



Alberta
Journeying
Through  **Grief™**

COACH'S MANUAL 2020

8 WEEK PROGRAM

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Program overview

About Alberta Journeying Through Grief™: A Simple Empowering Program

Alberta Journeying Through Grief™ is a SIMPLE, POSITIVE, EMPOWERING workshop.

It is a facilitated workshop for people who want to have an opportunity for a healthy learning process after any kind of loss. **Alberta Journeying Through Grief™** moves people to **action**.

The program teaches low tech and low cost skills that should be accessible to everyone.

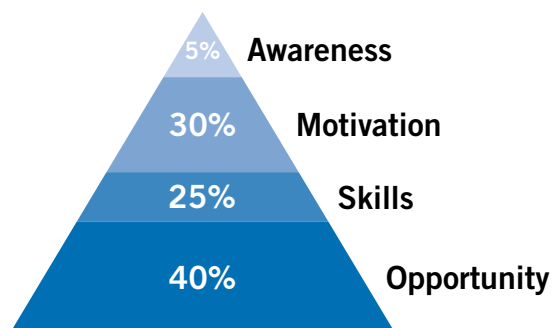
The participant's manual engages participants to use the skills they learn in class throughout the week and after the program is finished. According to participant evaluations they have found this a significant tool in program success.

Simple

Alberta Journeying Through Grief™ promotes the simple rather than the complex. The idea is that people don't need a great deal of information. People need the strategies for incorporating changes into their daily life. Significant program testing confirms that all information needed is included in the manual.

AMSO (Awareness, Motivation, Skills and Opportunity)

The AMSO Framework developed by Dr. Michael O'Donnell (2005) focuses on the development of effective programs. Practice has informed us that education based programs are not enough to change behavior in most people. The pyramid illustrates the AMSO design. The smallest part of the program is the **awareness**. The program design will help people assess and broaden their **motivation** through techniques such as health assessment and embracing their interests and passions. People learn **skills** that will move them towards their goals. **Opportunity** is integrating behaviors into their lives by planning how they will make using the skills a priority and have a plan to overcome barriers. This framework is different than most health programs offered. Coaches must understand the framework and focus on ensuring they follow the program design rather than reverting back to awareness based programs.



Positive

People learn best when they are engaged. **Alberta Journeying Through Grief™** accentuates the positive and what people want to move towards, not what they are moving away from. Participants build on their strengths. Coaches are authentic and enthusiastic in their facilitation of the program. Coaches lead by example. Gandhi's quote "Be the change you wish to see in the world" is our mantra.

Empowering

Participants are empowered by their own ability to build skills. Individuals have the biggest influence over their present and future journey through their everyday choices. People like it, feel empowered by it and recommend **Alberta Journeying Through Grief™** to their friends. It is based on current research and best practices. Every workshop is evaluated and feedback is used for continuous quality improvement. Simple, positive and empowering messaging has proven to help participants move forward in their journey.

Target Participants

Alberta Journeying Through Grief™ is for anyone who has experienced a loss. Losses may include:

- death of a loved one or pet
- loss of employment
- loss of health
- loss of a relationship
- other losses

All participants are encouraged to make a personal decision to commit to the program. A workshop size of less than 15 participants provides the stage for lively discussion and peer support. Participants are referred by their physician, health care professional or self-referral.

Coaches

Requirements

Personal

- Leads by example. *“Be the change you wish to see in the world.”* – Mahatma Gandhi
- Is authentic
- Believes in and is passionate about healthy living
- Uses the skills in their own lives
- Is positive, professional and energetic

Education

- Registered health professional

Specific Training

- Facilitator/coach training – recommended
- Motivational interviewing – recommended
- Shadow someone who has previous experience in facilitating **Alberta Journeying Through Grief™**
- Read the AMSO description in the manual on **page 2**
- Read the coach information on grief on **pages 139 – 145** of this manual

Coaching Grief

Your Role

Setting the Tone

The coaches are a critical component to participant success. The term coach was chosen carefully. Rather than telling participants what to do, coaches help them **develop new skills and habits and instill accountability** to ensure participants are finding ways to use these skills in their lives. Coaches that are engaged, excited and believe in the program will inspire participants. **Alberta Journeying Through Grief™** creates an experience that moves participants towards understanding and coping with grief and supporting emotional healing. The coach sets the tone for the workshop. This workshop is about the positive. The coach will find that appropriate humor breaks the ice, helps participants to form as a group, and makes the workshop enjoyable and ensures people want to return. The coach's role is to help participants live up to their goals and move to action.

Being Prepared

Review the appropriate week in the coach's manual prior to every class. Practice the material until you feel very comfortable. Set up all materials in advance and ensure that you are available to greet participants before the workshop and answer questions after it. Your friendliness helps participants feel comfortable.

Coaches learn to read the engagement and action of individuals and the group. There can be significant variance between people in the group. Also, groups take on their own personality and over time the personality and dynamics of the group can change. Coaches need to observe and monitor this in order to consider any small adjustment needed for subsequent classes. The challenge is to keep the group motivated and pushing forward while maintaining the engagement of each participant. This takes work and skill.

Coaches will identify and help develop group champions. These participants can provide energy or motivation to class members. When energy lags, coaches may need to direct a question to a class champion. Often participants take suggestions from class members more readily than from coaches. It is also important that coaches ensure there is participation from all workshop participants. Use champion input wisely to inject energy, but don't set up a situation where the champion dominates conversations.

Stick to the Basics

Content

Stick with the course content while working to engage participants. **Do not overwhelm participants or dilute the key content with additional information or handouts.** Asking for more information or details is often a participant strategy used to defer the harder work of taking action on change. **There is no need to supplement the materials in the participant journal. The simplicity of the information is powerful.** It is important that coaches resist the temptation to give additional information or handouts. If you feel the need to give out more information consider the possibility that you may need to learn to present the information in a more clear and concise manner.

Stories

The stories to illustrate key concepts have been chosen very carefully. We recommend that you do not substitute personal stories for these. Often substitute stories do not demonstrate the concepts as strongly. If you do use personal stories run them by another coach before you present them to ensure they illustrate the key concept.

Timing

The workshops have been carefully designed to ensure time to explore the basics and incorporate proven strategies. Be available 15 – 30 minutes before to greet participants and complete any set up required. Start workshops on time to respect the time of all participants. Also be available 15 minutes after workshops to answer participant questions.

Participant Success is Priority #1

Coaches are committed to the success of participants. Coaches nurture a supportive environment. Motivational interviewing techniques are used to facilitate change. It is highly recommended all coaches have this course before facilitating. It is the coach's job to skillfully direct participants to **action** on the basics. Listen carefully to what the participants have to say. A lot of the class learning comes from their experience.

Accountability

The **Alberta Journeying Through Grief™** workshop holds the participants accountable through a Check-in every week. Check-out and forging a detailed plan for the week is also part of participant accountability. It is a tool to guide them to practice grief skills through the week. Participant accountability builds their success and self-esteem.

Reading Your Group

Coaches learn to read the group. There will be significant variance between groups and group dynamics will change over the term of the workshop. Consider:

- Are workshop participants experiencing a healthy healing process through practicing the skills?
- Are participants working together to support each other?
- Are workshop champion(s) evolving?
- Are all workshop members engaged?
- Are there disruptions or negativity that needs addressing?
- What is working well?

Evaluation

Evaluation provides information to assess the impact of the program and allows comparison between programs, time points, and with the literature.

Week 1: Adult attitude to grief scale is completed by each participant.

Week 8: Adult attitude to grief scale and **Grief participant evaluation** are completed by each participant.

Coaching Tips

- Schedule 2 hours for each workshop. Plan a vitality break partway through the class for participants to take care of themselves. Encourage them to stand, grab water and connect with each other.
- Have a clock on the coaches' table or at the back of the room. Allow 15 minutes for check-in, up to 100 minutes for workshop discussion and 5 minutes for last video.
- Listen for successes as participants come in and as they share in **small groups**.
- For **Large Group Check-in**, ask a person with an exciting success to start first to set a tone of positivity.
- Prepare hesitant group members for slow success by encouraging them to simply try the activities and see what happens rather than promise great and immediate changes; grief skills need to be cultivated and some members need to be convinced it's worthwhile.
- Acknowledge, yet redirect negativity. When people feel unheard, they repeat themselves and ignoring them can make it worse. Allow 1 – 2 slips back to negativity and with humour/kindness, use these moments to normalize/empathise how hard making changes can be for all of us.
- This group is for any kind of loss, so it may require creativity to change some of the activities to fit their loss.
- **You can also address excuses during the Check-in using the following questions:**
 - **Thanks for raising that issue; others have mentioned it too. So, what did/can you do to deal with it?** (assume they did something).
 - **It sounds like the thought of change after all of this time is a bit scary; what did you finally tell yourself to move ahead?** (acknowledge the feeling, but move to action immediately).
 - **It can be hard to find time. I know it's busy; but, I wonder if you've given thought to how you may need to change your schedule to work on these activities?** (wait...) **How have others in the group found the time for these activities?** (use of subtle peer pressure)
 - **You're right, not every activity will work for you. We can look at how it was done and see if anything needed to be fine-tuned to make it fit for you specifically.**

Workshops

Preparation

All weeks

- In case of emergency, bring your cell phone to class (put it on silent/vibrate mode); have your building address handy
- Arrange the room in a horse shoe
- Have pens and markers available
- Have boxes of tissue placed on tables throughout the room
- Use the attendance chart weekly

Week 1

- Provide **Alberta Journeying Through Grief™** journals for each participant
- Provide one small piece of paper to each participant (for Icebreaker)
- **Mourner's bill of rights** card for each participant

Week 3

- White envelope for each participant
- Coloured paper (six colours, three 8.5 x 11 sheets of each, each paper cut into six pieces)

Week 6

- Non-verbal expression kit
 - Include pastels, paints, chalk, pencil crayons, play-dough, coloured paper and glue

Week 8

- Red, green, yellow, blue and black markers, 3 or 4 of each
- Other supplies needed for chosen closing activity

Text in this colour box is instructions for the coach.

