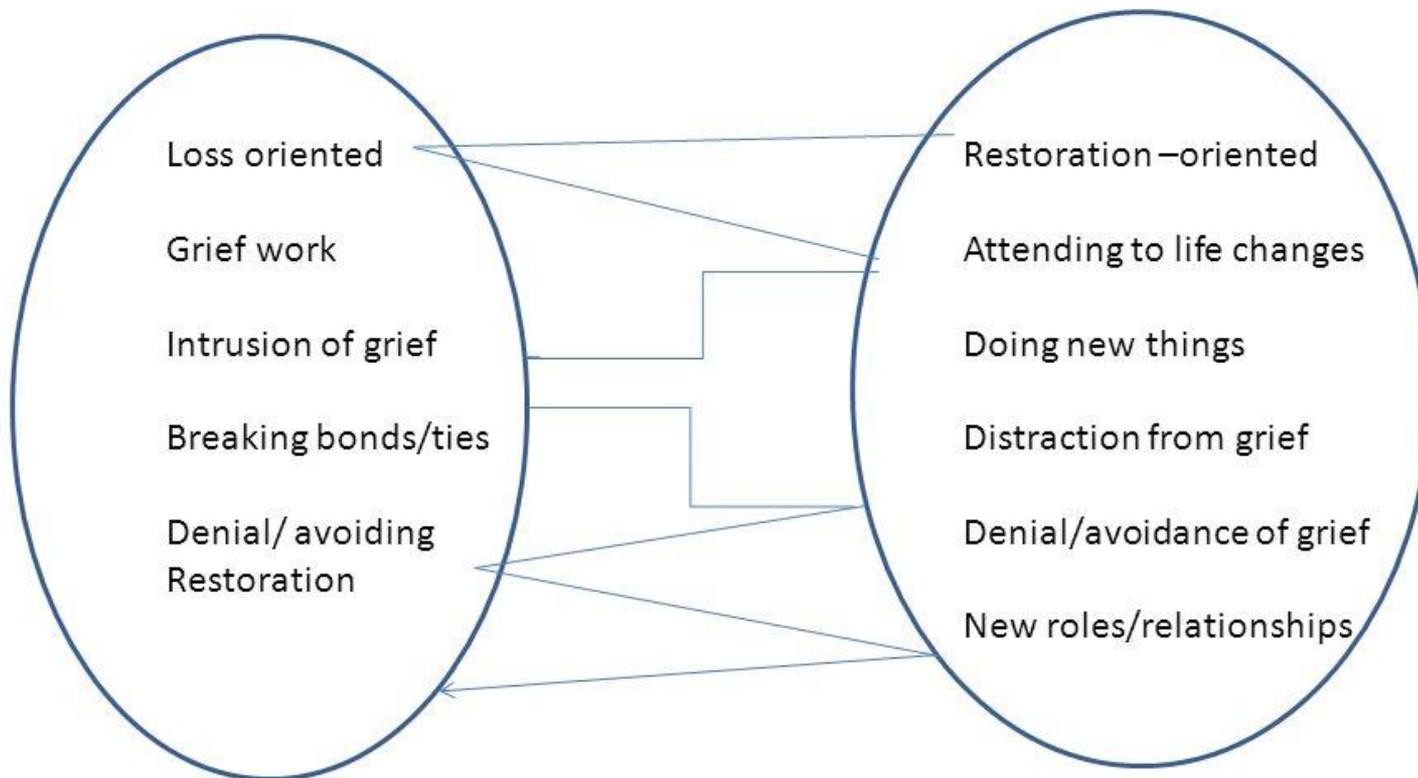
# STROEBE & SCHUT

## Dual Process Model:

- ⦿ Oscillating between a 'Loss-oriented' state and a 'Restoration-oriented' state
- ⦿ **Loss-oriented:** more emotional work of grief
- ⦿ **Restoration-oriented:** more task-focused grief work
- ⦿ 'Adaptive denial and distraction' from the emotional work of grief

# STROEBE & SCHUT

## Stoebe and Schut Dual Process Model of Grief



# J. WILLIAM WORDEN

## ◎ The 4 Tasks of Mourning

1. Accept the reality of the loss
2. Experience and work through the pain of grief
3. Adjust to the new “normal”; life without what was lost
4. Emotionally relocate the loss and move forward in life

# BOWLBY'S STAGES OF MOURNING

## ◉ Shock and Numbness

During this phase, the survivor experiences stunned feelings, impaired judgment and functioning, and difficulty concentrating. They may feel a sense of emotional numbness.

People in this stage may become oblivious to what is around them, although they continue functioning in their everyday lives.

