

# \* Bereavement Awareness

Nicola Hughes



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# \* Aims and Objectives

Aim: Gain a deeper understanding of bereavement and loss

Objectives:

- ✓ Reflect on your own thoughts and feelings about grief and how this may affect your helping
- ✓ Gain an understanding of bereavement theories and how to apply these theories in practice
- ✓ Consider the factors affecting bereaved people and their possible reactions
- ✓ Discuss assessment options and how we work with a bereaved client

# \* About Nicola Hughes

- ✓ My first placement was with a Bereavement Charity
- ✓ I've worked with bereaved children and their families since 2010.
- ✓ I deliver extensive training to professionals within the community, schools, and universities.
- ✓ I've been a group supervisor for a Bereavement Charity.
- ✓ I'm in Private Practice as a Creative Counsellor, Clinical Supervisor and Trainer.
- ✓ I work with individuals, young people and couples, face to face and online.

# \* On a Scale of 1 to 10...

Where:

1 = I know nothing about bereavement

10 = I know everything about bereavement

Give yourself a score.

1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10





## \* Overview

- ✓ Death and You
- ✓ Theory
- ✓ Death & Them
- ✓ Final Breath

# \* Death and You

“Don't send me  
flowers when  
I'm dead.

If you like me,  
send them  
while I'm alive.”

- Brian Clough



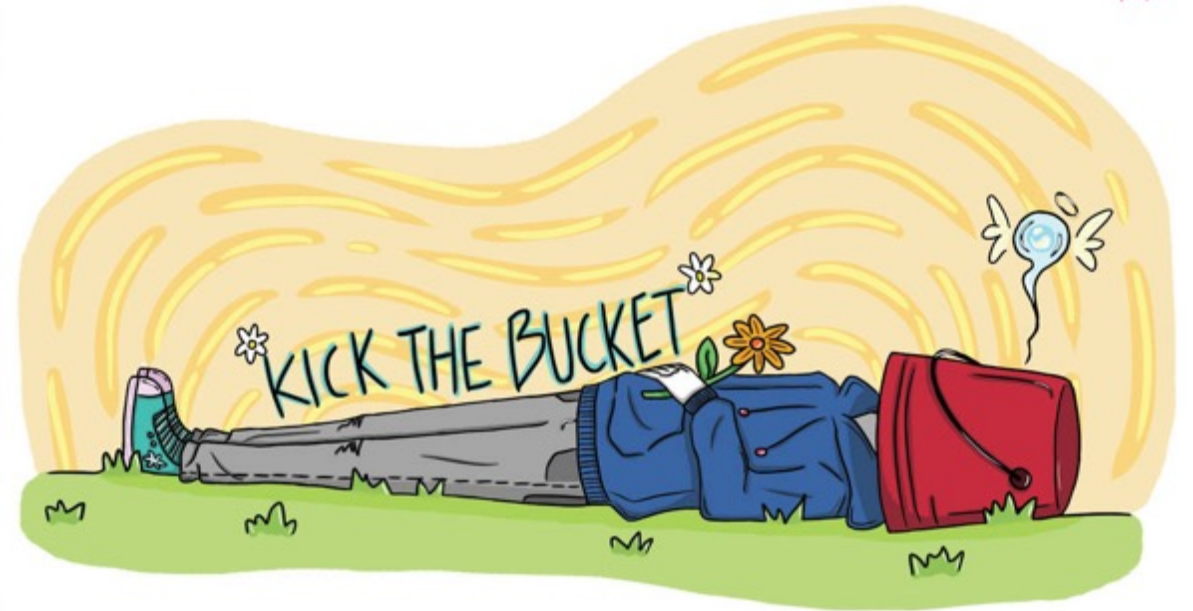
# \* Euphemisms

- ✓ Popped his clogs
- ✓ Pushing up daisies
- ✓ Kicked the bucket
- ✓ Brown bread
- ✓ Slipped away
- ✓ Crossed over
- ✓ Passed
- ✓ Star in the sky
- ✓ Through the pearly gates
- ✓ Lost
- ✓ Resting in peace
- ✓ Gone to be with their Maker
- ✓ Breathed their last breath
- ✓ In a better place
- ✓ Asleep
- ✓ Born sleeping



# \* Why do we use Euphemisms?

- ✓ For protection
- ✓ To avoid being rude or offensive
- ✓ To avoid discomfort
- ✓ To offer spiritual comfort
- ✓ Denial
- ✓ Your own painful grief feelings





## \* Reflect

- ✓ Think about the words you use to refer to death.
- ✓ Reflect on this. Are you avoiding something?
- ✓ Think about how you communicate with clients about death.
- ✓ Check out the words your clients use. Are they avoiding something?