Spoken text. **Bolded portions are the key points.**

Participant journal – this text is directly from the participant journal. It is meant to be read aloud.



Turn to this page.



Indicates you are still on that page.



Indicates PowerPoint slide for participant viewing.



Indicates a video.

Week 1



**Welcome to Alberta
Journeying Through Grief™
Week 1**

Please display name tent.



As participants come in, make journal available to each participant. Ask them to tear out the name tag at the front of the journal, fold it to form a tent and write their name on it.

Welcome

Welcome to **Alberta Journeying Through Grief™**. Please put your name on the name tag and place it so we can see it.

Give a few welcoming comments. Introduce coaches and credentials.



Housekeeping

- Bathroom and water
- Parking
- Bring your Grief journal each week
- Vitality break



Before we get into our first session, we want to go over a few housekeeping guidelines to make everyone feel comfortable.

2

Housekeeping

- Each class will have a **Vitality Break** about halfway through – this is a chance to refresh yourself – walk around, use the facilities and get some water.
- Bring your **Grief Journal** each week.

- Bathrooms and water
- Parking
- Evacuation procedure – In the event of an evacuation, please exit out the nearest door.

Indicate where these are located.

Our muster point is:

Indicate where this is outside.

Take a look at the workbook in front of you. We will refer to this as your **journal**. This is for you to keep and work on from week to week, so please bring it with you each time you come.



In order to help you to feel more comfortable and safe in this group, we have come up with some guidelines.

Each person's grief is **unique**. Be mindful of advice giving.

Let participants read through guidelines on their own. Highlight **confidentiality** and **leaving class**. Ask participants if they have a **medical condition** that could **affect them in class** to let coaches know (at break or after class).

2

Group Guidelines

- Please make every effort to attend on time, if you must come late please slip in quietly and take a seat.
- If you are going to be late or miss group, call the front desk at **403.343.9100**. We will ask that you review the material you missed prior to your return if you are absent so that you can participate fully in the next class.
- Being absent for more than 2 sessions out of 8 will result in a request that you rebook into a future group.
- Treat other group members with the same courtesy that you would like to receive.
- Confidentiality – keep information that comes up in group private to the group.
- If there will be someone in the room observing, we will let you know prior to them being in the room.
- Bringing snacks/water is permitted but please dispose of garbage afterwards. Does anyone have any severe food allergies we need to be aware of so we can avoid bringing those items?
- We encourage participation in class, but private conversations are discouraged until break so that you don't miss out on learnings. These conversations can be very distracting to others; we want to be respectful to all participants.
- If you need to leave the room before break, please give us a thumbs up so we know that you are ok. If you are gone for more than 5 minutes, one of us will come to check on you.
- This is a fragrance free facility, so please be mindful of this prior to group to maintain an adequate level of hygiene and avoid wearing fragrances.
- Please turn off all cell phones or put to silence/ vibrate.
- Verbal or physical attacks on the other clients or coaches will not be tolerated in group. Please use your skills to manage angry urges. Anyone who violates this rule will be asked to leave group for that day and will be called to discuss relevant consequences.
- Other: _____
Is there anything else that will help you feel more comfortable or safe in the group?

Please consider that people are here for many different types of loss: divorce, loss of a loved person or pet, estrangement, loss of job or physical health and others. We ask that you respect each person's loss and the way that the loss is experienced. Grief is like a fingerprint—it is slightly different for everyone. **We ask that you do not compare one loss to another.**

Also, since you are each dealing with a different type of loss in this group, we acknowledge that we do not have the perfect language to express some concepts in a way that includes everyone. When we use the words “your loss,” you can personalize this to your own situation (loss of person, pet, relationship, job, physical health or others).



Consent Form Questionnaire



Letter of Consent

Hand out letter of consent and have participants fill it out.

Questionnaire (about 5 minutes)

We ask that you be open to evaluating the group experience so we can learn from you and other participants in order to make necessary adjustments to the group. Please tear out the questionnaire at the front of your journal and fill it out.

Have participants tear out **Adult Attitude to Grief Scale** from the front of their journals. Give them about 5 minutes to complete it.

Icebreaker (about 5 minutes)

We will be getting to know you over the course of the workshop. In order to help **you** to get to know **us** better, in groups of two or three, we will get you to come up with one question that you would like to ask us. There is more paper here if you want to write your question down.

Give participants about 3 minutes to come up with a question. Have one person from each group share that question with the class. Coaches answer each question **briefly**.

Introduce yourself to the group. Tell us your name and one thing you enjoy doing.



What We are Doing Today

Each class will have the following sections:

- 1) **Understanding Your Grief Journey**
- 2) **Self-expression**
- 3) **Active Healing**



What We are Doing Today

3

Each class over the next 8 weeks will have the following **three sections**:

Understanding My Grief Journey

Self-expression

Active Healing

Each class will have the following three sections:

- a) **Understanding your grief journey** – this will give you some education. This will help you to understand yourself better.
- b) **Self-expression** – this will help you to go inside of yourself and reflect on your grief, to explore and express your grief.
- c) **Active healing** – this section helps to combine the first two into something you can use to move forward. You will engage in exercises to deepen your healing and reinvest in life.

We will also have a **check-in** each week. We will not push you to speak or share. You may find after a few weeks you are more comfortable sharing with each other.



Grief as a Mountain Climb



Grief as a Mountain Climb

Now before we get to today's content, we want to talk about grief being like a mountain climb.

3

Grief is like a mountain climb.

- Moving through grief is not a sprint, it is a long climb – similar to a climb up a mountain.
 - At the end of this group, you will be “in the climb”.
 - You will have a toolkit or proverbial backpack to help you move through your grief and loss. You already have some tools in your backpack.
 - The challenge is to use these tools or skills each week.
 - Challenge yourself to expand your toolkit.
 - The tools or skills only work if you use them.
 - Each person's mountain is different.
 - Each person will be at a different point in the climb...some at the base, some further up.
 - You are not alone in your grief.
-
- Please be aware that some of our materials and examples may refer to the death of a loved one, but be assured that we respect all other losses and aim to help you apply the principles for grief to your own particular loss.
 - If you are concerned about your comfort with your loss in this group (e.g. if you have a different kind of loss), come and talk to one of the coaches after class.
 - We are not here to fix your grief. It is a spiritual journey. We are looking at things that will help you move through that journey.

3

Note: Since you are each dealing with a different type of loss in this group, we acknowledge that we do not have the perfect language to express some concepts in a way that includes everyone. When we use the words “your loss,” you can personalize this to your own situation (loss of a person, pet, relationship, job, physical health or others).

Where am I now?

Place an **x** on the mountain to indicate where you are in your grief journey.



Have participants mark where they are on the mountain at this point of their grief journey.



Understanding Your Grief Journey



Note to Coach:
If it comes up, grief is the internal thoughts and feelings you experience; mourning is expressing grief outwardly.

Understanding Your Grief Journey

Grief vs. Depression

Our first section today is understanding your grief journey.



Understanding Your Grief Journey

Grief vs. Depression



We want to take a few moments to look at the difference between **grief** and **depression**. What do you see as the difference between the two?

Take a look at your journal on **page 4** where some of the differences are outlined.

Go through a few of the points from the chart.

4

Understanding My Grief Journey

Grief vs. Depression: A. Wolfelt

NORMAL GRIEF	CLINICAL DEPRESSION
You have normal grief if you...	You may be clinically depressed if you...
Respond to comfort and support	Do not accept support
Are often openly angry	Are irritable and complain but do not directly express anger
Relate your depressed feelings to the loss experience	Do not relate your feelings of depression to a particular life event
Can still experience moments of enjoyment in life	Exhibit an all-pervading sense of doom
Exhibit feelings of sadness and emptiness	Project a sense of hopelessness and chronic emptiness
May have transient physical complaints	Have chronic physical complaints
Express guilt over some specific aspect of the loss	Have generalized feelings of guilt
Feel a temporary loss of self-esteem	Feel a deep and ongoing loss of self-esteem

Group Discussion

Why does this matter? In other words, why is it important for you to distinguish between normal grief and depression?