# BOWLBY'S STAGES OF MOURNING

## ◎ Yearning and searching

During this stage, people often feel restless, anger, guilt and ambiguity. They question how and why the situation came about, and they may withdraw and want to be left alone. If it is a child who dies, intense anger from parents and family may be directed at caregivers, partners, a religious figure, and themselves.

# BOWLBY'S STAGES OF MOURNING

## ⦿ **Disorientation and disorganization**

In this phase, the death becomes “reality” for the survivors. Guilt, depression, and unfamiliarity are common feelings during this time. Self-neglect of physical needs (e.g. proper sleep and nutrition) often occurs, and physical and/or functional problems may arise.

# BOWLBY'S STAGES OF MOURNING

## ◉ **Reorganization and resolution**

Acknowledging the death and focusing on reality are represented in this phase. It is a time where survivors see an increase in their energy and self-confidence, as well as a gradual return of their decision-making faculties. The person has now passed through the mourning process, although losing a loved one is an occurrence that no one may completely get over.



"Finding happiness is not forgetting the one you miss, it is honoring them in the most sacred way possible. And happiness comes as we allow gratitude to flow."

*Tracee Louise*

*[www.traceelouise.wordpress.com](http://www.traceelouise.wordpress.com)*

# GRIEF AND LOSS IN ADDICTION

# GRIEF AND LOSS IN ADDICTION

- ◉ Unresolved grief, loss & trauma often predate use
- ◉ Compounded in addiction
- ◉ Complicated by use
- ◉ Minimized
- ◉ Normalized
- ◉ Use AOD to cope
- ◉ Lack healthy support
- ◉ Medicate / Avoid / Minimize feelings
- ◉ Grief not processed
- ◉ Losses not *fully* grieved

# OTHER LOSSES IN ADDICTION

- Experiences and events
- Relationships with family/friends
- Parenting time
- Family milestones
- Deaths/communal expressions of grief
- Time
- Opportunities
- Perinatal Care
- Spiritual

# WHAT ARE YOU LEAVING BEHIND?

Losses in moving from addiction to recovery...

- ⦿ Loss of drug (s) ...
- ⦿ Loss of Rituals, etc...
- ⦿ Loss of playmates...
- ⦿ Loss of playgrounds...

# IN EARLY RECOVERY PEOPLE BEGIN TO REALIZE THAT THEY HAVE LOST A LOT...

“... If you're an addict on the road to recovery, be prepared to experience emotions in a new way - the good and bad; and be sure to have a plan in place to fight off the cravings while you're in that vulnerable state.”

-Michael Bloch

# SOME TASKS IN RECOVERY

- ◉ Develop skills to cope with feelings
- ◉ Open up, identify and talk about losses
- ◉ Learn to identify feelings and verbalize feelings
- ◉ Learn to tolerate “negative” feelings
- ◉ Receive necessary social support
- ◉ Develop new attachments
- ◉ Develop new rituals

# THE FAMILY

“The **reaction to loss** that is widely experienced by friends and family members of persons who are addicted to mind altering substances is **profound grief**. It has characteristics of flawed interactional patterns because the **loss is ambiguous**. If a person dies, the grief is unambiguous: the social role the deceased played is no longer occupied and the deceased cannot fulfill obligations or promises. The spouse who becomes addicted to mind altering substances often **ceases to fulfill obligations or promises, but physically the social role is still occupied.**”

-Vicki Loyer-Carlson, Ph.D., LMFT

## THE FAMILY...ANTICIPATORY GRIEF

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# TENSIONS FOR FAMILIES

- ◉ Despair vs. Hope
- ◉ Denial vs. Acceptance
- ◉ Meaninglessness vs. Meaningfulness
- ◉ Independence vs. Accepting Interdependence
- ◉ Ambiguity vs. Certainty of Outcome
- ◉ Making Plans vs. Experiencing Emotions
- ◉ Holding On vs. Letting Go
- ◉ Not Talking vs. Speaking Openly
- ◉ Family as it Was vs. Family as it is Becoming

# GRIEF WORK IN ADDICTION

- ⦿ Grief therapy: goal is not about forgetting but remembering with less pain.
- ⦿ Developing adaptive coping mechanisms.
- ⦿ Finding meaning.
- ⦿ **AA and Al-Anon, NA and Nar-Anon are often a significant part of grief work**

## WHAT HELPS?

“The best therapy for grief is time and community.”

-Michael S. Logan

Do not grieve alone.