## \* My Losses

Have a look at the handout and circle all the losses you have experienced.

**We have all experienced Loss.**

- ✓ How can this HELP your client work?
- ✓ How can this HINDER your client work?

## Help

- ✓ You may have hope that underpins your work.
- ✓ Easier to empathise with clients' raw feelings
- ✓ Patience to walk a painful and slow journey with your client
- ✓ Can share interim coping strategies

## Hinder

- ✓ The work may become about you and your feelings. Can you bracket your story?
- ✓ Become too emotionally involved
- ✓ Struggle to hear clients' frame of reference and distance yourself
- ✓ May want to give advice or share stories

## \* Further Thought

### Dying Matters Campaign: 5 things to do before I die

- ✓ Write your will
- ✓ Consider organ donation
- ✓ Record your funeral wishes
- ✓ Plan your future care and support
- ✓ Tell your loved ones your wishes





## \* Definition

What is the difference between:

- ✓ Bereavement
- ✓ Grief
- ✓ Mourning



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## \* Definition

- ✓ **Bereavement** is the death of someone.
- ✓ **Grief** is what we feel.
- ✓ **Mourning** is the physical expression of grief.



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## \* Definition

**Grief is a natural process.**

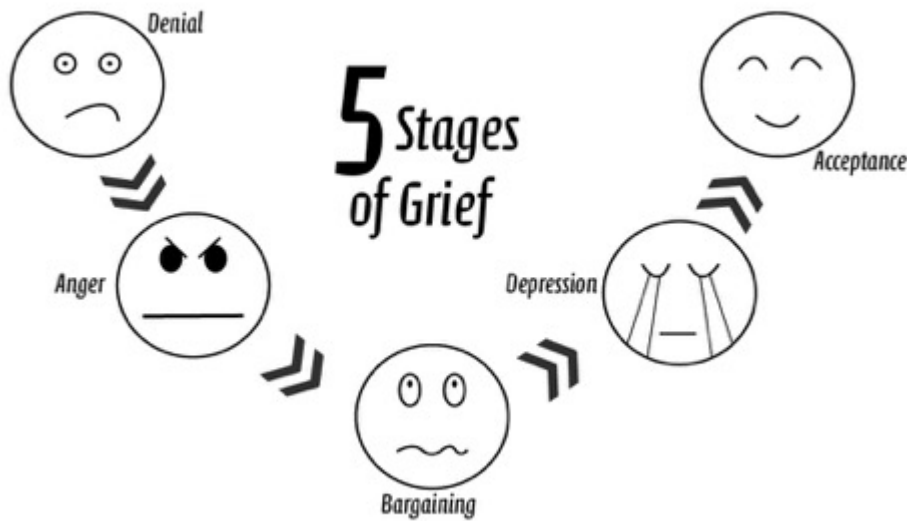
It does not necessarily require professional intervention.