Take a few minutes to fill your own answer in your journal.

4

Why is it important for me to distinguish between normal grief and depression?

Have them fill out **Grief Depression Inventory** on **page 53**. This is for them—they do not need to hand this in.

4

If you are concerned that you may be **struggling with depression**, please see one of the coaches after class.

Note to Coach:

Grief is healthy; depression is unhealthy.
Grief can morph into depression.
We just want you to be aware that
there are other resources you may need if
you think you are dealing with depression.

Coach can assess needs;
possible referral for 1:1 counseling or
Happiness Basics class.



Self-care Wheel

4

Self-care Wheel

Self-care is encouraged during your grief journey. A Self-care Wheel allows you to explore and discover various ways to look after your well-being and pay attention to your needs.

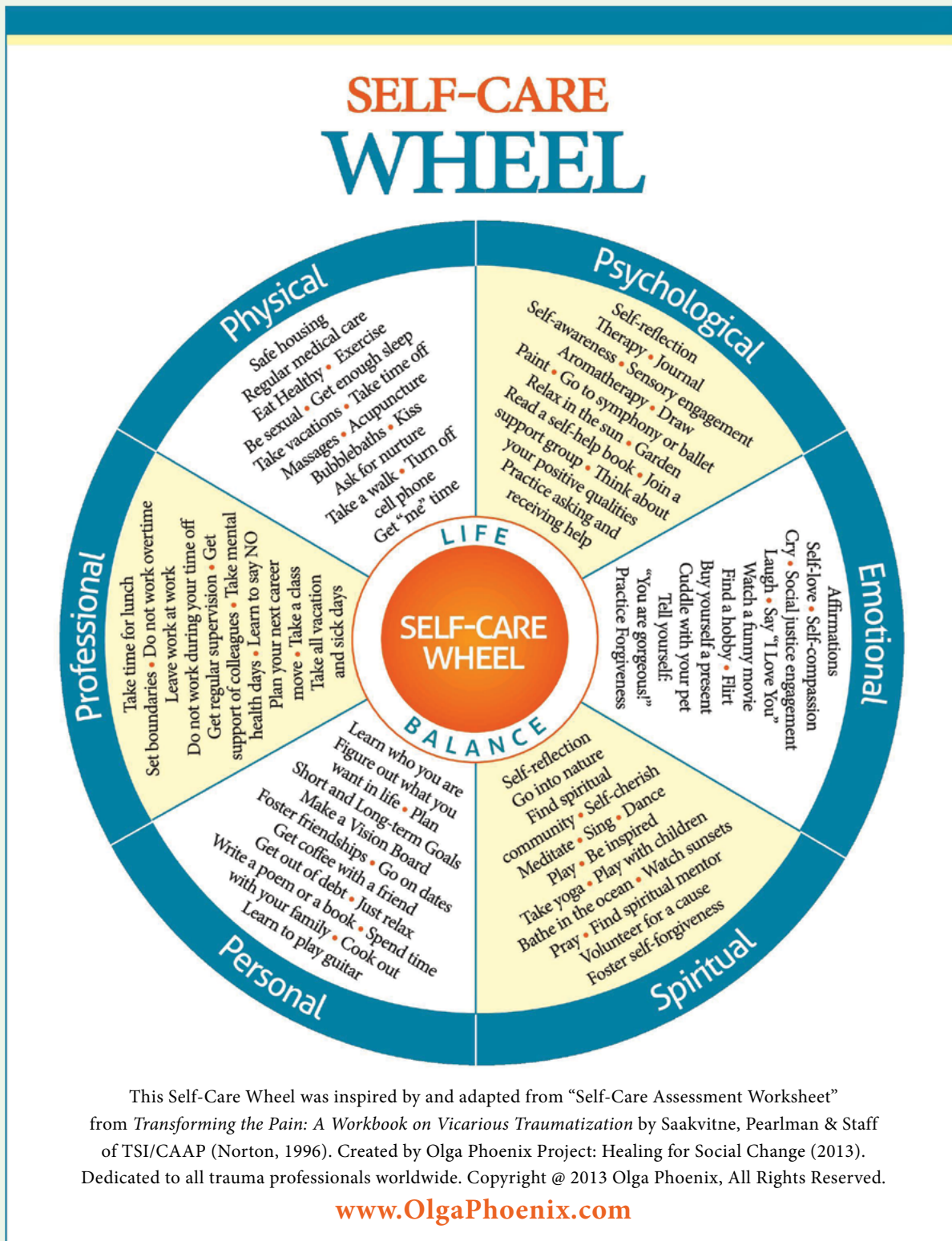
Earlier, we mentioned you have a proverbial backpack that you can fill up with tools to help you in your journey. This exercise is a way for you to identify tools you already have in your backpack and to add some new ones.

Take a look at the Self-care Wheel. Take a moment to look at what you are already doing in each area.

Go through a few of the points from the chart; give a few minutes to reflect, then discuss.

Coach can put “Self-care” up on the whiteboard and write down their answers.

Note to Coach:
This is not meant to be a chore,
it's meant to be a healthy release.
If it's chore, it becomes
a distraction or an expectation.



This Self-Care Wheel was inspired by and adapted from “Self-Care Assessment Worksheet” from *Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization* by Saakvitne, Pearlman & Staff of TSI/CAAP (Norton, 1996). Created by Olga Phoenix Project: Healing for Social Change (2013). Dedicated to all trauma professionals worldwide. Copyright @ 2013 Olga Phoenix, All Rights Reserved.

Now think about what you would like to do more or less of in one or two of the areas.

Give a few minutes for reflection, then ask if anyone wants to share.

What one thing could you do this week from the Self-care Wheel to nurture yourself? Jot that down on **page 6**.

After a few minutes:

Would anyone like to share?



What one thing could I do this week from the Self-care Wheel to nurture myself?



Self-expression:

Hopes for the Group

Mourner's Bill of Rights



Self-expression

Hopes For the Group

We are going to talk about your hopes for the group and Mourner's Bill of Rights.

Have participants share what they **hope to get out of the group**. Write their answers on a flip chart or whiteboard. Facilitators are to weave in group hopes over the 8 weeks throughout information and discussions.

Take a moment to jot down a few ideas for yourself on **page 6**.

6

What do I hope to get out of the group?

You can go back to these every now and then throughout the 8 weeks and revise as necessary.

Mourner's Bill of Rights

There are many different reactions others may have to your grief. You may be asking yourself, "Do I have the right to express my grief?" This card gives you permission to do what you need to do.

Give out **Mourner's bill of rights** cards. Allow a few minutes for discussion.



Active Healing

5 Minutes Off



Active Healing

Breathing Meditation (5 Minutes Off)

Sometimes we can experience grief reactions in different ways—our bodies may be tense or fatigued and our minds may be all over the place—this video allows us to take **5 Minutes Off** from what we are experiencing—a bit of a break. We will give you the opportunity to experience **5 Minutes Off** this week. We will end our other weeks with it; you have the option on those weeks to stay or go when we put the video on.

We will be asking you what you noticed before the exercise so take a moment to think about what you notice now before we start.



Cue video: **5 Minutes Off**

Brief Discussion

What that was like for you?

Take a few minutes to **reflect** and **answer the questions on page 7** of your journal.

7

Breathing Meditation

- 5 minutes off

What did I notice before the exercise?

What did I notice after?

What did I learn?

7

Homework

For further exploration, check out:

- Anxiety to calm meditations on Red Deer PCN website: www.reddeerpcn.com
- UCLA free guided meditations
- YouTube “Deep breathing”
- Visit your local library and ask about meditation DVDs
- CALM (not all of it is free)

Homework

Self-care

- Build in some time for self-care. Explore other meditations (list in journal) if interested.

Links

- Next week, we will be talking about **links**—objects that help you feel **linked** or **connected** with your loss. Feel free to bring in your own link.

Week 2



Welcome to Alberta Journeying Through Grief™ Week 2

Please display name tent
Weekly reflection
Check-in



Week 2 up as participants arrive. Direct participants to start the Check-in on **page 9** and be ready for their small group discussion of last week's homework.

9

Check-in

WEEKLY REFLECTION: How did my week go? Was there anything surprising from my Self-care Wheel last week? Did I try anything new for self-care? If yes, how was it helpful? If no, is there anything else that was helpful to me? What came up for me this week?

Allow for each individual the necessary time to reflect upon their thoughts, feelings, physical sensations, spiritual etc.

Check-in

Invite participants to **share reflections in groups of two – four, encouraging them to give each person a chance to share.**

Large Group

Does anyone want to share something about the Self-care Wheel, meditations or any discoveries this week?

Give plenty of time for large group check-in.

Note to Coach:

Participants may not notice much change from week to week. **Grief is a process.** The tools will take time and reflection to begin the work of healing. Encourage participants to be patient with themselves. They may be tired/drained after these sessions. Participants may need more rest or other forms of self-care.