# HELPING THOSE IN GRIEF

- ⦿ **A person should never be forced to talk about his/her feelings** - At one time, it was “common wisdom” that grieving people would benefit from talking about their traumatic experiences, and that Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder could be mitigated by doing so. This is only true in a limited sense: those who **wish to talk** about their feelings can benefit from doing so; however, the same cannot be said for everyone. Research suggests that **forcing** people to talk about their feelings may actually negatively affect all parties involved.

# HELPING THOSE IN GRIEF

- ◉ **Do not avoid mentioning the names of the deceased** - Oftentimes, people avoid mentioning the deceased out of fear of reminding the survivors of their loss or due to feelings of discomfort or uncertainty. This is tantamount to acting as if they are not in pain. Instead, do not avoid the deceased's name, as it may help lessen the person's feelings of loneliness. Otherwise, the person may begin feeling isolated.

# HELPING THOSE IN GRIEF

- ◉ **Listening is important** - Sometimes, listening is the best thing you can do when survivors wish to talk about their experiences. You may hear the same stories or difficulties several times, but it is crucial to simply listen, avoid being judgmental, and provide as little feedback as needed. You may have doubts about only listening and wish to do more for the person, but rest assured that you are helping a great deal by just being with the person.

# HELPING THOSE IN GRIEF

- **If suicidal ideation surfaces, ensure the person receives appropriate care.**- When suffering from intense grief, oftentimes people will make such remarks as, “I feel as if I am dying,” and “I can’t live without him/her.” Generally, these types of expressions are just an outlet for the grief. However, it is important that you assess whether or not the person clearly intends to harm him/herself. Immediately consult with a mental health professional or clinical supervisor if you have any suspicion that the person may be in danger of committing suicide. Also, be aware of your agency’s policy.

# HELPING THOSE IN GRIEF

- ◎ **Encourage the person to make wise choices**
  - If a person appears to be making rash major life choices during a grieving period, you can urge the person to take his or her time. Let the person know that it is OK to take time to make major choices. By gently talking with the person through a few scenarios, it may become apparent that a major life choice at the moment is probably unwise.

# HELPING THOSE IN GRIEF

- ◎ **Remember that grieving is a long process**
  - The person may be grieving for a significant amount of time. Depending upon the individual, it may take months before the most painful grieving begins. This can leave a person feeling very lonely, as most people are most sympathetic immediately after a death. They are less likely to offer support one a regular basis down the road, even though this is when the grieving person may need it the most.

# HELPING THOSE IN GRIEF

- ◉ **Offer your companionship** - Sometimes a grieving person simply does not want to be alone. The presence of another person in the room can be comforting.

# HELPING THOSE IN GRIEF

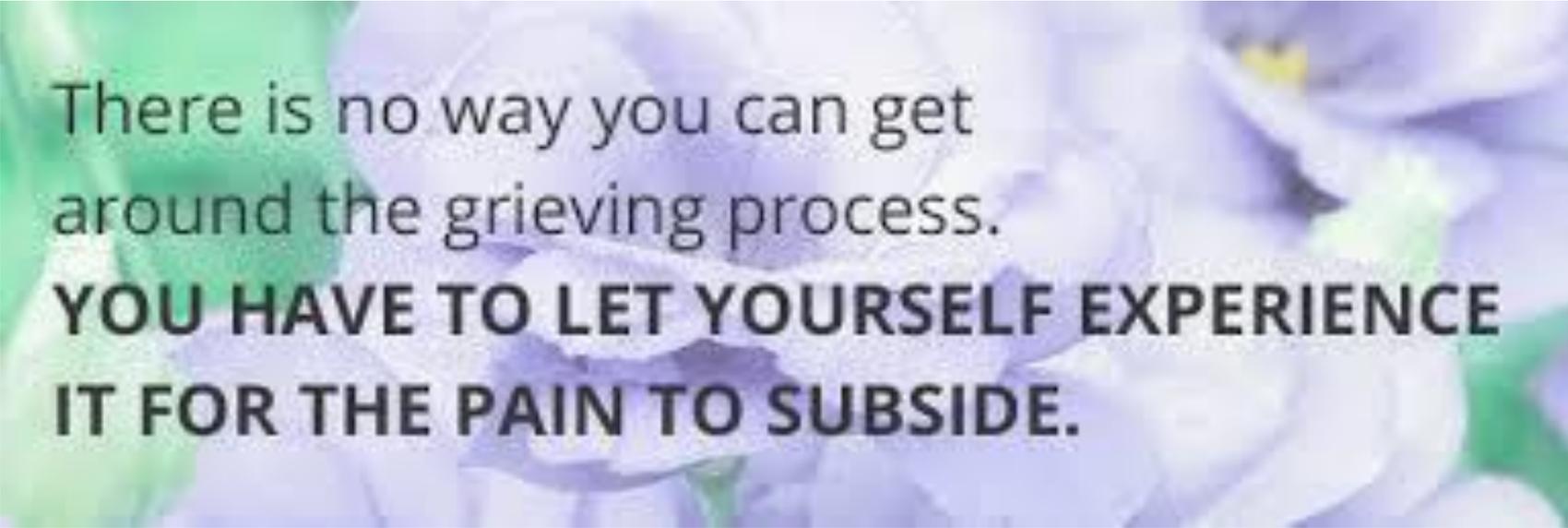
- **Do not say “I know how you feel”** - You may have experienced significant loss in your personal life. However, as we’ve said all along, each loss is different from each person. The truth is that it is impossible for you to know how another person feels. More accurate expressions of sympathy are less likely to minimize the person’s loss. You can use similar sentiments such as “This must be extremely difficult for you” or “I know how difficult it was for me when my loved one died.” This way, you express your sympathy, without dismissing the uniqueness of the individual’s experience.