# Bereavement Theories



# \* 5 Stages of Grief - Kübler-Ross Model

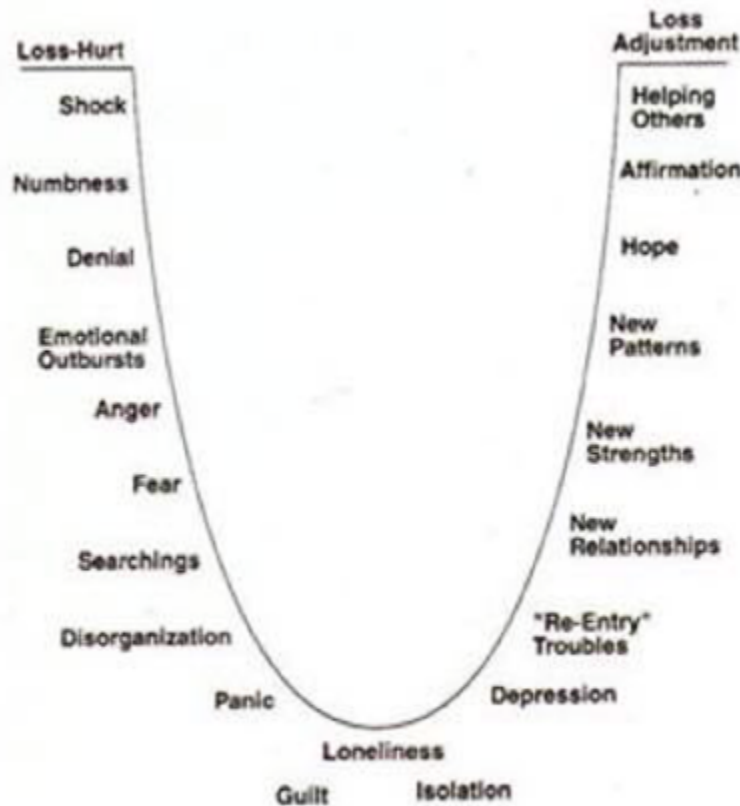


- ✓ The stages have evolved since their introduction.
- ✓ “They were never meant to help tuck messy emotions into neat packages.”
- ✓ “There is no typical response to loss, as there is no typical loss.”
- ✓ “Our grief is as individual as our lives.”

Kubler-Ross, E & Kessler D, (2005) On Grief and Grieving. London. Simon & Schuster

# Stages of Grief

# My Experience



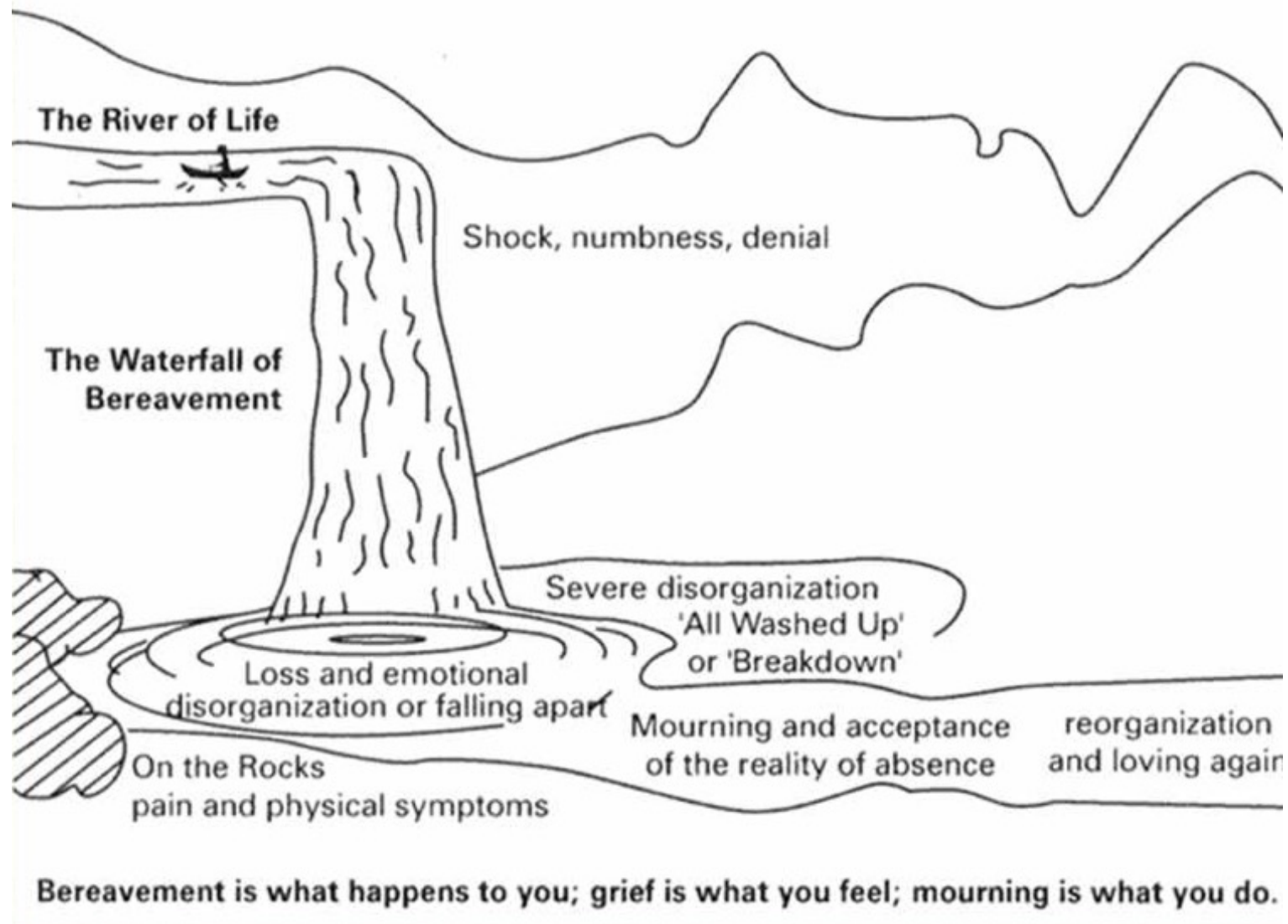
# \* Four Tasks of Mourning – William Worden