Understanding Your Grief Journey



Understanding Your Grief Journey


9

Understanding My Grief Journey

Today, we will be talking about **two types of links**. One we will simply call **“the link”**—something that helps you to experience your loss in a positive way. The second type of link is the connection between **grief** and **attachment**.



Understanding Your Grief Journey
Introduction to “The Link”
Link Between Grief and Attachment

Attachment  Grief

*Note to Coach:
Adapted from
Alan Wolfelt:
Depression of Grief*

*Note to Coach:
Alan Wolfelt:
Understanding Your Grief
pg. 78*

The Link

“Linking ...can help you to feel connected to your loss.”
(Depression of Grief)

The Link

- Can be a memento—a recording of the person’s voice, a favourite toy or clothing, a special place, a thought.
- Can be created after the loss (e.g., an article that you buy that reminds you of your loved one or brings back a good memory).
- These are ways to connect physically, emotionally and spiritually or remind us of the essence of our loss.
- They help us to form a new attachment to our loss.
- The item you choose should be soothing/healing and have a positive meaning.

Take a moment to answer the question on **page 9** about what your link might be. You will answer the last question a bit later.

9

The Link

What is *my* link? Is it an item, place, story or thought? Something that is soothing and triggers a positive experience for me?

Note to Coach:

Coach can start this by bringing in an example of the link to place on table. Create a space for sharing within the group. Invite participants to share the link that they brought today. They may also want to bring a link during the next few weeks. They can keep their own objects with them for safekeeping.

Individuals who are experiencing divorce or another type of loss may have objects they want to get rid of rather than remember. Others may want to focus on an item that symbolizes what they lost (e.g., power or independence). The most important thing is for them to honor what they feel.

Also, some participants may be experiencing a loss of someone who “did them wrong”—the loss may have more to do with what they should have said or done or how the relationship was or could have been, than with the actual loss of the person.

Continue on same PowerPoint: **Link Between Grief & Attachment**

Group Discussion

As you look at the slide on the link between grief and attachment—what is the relationship between the two sides of the coin for you? What does it look like for you?

- If you didn't love or feel positive emotions, would you grieve?
- Because we buried a person or pet or our job or our health or our marriage doesn't mean we buried our feelings. They remain.
- How long should we grieve for?

Answer the last question on **page 9**.

Note to Coach:

Re: link between grief/attachment (adapted from Worden; Wolfelt; Rando)

9

Take a few minutes to reflect on the link between grief and attachment. What does this mean for me?



Body Memory

"Our first impressions of an experience usually come from our senses...these impressions are not encoded as words, but as the somatic sensations they are: sight, smell, sounds, touches, taste, movement, positions, behavioural sequences, visceral reactions."

(The Body Remembers, page 44)



Body Memory

We can sometimes have an emotional reaction or our body responds in some way to our environment before we think about it.

There are things in our environment that we may not be able to control that trigger the pain of the loss—they engage the five senses. Triggers can be negative, but they can also be positive. In this next section, we want to focus on a **positive trigger** and **experience**.

"Our first impressions of an experience usually come from our senses...these impressions are not encoded as words, but as the somatic sensations they are: smell, sight, sounds, touches, tastes, movement, position, behavioral sequences, visceral reactions."

Would anyone like to share their thoughts on this?

*Note to Coach:
The Body Remembers,
page 44*



Self-expression
Body Reaction Exercise



Self-expression

Body Reaction Exercise

Sit comfortably in your chair. If you feel safe, you can close your eyes.

Bring to mind **your link** that connects **you** to **your loss**. Remember it can be an item, a place, or memory. Take a few minutes to hold **that image** in your mind.

Savour your **body's reaction** – notice what emotions are present. What is happening in your body? What smells are there? As you hold that image in your mind, what do you see? Are there any tastes present? Any sounds? What thoughts are with you? Is there a need that you feel? Whatever is present, that is okay. Is there anything you need to do (cry, get a hug etc.)?

When you are ready, open your eyes and return back.

Note to Coach:

For those who are at peace about the loss, e.g. a person who died, the intensity of the body reaction is related to your feelings as well.

Take a few minutes to answer the questions on **page 10**.

10

Self-expression

Body Reaction Exercise

REFLECTION: take a few moments to reflect on the **Body reaction exercise**. What was that like for me?

What do/did I feel, see, smell, hear or taste?

What memories or thoughts came up as I experienced this?

What need(s) came up?

Are these questions helpful for continuing your journey?



Active Healing

Benefits of Journalling

Homework



Active Healing

Journalling

We want to introduce the tool of **journalling** today. Your grief journal that we gave you is already getting you started. You can also start a separate blank book if you like. This can be your **personal journal**.

What are some possible benefits of **journalling**?

Answers we are looking for: personal, some place to put your emotions, see how things change over time, bring clarity.

Explain

Keeping a **personal journal** may be very helpful to process and log **thoughts, feelings, memories, images, and sensations during your journey** through grief. Journalling is beneficial to **gain clarity** about the journey of: where you started, the present journey, and where you hope to be in the future. Your journal is **private** and there is no need to share it with anyone unless you make that choice. Please make use of the list of **feelings words** on **page 46** of your grief journal—to help you in the process. Circle all of the **emotions** you feel when reflecting on a question.

Journalling can be as simple as writing down your thoughts and feelings.

You have the option of **destroying** what you **wrote**—this can be a way of **letting go**. This may also be helpful if you are concerned about someone else reading it.

Directions

You can find a **journal**, book or scribbler that catches your attention and start to write using the following **suggestions** or you can **devise your own questions**.

If you go online and type in '**grief journalling**', you can find some more information to help you.



Active Healing

Journalling

Choose one or two topics to explore in my journal this week.

If you do not enjoy journalling, use your creativity to come up with another way to express yourself, for example, drawing a picture of how you feel or making a collage... it is a creative process. It will help you to focus.

If time permits, allow participants to start journalling in class.

11

You can use [page 46](#) “How do I feel?” to help you in this process. Circle all of the emotions you feel when reflecting on a question.

Some suggestions for **Journal headings** to explore:

1. **The meaning of loss:** write down your thoughts about loss as a universal and personal experience. Focus on the unique experiences and if they have some meaning to you.
2. **Significant loss in childhood/adolescence or both:** write down your feelings about the loss as a child, reflecting on the feelings then and now. How did you make it through that tough time? In what ways do you feel the loss affected or changed you? Looking back, can you see any value in going through your loss at that time and describe in detail how it changed you as a person.
3. **Any other significant loss as an adult:** same as above except for age.
4. **Hurting:** write down your present wounds and compare them to earlier times. What are the differences?
5. **Helping:** write down what has helped you to cope with or heal your wounds.
6. **Healing:** how are you healing your current grief?
7. **Needs:** what are your current needs? What would help you be self-respecting and caring of yourself right now?
8. **Unfinished business:** what curiosities and unanswered questions do you have about your loss(es)? What was left unsaid?
9. **Now:** in what way do you currently relate to your loss(es)? What do you notice about your present experience of being here and interacting with loss(es) in the past?
10. **Beyond now:** now that you are adjusting to this different life, what plans do you have to embrace a new meaning in your life? It might include thoughts and dreams about the future.

For additional ideas, go online and type in “grief journalling.”

How do I plan to take care of myself this week?

Homework

Journal

- Set up your **personal journal** and write on a few of the suggested questions that speak to you. We encourage ongoing journalling throughout the 8 weeks and beyond. Remember that you can use other forms of self-expression such as drawing or making a collage.

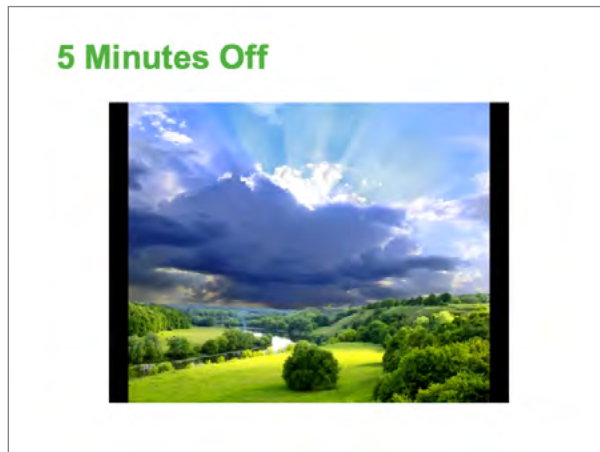
Self-care

- Build in some time for self-care. Look at your Self-care Wheel for ideas. Explore other meditations if interested.

11

Remember to embrace the memory of my connection!

5 Minutes Off



We would like to end our group each week with some self-care. So we will just take a few minutes to do the **5 Minutes Off** that we did in week 1.

This is **optional**, so we invite you to participate if you wish. If you are not comfortable with it, feel free to end your time with us. You will have an opportunity on other weeks to view it again.