# HELPING THOSE IN GRIEF

- ◉ **Do not discourage feelings** - Being in the presence of someone expressing intense emotions can be uncomfortable. When you say things such as “I know you can be strong” or “Don’t cry”, you let the grieving person know that you are not comfortable. This can make him or her feel more alone, and even reinforce a fear that they will not be able to cope with the overwhelming situation. Encouraging the expression of feelings by letting the person know s/he does not have to be strong, or that it is OK to cry allows the person the freedom to grieve as he or she wishes.

# HELPING THOSE IN GRIEF

- ◉ **Be cautious when offering advice** - If a grieving person is not getting out much or avoids talking about the death, it can be tempting to suggest to the person that these are not healthy behaviors. This is when you need to be careful to not suggest that a person “should” or “shouldn’t” do something. The truth of the matter is, that only the person knows what he or she “should” or “shouldn’t” do. Telling people that they have to do something, often results in them doing the opposite. The best advice you can give to a grieving person is that it is OK for him or her to deal with the loss any way that she wants to.



There is no way you can get  
around the grieving process.

**YOU HAVE TO LET YOURSELF EXPERIENCE  
IT FOR THE PAIN TO SUBSIDE.**

# REFERRALS

- Psychological counselors use a wide variety of interventions when dealing with grief. Some of the more common types of psychotherapy that have been shown to be effective include: cognitive-behavioral therapy, interpersonal psychotherapy, and rational emotive behavioral therapy. Each of these types of therapy can be done individually or in a group.

# REFERRALS

- When referring someone for counseling, it is important to let the person know that you do not think that s/he has a mental disorder. Let the person know that the way s/he is handling the death of a loved one is completely normal, and that it is also completely normal to speak with a grief counselor for some guidance during a difficult time.

# REFERRALS

- The grieving process can range from resilient (those who have adequate coping resources), to complicated (beyond a reasonable time frame), or anywhere in between. Grief counseling can potentially be beneficial to anyone who would like a non-judgmental ally to speak with. Similarly, support groups are available in most areas, for those wishing the support of individuals who have gone through a similar experience.

# FINISH THE SENTENCE...

- ◉ The thing that makes me feel the saddest is .....
- ◉ If I could talk to the person who died I would ask (say)....
- ◉ Since the death my family doesn't....
- ◉ My worst memory is....
- ◉ If I could change things I would....
- ◉ One thing that I liked to do with the person who died was...
- ◉ When the person died I....
- ◉ Since the death my friends....
- ◉ After the death, school....
- ◉ When I am alone....
- ◉ The thing that makes me feel the happiest is...
- ◉ The thing that makes me feel the safest is...
- ◉ The one person who understand me the most is...
- ◉ The thing that makes me feel the angriest is...
- ◉ I feel better when...

# REMINDER FOR YOUR PERSONAL GRIEF JOURNEY

- ◉ Grief is exhausting. It takes a lot of time and energy and can wear you out. That is why anyone who is going through grief needs love, understanding, and encouragement. Grief is a journey and no two journey's are alike. However, here are some helpful hints that you can use along the way.

# CREATE

## Experiential Techniques

Behaviors are better at altering emotional states than thoughts are.

- ◉ experiential therapies (art, writing, music) engage areas of the brain involved in grief, memory, healing, recovery

# 12 HELPFUL HINTS FOR YOUR PERSONAL GRIEF JOURNEY

1. Eat healthy foods and snacks. A healthy diet will keep your physical body in good health and will promote a better well being.
2. Get lots of rest. Take naps—remember grieving takes a lot of work.
3. Talk about your feelings. Find someone you feel comfortable sharing your thoughts and emotions with.
4. Exercise. Physical activity will help to release negative energy.
5. Laugh often. Laughing, even when you are sad or angry is healthy. In fact, it's nature's own best medicine.
6. Spend time with friends.