1. To accept the reality of the loss
2. To process the pain of grief
3. To adjust to a world without the deceased
4. To find an enduring connection with the deceased while embarking with new life

Worden, W. (1991) Grief Counselling and Grief Therapy 2nd Ed.  
London. Routledge- p.10-18

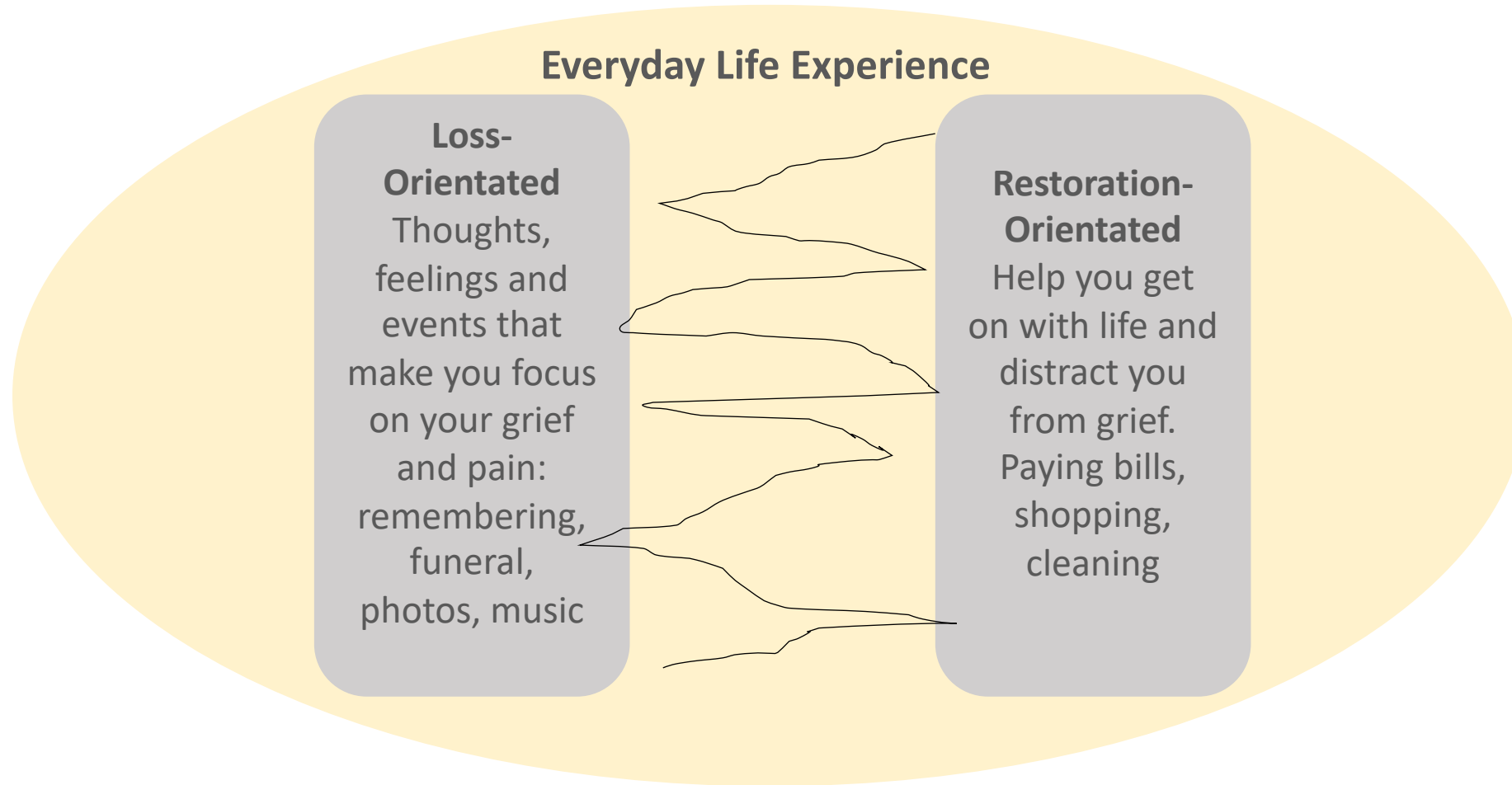


## \* The Whirlpool of Grief





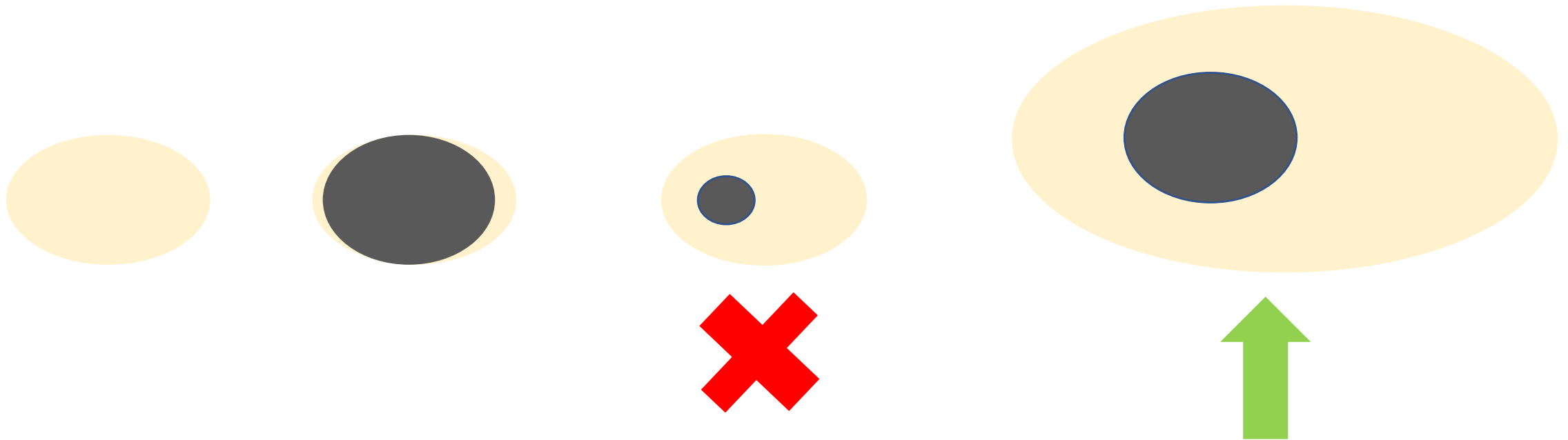
## \* Dual Process Model



Stroebe, Margaret; Schut, Henk (1999). "The Dual Process Model of Coping with Bereavement: Rationale and Description". *Death Studies*. **23** (3): 197–224. [doi:10.1080/074811899201046](https://doi.org/10.1080/074811899201046). PMID 10848151

## \* Tonkin's Model

According to this theory, grief starts off as all-consuming and, in fact, stays the same size and intensity, but the bereaved person grows 'around' their grief.