Cue video: **5 Minutes Off**

Week 3



Welcome to Alberta Journeying Through Grief™ Week 3

Please display name tent
Weekly reflection
Check-in



Week 3 up as participants arrive. Direct participants to start the Check-in on **page 13** and be ready for their small group discussion of last week's homework.

13

Check-in

WEEKLY REFLECTION: How did my week go? Did I try journaling? If yes, how was it helpful? If no, is there anything else that was helpful to me? What came up for me this week?

Check-in

Invite participants to share reflections in groups of two – four, encouraging them to give each person a chance to share.

Large Group

- Does anyone want to share how their week went?
- Did you try journalling? If yes, how was it helpful? If no, is there anything else that was helpful to you?
- What came up for you this week?

Give plenty of time for large group check-in.

Note to Coach:

Participants may not notice much change from week to week. Grief is a process. The tools will take time and reflection to begin the work of healing. Encourage participants to be patient with themselves. They may be tired/drained after these sessions. Participants may need more rest or other forms of self-care.



The Six Needs of Mourning

1. Acknowledge the reality of the loss
2. Embrace the pain of loss
3. Remember your loss
4. Develop a new self-identity
5. Search for meaning
6. Receive ongoing support from others

(Alan Wolfelt)

The Six Needs of Mourning – Acknowledge the Reality of the Loss

Alan Wolfelt is an expert in the areas of grief and loss. He has identified **six needs of mourning** that people need to go through on their journey. **Mourning** is the outward expression of grief. We will be looking at these six needs over the next six weeks.

13

Six Needs of Mourning

1. Acknowledge the reality of the loss
2. Embrace the pain of the loss
3. Remember your loss
4. Develop a new self-identity
5. Search for meaning
6. Receive ongoing support from others



Acknowledge the Reality of the Loss



The first **Need of mourning** is to **acknowledge the reality of the loss**. Throughout our journey we have the difficult task of **acknowledging the reality of the loss** and working through the grief process which we will talk about in a few minutes.

- You must gently confront the difficult reality that someone or something you loved (enjoyed) in your life is gone and will never physically be present again.
- Whether the loss was sudden or anticipated, acknowledging the full reality of the loss may occur over weeks and months.
- You will first acknowledge the reality of the loss with your head. Only over time will you come to acknowledge it with your heart.
- At times you may push away the reality of the loss. This is normal. You will come to integrate the reality in doses as you are ready.



Understanding Your Grief Journey

The Grief Process



Understanding Your Grief Journey

The Grief Process

Read the following out loud in class: Coach may want to start with first paragraph and have participants take turns reading the rest (out loud) or whatever seems comfortable.

14

Understanding My Grief Journey

The Grief Process

Adapted from: **GRIEF COUNSELING AND GRIEF THERAPY** by J. William Worden, Ph.D

Grief is a **healing process**; a **normal response** when a death or loss occurs.

Each of us has **different reactions** and **varying intensity** of emotional responses – these may come and go, often described as a **“wave washing over you.”** All of us move through our grief process **in our own way and at our own pace**.

Grief is **work** and can be thought of as a **back and forth** process, not simply as a steady progression. The phases outlined below are not linear. You can be going through more than one phase at the same time.

Facing the Reality of the Loss

You may feel a sense of **shock**, **disbelief** or **numbness** that the loss has actually occurred. You may secretly hope that your loss will **return** and life will go on as before. You may also have feelings of panic about what will happen to you. The task in this phase is to intellectually and emotionally integrate that your loss is **no longer physically present and part of your everyday life**.

14

Experiencing the Pain of Loss

Emotional and physical distress occurs. You will experience many reactions such as **sleep problems, physical aches, intense emotions** (e.g., anger, guilt, sadness). The pain and distress is like a **roller coaster** – some days are better than others. Many people find themselves asking who they are and exploring the meaning for themselves in their **new normal**. This is an **unavoidable task**. Give yourself **time** and **permission** – to **surrender to the loss** and feel the pain.

Reinvesting in Life

Your emotional and physical reactions become **less intense, less frequent** and **less overwhelming**. You are able to **connect** with the loss in a **new way**. As you **adjust** to a **new life**, you may need to **acquire new skills, relationships, and memories**. The **energy** used previously for **grief** may be **invested in hope for the future**.

Some people begin their grief process **before a loss occurs** – for example, grieve for what has already been lost when someone is ill and for the impending loss through death. This **anticipatory grief** sometimes can **change the process of our grief after the loss**.

Please take a look at the question at the bottom of **page 14**.

14

REFLECT: Where do I think I am at in the process?

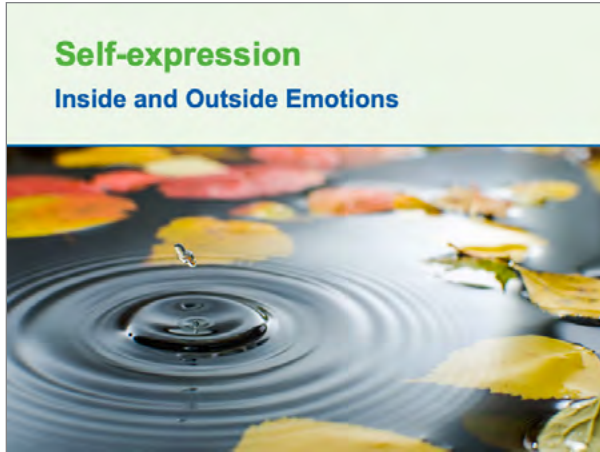
Remember you can be in a few different stages at the same time.

Take a moment to write down your answer and then we will discuss it.

If participants are comfortable, have them take 10 minutes to share about their loss in pairs.

Group Discussion

Take a few minutes to discuss in larger group—where do they think they are at in the process?



Self-expression

Inside and Outside Emotions

15

Self-expression

Inside and Outside Emotions

Expressing Emotions

The purpose of this section is reflect on the emotions that you keep hidden or have trouble naming. It is also to raise awareness of what emotions you share with others and how you would share those emotions with others.

Inside and Outside Emotions Activity

Instructions

Hand out envelopes. Give time between each step.



On the outside of your envelope, write the feelings that you are comfortable with showing to others (you can use **How do I feel?** ideas from page 46 of your journal).



1. On the outside of your envelope, write the feelings that you are comfortable with showing to others (you can use the **How do I feel?** ideas on **page 46** of your journal).

Discussion:

- **How did you write them?** (e.g. what font, capitals, where placed, big/small)
How you experience these shows how you express yourself.
- **What influences your comfort with sharing?** (e.g. family, culture)



Write down on coloured paper the feelings that you experience internally and do not show to others as openly. Put the coloured papers in the envelope.



2. Write down on colored paper the feelings that you experience internally and do not show to others as openly. Put the colored papers in the envelope.



Choose one emotion from inside your envelope that you want to try to express on the outside. Is there one you would like to share?



- 3. Choose one emotion from inside your envelope that you want to try to express on the outside. Is there one you would like to share?**

Give a few minutes for sharing.

Take a few minutes to answer the questions on **page 15** of your journal. Then we will discuss as a group. On the third question, answer specifically for the emotion that you brought outside your envelope.

15

Why did I pick the colours I did?

What new awareness did I gain from this experience?

What would it take to move an emotion from the inside to the outside or the outside to the inside?

What is so difficult about sharing the inside emotions with others?

How do I feel about sharing my private emotions with the group? What would I need to make this easier?

Discuss answers as a group

- Would anyone like to share the emotion they chose to possibly show?
- What do you think will happen if you share it?
- Why did you pick the colors you did?
- What was the experience like?
- What would (or did) it take to move a feeling on the inside to the outside **or** from the outside to the inside?
- What is so difficult about sharing the inside emotions with others?
- How do you feel after sharing your emotions with the group?

Additional questions to stimulate discussion:

- Even if you felt comfortable and trusting, are there any emotions you would keep to yourself?
- Do you feel you have a choice as to what emotions can be outside?
- Are there any benefits to moving an emotion from the inside out?
- Be curious about your choices: why did I do what I did? How did I talk myself into choosing this one?



Active Healing
Lifeline



Active Healing

Coping Strategies

Remember in week 1, we said we were curious what tools you already had in your backpack? This is an opportunity to reflect on those things by thinking back to what worked in the past to help you to cope with your loss. Your **lifeline** is one thing you could look at to help you with this.

16

Active Healing



Lifeline

16

Coping Strategies – Lifeline

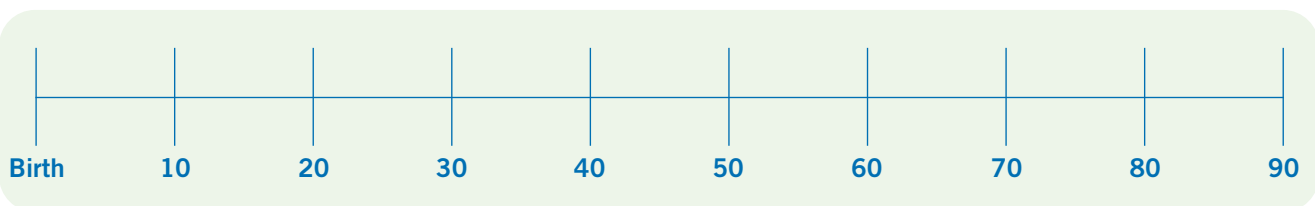
Explain

A **lifeline** is a story of your life that is depicted through **significant events** (positive or negative) that you went through. By reviewing and reflecting upon your lifeline you will be able to recall support, attitudes, and beliefs that allowed you to survive difficult experiences from the past that you may utilize now.