# 12 HELPFUL HINTS FOR YOUR PERSONAL GRIEF JOURNEY

7. Write down your feelings. Keep a diary or a journal.
8. Draw pictures or paint. Art is a fantastic way to express yourself! Share it with others.
9. Start a book of memories or make a memory box, PowerPoint or video. Be creative. Scrapbook or journal. Include special pictures and thoughts. When you are finished you will have a very special keepsake all about you and the person who died. Refer to it often. It will make you smile.
10. Don't rush grief. It takes it's own time. You do not "get over" grief. In time however, you will accept things intellectually and will learn how to go on.
11. Write a letter to God, or a counselor or to the person who died. Tell them how you feel, what makes you angry or sad. It will make you feel better, even if you don't send it.
12. Join a support group or workshop. Being with other teens who have experienced a loss is comforting.

# CREATE A GRIEF SUPPORT SYSTEM:

1. Find three people you are comfortable talking to.
2. Name a place that you can go that is comfortable and safe.
3. Name three things you can do, or three people you can be with, where you can let out anger without hurting yourself or others.
4. Name three things you can do or three people you can be with to let out sad feelings.
5. Name three non-harmful ways to release feelings of anger or sadness.
6. Name three things you can do when life feels meaningless.
7. Name three activities you can do that will help you to express your feelings. Examples: writing, drawing, hitting pillows, singing, playing sports, dance.
8. Name some things that will help you get your mind off your loss.

# TRIGGERING EVENTS

- Anniversaries
- National tragedies
- Others having a similar experience
- Holidays
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

# WHEN GRIEF BEGINS TO HEAL

- ◉ When a person can think of what was lost without acute pain?
- ◉ When the tasks of mourning have been accomplished?
- ◉ When one can think of the what was lost without physical manifestations such as crying or feeling tightness in the chest?
- ◉ When one can reinvest his/her emotions into life and the living?
- ◉ When one can regain an interest in life, feel more hopeful, experience healthy gratification again, and adapt to new roles?
- ◉ Is there a time limit? 1 year? 4 seasons? 2 years?

# MASLOW'S HIERARCHY

## MASLOW'S HEIRARCHY of NEEDS



# WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS

- Provide a sense of physical and emotional safety.
- Provide time for problem solving.
- Help individual regain old, healthy coping skills and/or gain new ones.
- Help individuals return to a healthy level of functioning.
- Help individuals gain a sense of self-worth, confidence, and a “new normal”.

“When we are no longer  
able to change a situation-  
we are challenged to  
change ourselves.”

Viktor Frankl

# CAUTIONS AND REMINDERS

- ⦿ The Purpose is not to “fix” people. (Process vs. results)
- ⦿ People may be vulnerable to interventions, including bad ones
- ⦿ People may feel **powerless** and helpless
- ⦿ We do not provide therapy at crisis scenes or funerals.

# TASKS OF GRIEF

- ◉ To accept the reality of the loss
  - ◉ To experience the pain of the loss
  - ◉ To adjust to an environment in which the loss has occurred
  - ◉ To withdraw emotional energy invested in the loss and invest in new relationships (Learn to live again)
  - ◉ **Find meaning and purpose in the loss**
- ◉ How can we help?

# MOVING FROM GRIEF TO GRATITUDE

Consider grief as a form of honor.

# GUIDELINES

- ◉ Limit your own talking.
- ◉ Think like a person in crisis.
- ◉ Don't interrupt.
- ◉ Concentrate.
- ◉ Take notes.
- ◉ Listen for ideas, not just words.
- ◉ Use non-verbal attending.
- ◉ Turn off your own words.
- ◉ React to ideas, not the person.
- ◉ Don't jump to conclusions.
- ◉ Practice listening.

A photograph of a field of cosmos flowers in shades of pink, purple, and white. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some fully open and others as buds. The background is a clear, light blue sky. The overall mood is peaceful and celebratory.

The highest tribute  
to the dead is not grief  
but gratitude.

Thornton Wilder

# MUCH OF THE INFORMATION IN THIS PRESENTATION CAME FROM:

- ◉ Dougy Center for Grieving Children and Families
- ◉ <http://www.samhsa.gov/>
- ◉ Janice Firn, PhD, LMSW
- ◉ Jayne Crisp
- ◉ Ryan's Heart

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