[www.loistonkin.com/growing-around-grief](http://www.loistonkin.com/growing-around-grief)

# \* All the theories

- ✓ 5 Stages of Grief – Kubler Ross
- ✓ 4 Tasks of Mourning – Worden
- ✓ The Whirlpool of Grief
- ✓ Dual Process Model - Stroebe and Schut
- ✓ Growing Around Grief - Tonkin



# Death and Them

“Death is not the greatest loss in life.  
The greatest loss is what dies inside us while we live.”  
Norman Cousins



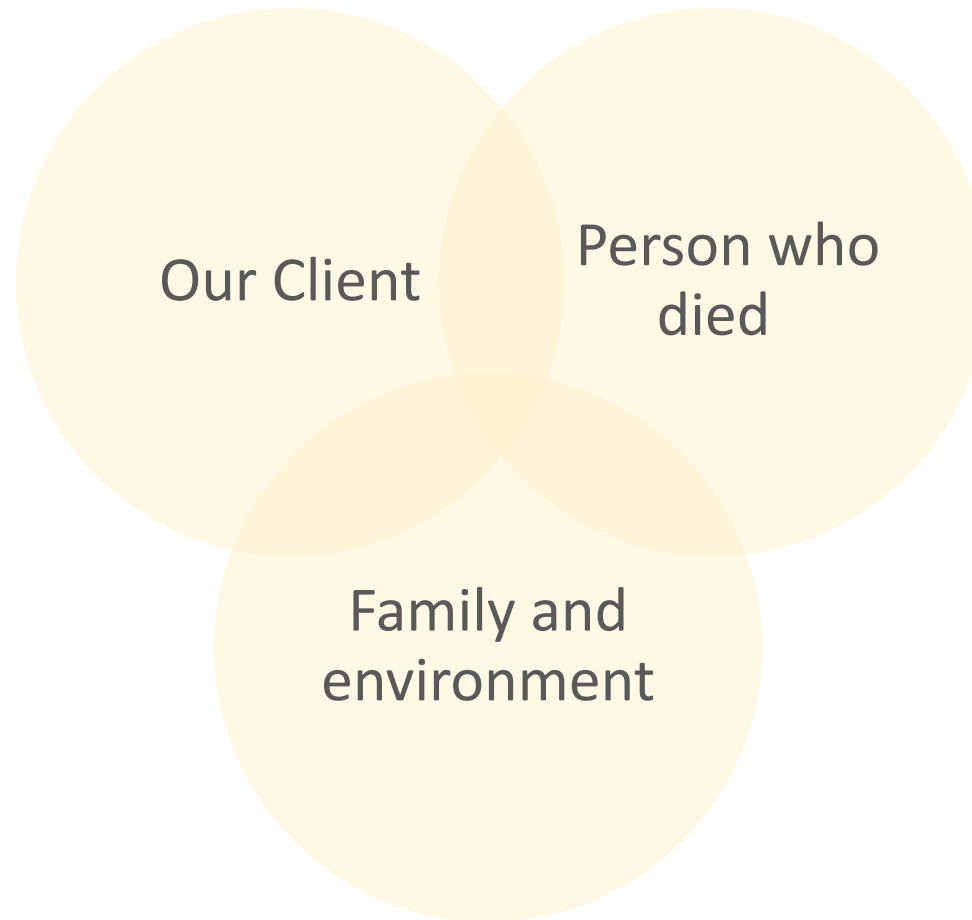
# \* Working with Diversity

You don't need to know everything but approach clients with curiosity and positive regard. Be aware of your own beliefs and values so that these can be 'bracketed' successfully.

## Cultural and Religious Differences to Consider:

- ✓ Grieving response
- ✓ Laying out the body
- ✓ Viewing the body
- ✓ Burial / Cremation or other
- ✓ Period between death and funeral
- ✓ Involvement of women or children
- ✓ Beliefs about an afterlife
- ✓ Spiritual differences
- ✓ Customary mourning period

# \* Intervening Variables



# \* Complicated Grief

Remember grief is a natural response; however prolonged symptoms can mean intervention is necessary.