Have them fill out the lifeline on **page 16** of their journals. If they don't have time to finish today, they can add to it in the coming week(s).

You can write positive events above the line and negative events below the line.

16



Take a few minutes to reflect on the questions on **page 16**.

16

What support, attitudes and beliefs helped me to survive difficult experiences in the past?

What did I learn from the positive experiences?

How could I draw on the support, attitudes and beliefs as well as what I learned now?

What was that like for you to look at your life that way? Did you discover anything you could draw on now? What are the strengths or resilience you have that can help you as you grieve?

Give a few minutes for sharing.

It's not just about the event, but about the impact of that event and how you were able to move through it. Remember, you already had some tools in your backpack before even starting this group.

Group Discussion

Homework

17

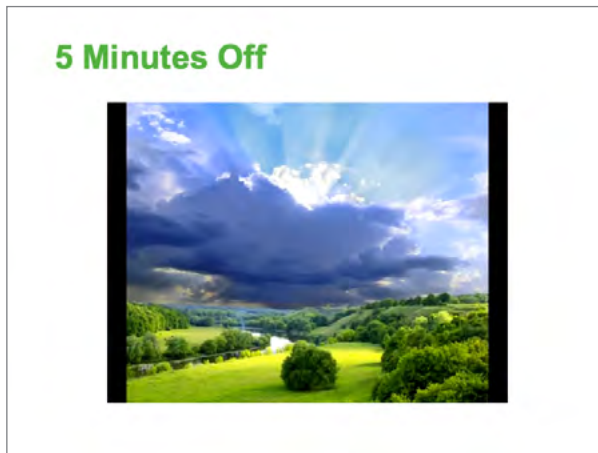
Homework

Choose one thing that helped me to cope with loss in the past — try activating it this week. How and when do I plan to do it?

How do I plan to take care of myself this week?

5 Minutes Off

This may have been a difficult week for some of you. Many emotions may have come up.



One of the things we will leave you with for self-care is our **5 Minutes Off** exercise. So relax and take a break.

Remember, this is **optional**, so we invite you to participate if you wish **or** feel free to end your time with us. You will have an opportunity on other weeks to view it again.



Cue video: **5 Minutes Off**

Week 4



Welcome to Alberta Journeying Through Grief™ Week 4

Please display name tent
Weekly reflection
Check-in



Week 4 up as participants arrive. Direct participants to start the Check-in on **page 19** and be ready for their small group discussion of last week's homework.

19

Check-in

WEEKLY REFLECTION: How did my week go? Did I choose one thing from the past that helped me to cope and try activating it? If yes, how was it helpful? If no, is there anything else that was helpful to me? What came up for me this week?

Allow for each individual the necessary time to reflect upon their thoughts, feelings, physical sensations, spiritual etc.

Check-in

Invite participants to share reflections in groups of two – four, encouraging them to give each person a chance to share.

Large Group

- Does anyone want to share how their week went?
- Did you choose one thing from the past that helped you to cope and try activating it? If yes, how was it helpful? If no, is there anything else that was helpful to you?
- What came up for you this week?

Give plenty of time for large group check-in.

In looking back at last week, some of you may have been triggered by the questions or exercises we did. We can get triggered by things we did not expect. Some things are difficult but are part of the journey. In some of these exercises, you will experience the pain—you will go in for a bit, then come out. The idea is not to get stuck there. Think about what has helped in the past to cope with significant events.

Note to Coach:
Participants may not notice much change from week to week. Grief is a process. The tools will take time and reflection to begin the work of healing. Encourage participants to be patient with themselves. They may be tired/drained after these sessions. Participants may need more rest or other forms of self-care.

A Reminder Before We Continue

You may like certain exercises or tools and not like others as much. **Not all of the exercises will be soothing.** The idea is to give you a **taste** of a **variety** of **different things** and you **choose** from the **menu of tools** presented, which ones are most helpful and put them in your proverbial backpack. Others, you may come back to later and try them.



Understanding Your Grief Journey

Separation Anxiety
Healthy Attachment



Understanding Your Grief Journey

Healthy Attachment

Today, we are going to talk about **separation anxiety** and **healthy attachment**. What is separation anxiety?

Pause and wait for response.

Death and loss create separation anxiety.

Separation Anxiety

Alan Wolfelt talks about what separation anxiety is. He says:

“Feelings of anxiety, panic, and fear also may be a part of your grief experience. You may ask yourself, ‘Am I going to be OK? Will I survive this? Will my life have any purpose without my loss?’ These questions are natural. If you begin to think you are abnormal, your level of fear may also increase. While unpleasant, anxiety, panic, and fear are often normal components of the grief experience. The good news is that expressing them can help make them feel more tolerable. And knowing that they are temporary may help you during this trying time.” Your sense of security has been threatened, so you are naturally anxious. As your head and heart miss this loss that was a part of your life, panic may set in. Feelings of anxiety and fear often elicit thoughts about “going crazy.”

The way to overcome that separation anxiety is to establish a healthy relationship with your loss.

*Note to Coach:
Adapted from Alan Wolfelt,
Understanding
Your Grief pg. 54.*



Group Activity

Healthy Attachment – or Not?



Group Activity

We are going to look at a list of behaviours and discuss whether they are showing a healthy or unhealthy attachment to the loss.

Coach to write two columns on the board: **Healthy** and **Unhealthy**. Read the following list of **behaviours**. Have participants vote on each, whether it is **healthy** or **unhealthy** and write the behaviour in the appropriate column(s). **H = healthy, UH = unhealthy**

- **Talking to the lost loved one.** H (*Talking out loud can be very helpful.*)
- **Refusing to establish new relationships.** UH (*Depends on time frame.*)
- **Fear of laughing or enjoying life.** UH
- **Writing.** H
- **Rituals.** H (*Can be unhealthy if you feel obligated or struck—healthy if it's energizing to you.*)
- **Revisiting the location of the loss and crying a lot.** Can be either H or UH
- **Celebrating what or who you lost.** H
- **Can't stop thinking about the loss/not able to think about anything else.** UH (*Depends on time frame.*)
- **Maintaining unhealthy relationships with others (e.g. fighting with daughter/spouse or drawing out legal proceedings.)** UH
- **Making note of how your loss improved you.** H
- **Rituals become restrictive—you don't really want to do it anymore but feel you have to.** UH
- **Reminiscing/telling stories.** H

- **Inability to get rid of their things.** H or UH (*Depending on time frame. Are you ready?*)
- **Refusing to ask for help.** UH (*This can be very hard because it's putting yourself in a vulnerable place.*)
- **No longer able to function (e.g. not eating or exercising.)** UH (*Depending on time frame.*)

Discussion

When would an **attachment** become **unhealthy**? How would you know the difference?

Pause and wait for response.

You can see that there is no black and white answer to a lot of these. There is no time limit on grief and many of these depend on where you are coming from.

Please take a moment to answer the questions in your journal on **page 19**. Ask yourself, “what is one small thing I can do to shift it”?

19

Understanding My Grief Journey

Healthy Attachment

Am I doing anything right now that I believe is an unhealthy attachment? Is there anything that is keeping me stuck?

If yes, what changes do I need to make?

If you answered yes, feel free to speak to one of the coaches after the session.

Did anyone have an unhealthy attachment? Are you willing to share how you overcame it?

If you feel uncomfortable sharing with the group, feel free to talk to one of the coaches after the session.



Self-expression

Making Sense of the Loss and Searching For Meaning

20

Self-expression

Making Sense of the Loss and Searching for Meaning –
Is the “Why” Question Helping or Not Helping?

Last week, we talked about facing the reality of the loss and you shared in your group about your loss. This week, we will talk about another need of mourning: **making sense of the loss**.



Six Needs of Mourning (Alan Wolfelt)

Making Sense of the Loss



20

Making Sense of the Loss and Searching for Meaning – Is the “Why” Question Helping or Not Helping?

Whys/What Ifs/Shoulds

- When we are mourning, we naturally question the **meaning and purpose of life** and **death**.
- It is natural to have **“why”** questions come up and often they precede **“how”** questions. **“Why did this happen?”** or **“Why am I feeling this way?”** come before **“How will I go on living?”**
- You will probably question your philosophy of life and explore religious and spiritual values as you work on this need. These beliefs can also be an anchor.
- Remember that having faith or spirituality does not negate your need to mourn.
- It can be all consuming as the **“why”** questions take over our thought processes.
- How many of you have **“why”** questions?

*Note to Coach:
Adapted from A. Wolfelt,
Six Needs of Mourning,
Need #5.*

Pause and wait for response.



Note to Coach:
Some people don't have a "Why" question. Other ways to phrase this could be:

- What took its place?
- What other questions do you have about your loss? (woulds, shoulds, etc.)
- How did you move through your other questions?

Asking WHY?

20

What feelings are attached to asking "why"?

What is the experience like for me when I ask "why"?

How does asking "why" help me find meaning?

What does the "why" give me?

20

How am I going to take care of myself in light of what I've discovered?

Discussion

Does anyone have a **“why”** question(s) they would like to share? It's okay not to have an answer.

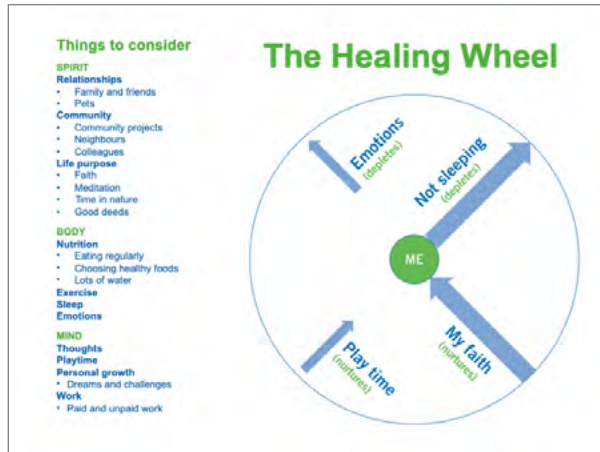
Note to Coach:

If the participants are ruminating or stuck in the “why?” they may need further therapy. Please consider referring them to one-to-one counselling.

Note to Coach:

Participants may need to give themselves permission to feel whatever they are feeling (guilt, anger, sadness). It is okay to feel uncomfortable feelings.

What makes a feeling negative is the resistance of the feeling (e.g. thoughts of the feeling, “shoulds” of the feeling)—these are what makes it negative.



Active Healing

The Healing Wheel

21

Active Healing

The Healing Wheel (Adapted from the Red Deer Primary Care Network Balance Wheel)

Look at your journal on **page 21**.

The next tool we will look at for active healing is a **Healing wheel**. The purpose of this exercise is to **increase self-awareness** regarding “**what nurtures you**” and “**what depletes you**” (arrows in and out).

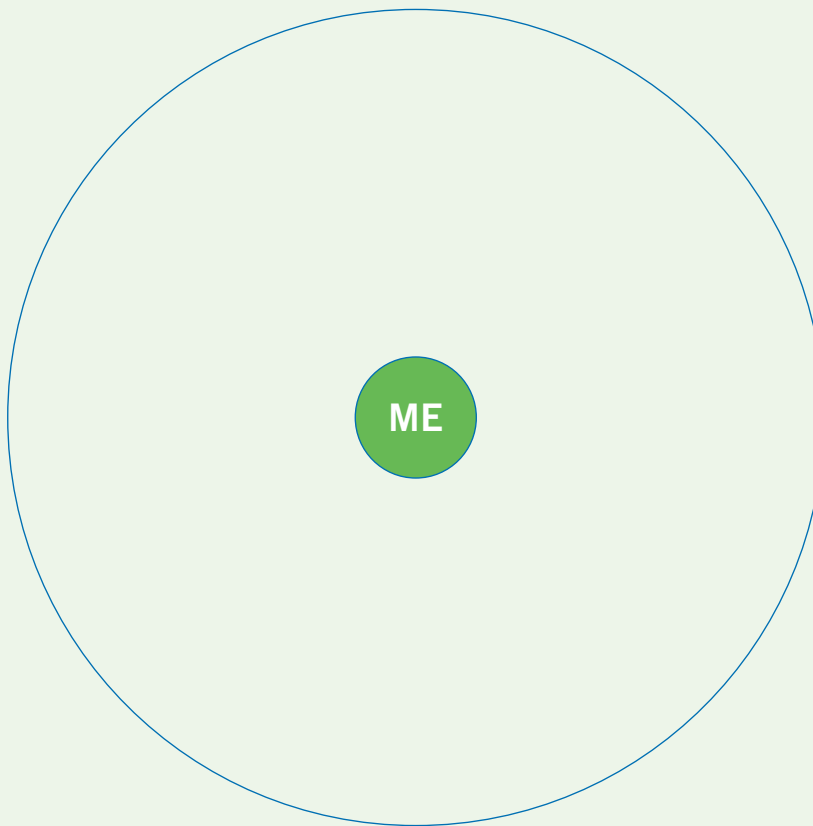
- Look at each section. Choose the things that are most relevant to you to put on your wheel.
- Draw an **arrow from the outer edge of the wheel inward** to indicate those things that nurture you. **Label the arrows** so you remember what it is that nurtures you.
- Draw arrows from the **inside of the circle pointing outward to indicate the things that deplete you. Label the arrows.**

21

The Healing Wheel (Adapted from the Red Deer Primary Care Network Balance Wheel)

The purpose of this exercise is to increase self-awareness regarding “what nurtures you” and “what depletes you”.

- Look at each section under “things to consider”. Choose the things that are most relevant to you to put on your wheel.
- Draw an arrow from the **outer edge** of the wheel **inward** to indicate those things that nurture you. Label the arrows so you remember what it is that nurtures you.
- Draw arrows from the **inside** of the circle pointing **outward** to indicate the things that deplete you. Label the arrows.



Things to consider

SPIRIT

Relationships

- Family and friends
- Pets

Community

- Community projects
- Neighbours
- Colleagues

Life purpose

- Faith
- Meditation
- Time in nature
- Good deeds

BODY

Nutrition

- Eating regularly
- Choosing healthy foods
- Lots of water

Exercise

Sleep

Emotions

MIND

Thoughts

Playtime

Personal growth

- Dreams and challenges

Work

- Paid and unpaid work

22

Regarding my Healing Wheel, what does the number of arrows 'in' vs. 'out' tell me?

What does my Healing Wheel tell me? Do I have enough inward arrows to support the weight of the outward arrows?

Answer the questions at the top of **page 22**.

Group Discussion

- What does the number of arrows '**in**' vs. '**out**' tell you?
- Are they in **balance**? Consider the **weight** or the **value** of the arrows-some contribute more or less than others.

Your homework today will help you apply what you have learned from your healing wheel. What do you need for more nurturing? For self-care? To recharge for the journey?



Active Healing

Homework

Reflecting on your **Healing Wheel**, what are one or two things you can do this week to recharge for the journey?



Homework

22

Homework

Reflecting on my **Healing Wheel**, what do I need more of to nurture me?

What is self-care to me?

What are one or two things I can do this week to recharge for the journey?

REMEMBER: This isn't a sprint, it's a long climb!

5 Minutes Off



5 Minutes Off



We will end our week with **5 Minutes Off**.

Remember, this is **optional**, so we invite you to participate if you wish **or** feel free to end your time with us. You will have an opportunity on other weeks to view it again.



Cue video: **5 Minutes Off**

Week 5



Welcome to Alberta Journeying Through Grief™ Week 5

Please display name tent
Weekly reflection
Check-in



Week 5 up as participants arrive. Direct participants to start the Check-in on **page 23** and be ready for their small group discussion of last week's homework.

23

Check-in

WEEKLY REFLECTION: How did my week go? Did I do something to nurture or recharge myself this week? If yes, how was it helpful? If no, is there anything else that was helpful to me? What came up for me this week?

Allow for each individual the necessary time to reflect upon their thoughts, feelings, physical sensations, spiritual etc.

Check-in

Invite participants to share reflections in groups of two – four, encouraging them to give each person a chance to share.

Large Group

- Does anyone want to share how their week went?
- Did you do something to **nurture** or **recharge** yourself this week? If yes, how was it helpful? If no, is there anything else that was helpful to you?
- What came up for you this week?

Give plenty of time for large group check-in.

What was familiar/unfamiliar/easy/hard/confusing/surprising about doing the homework exercise?

Remember that some of the exercises we do will be triggering and some will be soothing. The balance of grief work is emotionally heavy work. That is why it is important to make time for self-soothing and self-care so that you are not always focused on the grief.

Questions you could ask to bring out discussion:

- What did you discover by filling out your healing wheel?
- Did you notice more depleting arrows (going out) or more nurturing arrows (going in)?
- Are you taking note of what is helpful and not helpful on your journey?
- Who do you have in your life that is nurturing, safe or comforting? Who can you lean on?

Note to Coach:

Participants may not notice much change from week to week. Grief is a process. The tools will take time and reflection to begin the work of healing. Encourage participants to be patient with themselves. They may be tired/draind after these sessions. Participants may need more rest or other forms of self-care.