- ✓ The person feels stuck and struggles to cope with the emotional impact of their grief or won't grieve.
- ✓ Having existing mental health conditions
- ✓ Traumatic death/murder/suicide/domestic abuse
- ✓ **A result of a combination of difficult circumstances**



# \* Possible Grief Reactions

## Behavioural

- ✓ Withdraw, regress or become clingy
- ✓ Behavioural problems
- ✓ Risk-taking behaviour or cause harm to themselves
- ✓ Poor punctuality or truant
- ✓ Difficulties with concentration and learning
- ✓ Be preoccupied or become forgetful
- ✓ Hit out

## Physical

- ✓ Sweating, butterflies, constricted throat
- ✓ Sensation of a weight on shoulders, neck and head
- ✓ Exhaustion, ache and pains
- ✓ Affected appetite, sleep, bladder or bowel control
- ✓ Decreased resistance to illness
- ✓ Present similar symptoms to the person who died

# \* Possible Grief Reactions

## Thoughts

- ✓ It's my fault they died
- ✓ People I care about are going to die
- ✓ Why did they leave me
- ✓ It's not fair
- ✓ The world is not a safe place

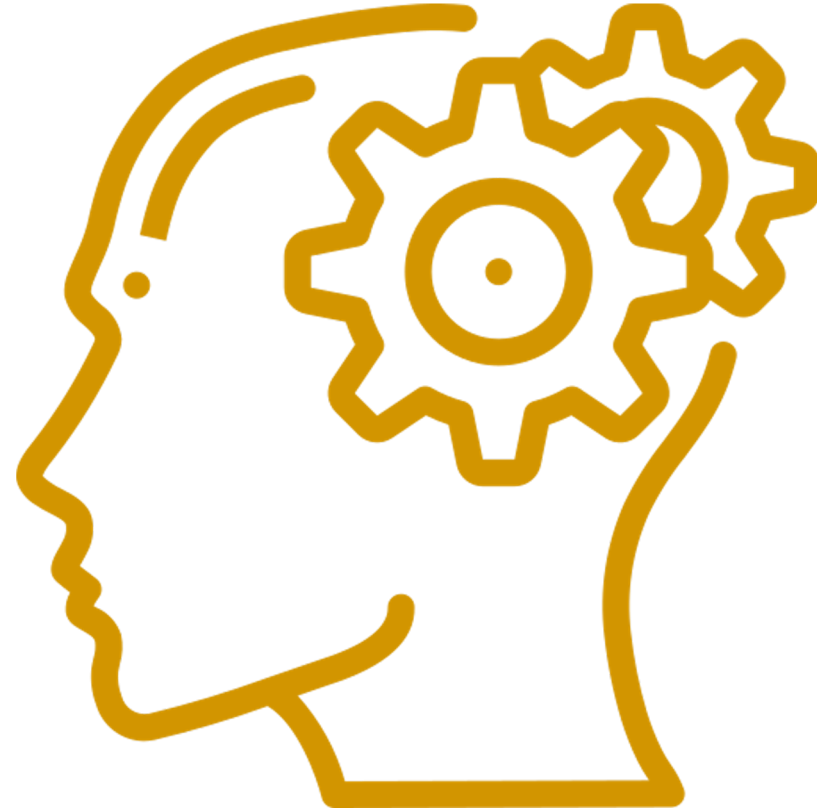
## Feelings

- ✓ Mood swings, nightmares
- ✓ Become fearful of the dark
- ✓ Feel lonely/abandoned, anxious, sad, guilty, angry, relieved, numb, overwhelmed, bitter, confused, heartache, happy memories



# \* Assessment

- ✓ Intervening variables
- ✓ Stages of grief
- ✓ Tasks of grief
- ✓ Whirlpool of grief
- ✓ Client's reactions – what is the 'problem'?
- ✓ Meaningful dates
- ✓ Genogram or ecogram
- ✓ Why now?



# \* The Work

- ✓ Time and space to tell stories
- ✓ A place to remember
- ✓ A space to feel uncomfortable feelings
- ✓ Less goal-setting than in other work
- ✓ A help with ideas
- ✓ Creative work

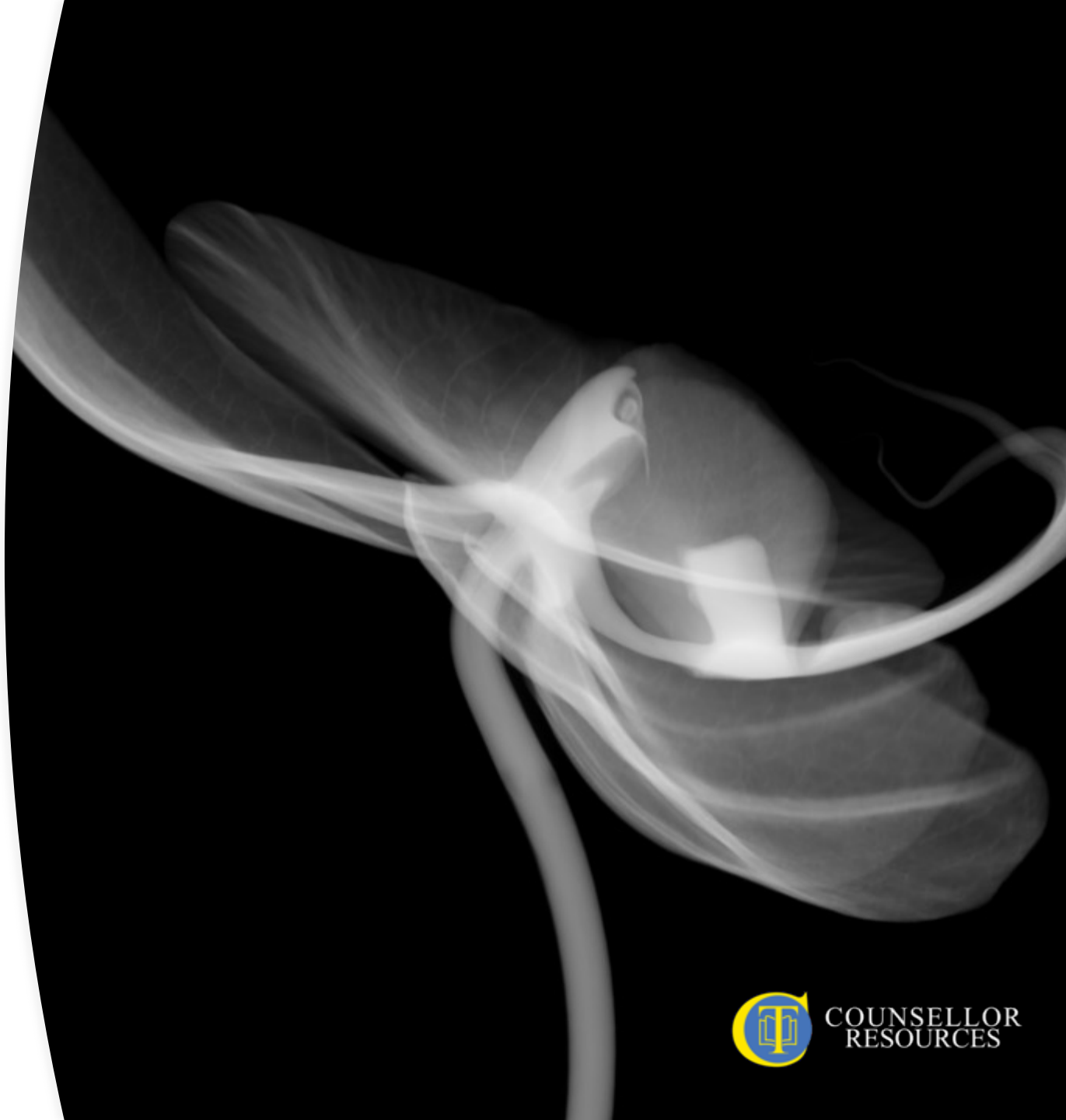


# \* The Final Breath

- ✓ Reflected on your own experiences
- ✓ Learnt about theories
- ✓ Learnt about the grieving

## What next?

- ✓ Your own counselling?
- ✓ Good bereavement supervisor?
- ✓ Extra reading?



# \* Where are you now?

On a scale of 1-10 where:

1 = I know nothing about bereavement

10 = I know everything about bereavement

Give yourself a NEW score.

1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10



# \* CPD Certificate

*Don't forget to claim your CPD certificate.*



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