Understanding Your Grief Journey

Activating Your Memory
Ceremony/Rituals



Understanding Your Grief Journey

Activating Your Memory: Remember Your Loss

23

Understanding My Grief Journey

Activating My Memory: Remember My Loss

*Note to Coach:
When we refer to you remembering your loss, we refer to the person, relationship, job, pet or health or other that was lost.*

Today, we will talk about **activating your memory and ceremony/rituals and the part they play in remembering your loss**. This is a conscious activity to connect with your loss.



Six Needs of Mourning (Alan Wolfelt)

Remember Your Loss



Last week we talked about **making sense of loss** as one of the needs of mourning. This week, we will talk about **remembering your loss**.

What is a memory?

Pause and wait for response.

There needs to be an emotional imprint for a memory to happen. The stronger the imprint, the more we can get stuck in it. Remember in past weeks how we talked about each of us having a backpack full of tools? There are experiences in your past that you can use to influence your present situation (Lifeline week 3).

It is important that you **remember your loss**.

- When we experience a loss, **it lives on in us through memory**.
- To heal, it might be helpful to **actively remember** the essence of what you lost and commemorate that essence.
- Remembering the **past** makes **hoping** for the **future possible**.
- What are some ways you can honour the memories of your loss?

Note to Coach:

Memories can be both positive and negative.
Note: Some people might want to suppress a memory because it can be painful, which can increase the intensity of the grief.

Note to Coach:

Adapted from A. Wolfelt, Six Needs of Mourning, Need #3.

Please take a few minutes to answer the first question on **page 23**. You will answer the second question later.

23

Activating My Memory: Remember My Loss

How do I remember my loss and honour my memories?



Ceremony and Rituals

What ritual would you like to create to honour your relationship with your memories?



Note to Coach:
Dr. Therese Rando pg. 62 & 65,
"How to go on living when
someone you love dies."

Ceremony and Rituals

The second tool we want to look at as part of understanding the grief journey is **ceremonies** and **rituals** and the part they play in remembering your loss. What is a ritual?

Pause and wait for a response.

Ritual – A **specific behavior** or **activity** that gives **symbolic expression** to certain feelings and thoughts. Rituals can provide a **structured way** to recall what you lost and to make some statement about your feelings. Since they **acknowledge the physical loss** while allowing the memory to continue, they can serve to encourage you to **form a new relationship with the loss**.

Design your ritual

- Rituals may be **formal** or **informal**.
- The ritual can be by yourself or in a group.
- Rituals can occur **all the time**, **infrequently**, or **only once** (e.g., birthdays, anniversaries, funerals, linking object, etc.)
- Rituals don't have to be expensive
- Rituals don't need to take a lot of time.
- If a ritual is triggering you, it may not be the right ritual for you.

Are there any rituals you have done or are doing?

How can you use **ceremony or ritual to strengthen the relationship with your memories?**

Pause and wait for response.

Please remember that you need to experiment with rituals—you want something that makes you feel close to the loss, energized, at peace. You can feel sad, but with comfort behind it.

Your mood will affect your mindset.

Take a moment to answer the last question on **page 23**.

23

How can I use ceremony or ritual to strengthen the relationship with my memories?

Plan

Using **page 24** of your journal, design and plan your own ritual. Other ideas: releasing a balloon, reading or writing a poem, saying a prayer, taking flowers to graveside.

What do you need in order to take the first step, second step, third step, etc.? What do you need afterwards?

Give participants about 10 minutes to reflect and answer the questions.

24

What ritual would I like to create to honor my relationship to my loss?

What do I need in order to take that first step? Take the second step? The third step? Etc...

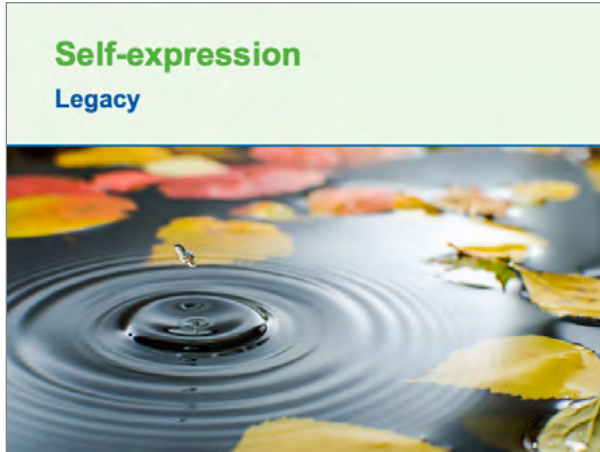
What do I need afterward? What can I do for self-care?

Let's take some time to share. What came out of these questions for you? How might you use ritual now?

Rituals should not be a chore or make you feel guilty. Ritual is for you not to feel **pushed** into it but **rather pulled** or **drawn** into it.

You may have two different experiences of ritual within the same context: one time it may **energize** you, **another time**, only **grief** is present. Then you will need to do something to care for or nurture yourself afterwards. Both states are healing.

Remember, it is the **journey** not the **outcome** that's important.



Self-expression

Legacy

25

Self-expression

Legacy

Your loss has left a mark on you. What is that mark?

Allow participants a few minutes to answer.

The mark could be what you have experienced, how you have been touched or changed, how you have grown or what you have learned. It can also be what was left behind to be remembered—what they did, their life, their story.

We want to tap into this and think about how you can add to this, moving forward. Not only that, but how are you honoring it for yourself? How can you use what they taught you?

25

What is the legacy of knowing or experiencing my loss?

How has it changed me?

What did I learn from it? How will I use it?

Take a moment to write a few thoughts down on **page 25** of your journal.

Group Discussion

- What is the **legacy** of knowing or experiencing your loss?
- How has it **changed** you?
- What did you **learn** from it?



Active Healing

Homework

Make a plan for the next significant event.



Active Healing

Significant Events

26

Active Healing

Significant Events

Grief Waves

Have you heard of grief waves? Does anyone know what that is?

Pause and wait for response.

Grief can be like waves on the ocean—they rise and fall and wash over you. Sometimes they knock you over. But then they subside. We can get to a place where we feel like we are **doing okay**. Then, some **significant occasion** (foreseen or unforeseen) comes along and we can be hit with **waves of grief** again. It is a **normal** thing that happens. It doesn't mean you are taking steps backwards.

It helps to have a **plan** for those occasions you can foresee.

Homework

26

Homework

If I know a significant event is coming up, how will I prepare for it? (physically, mentally)

Plan For a Significant Event

As you plan for a significant event, look at both physical and mental preparation.

26

My plan for the next significant event (e.g., anniversary). It could include a ritual.

What is my plan for how I will cope?

How do I plan to take care of myself this week?

5 Minutes Off



5 Minutes Off



We will end our week with **5 Minutes Off**.

Remember, this is **optional**, so we invite you to participate if you wish **or** feel free to end your time with us. You will have an opportunity on other weeks to view it again.



Cue video: **5 Minutes Off**

Week 6



Welcome to Alberta Journeying Through Grief™ Week 6

Please display name tent
Weekly reflection
Check-in



Week 6 up as participants arrive. Direct participants to start the Check-in on **page 27** and be ready for their small group discussion of last week's homework.

27

Check-in

WEEKLY REFLECTION: How did my week go? Did I plan for a significant event this week? If yes, how was it helpful? If no, is there anything else that was helpful to me? What came up for me this week?

Allow for each individual the necessary time to reflect upon their thoughts, feelings, physical sensations, spiritual etc.

Check-in

Invite participants to share reflections in groups of two – four, encouraging them to give each person a chance to share.

Large Group

- Does anyone want to share how their week went?
- Did you plan for a **significant event** this week? If yes, how was it **helpful**? If no, is there anything else that was helpful to you?
- What came up for you this week?

Give plenty of time for large group check-in.

What was familiar/unfamiliar/easy/hard/confusing/surprising about doing the homework exercise?

Questions to bring out discussion:

- What helped you to get through the significant event either this week or in the past?
- Did you find any things that help you ride the waves of grief?
- Does anyone want to share anything further about a ritual they are going to use?
- Were there any discoveries about the legacy your loss has left?
- One thing to think about is that we like knowing the beginning, the middle and the end of things. We know how grief starts and we want it to end, but we often do not focus on the journey. **The quality of the journey determines the quality of the end.**

Note to Coach:

Participants may not notice much change from week to week. Grief is a process. The tools will take time and reflection to begin the work of healing. Encourage participants to be patient with themselves. They may be tired/draind after these sessions. Participants may need more rest or other forms of self-care.



**Understanding Your
Grief Journey**

**Embrace the Pain of Loss
Grief Dosing**



Understanding Your Grief Journey

Embrace the Pain of Loss; Grief Dosing

27

Understanding My Grief Journey

Embrace the Pain of Loss; Grief Dosing



Six Needs of Mourning (Alan Wolfelt)

Embrace the Pain of the Loss



Embrace the Pain of Loss

Last week we talked about **remembering your loss**. Today as part of understanding your grief journey, we will look at another of Alan Wolfelt's Six Needs of Mourning.

*Note to Coach:
Adapted from A. Wolfelt,
Six Needs of Mourning,
Need #2.*

Embrace the pain of loss (become aware of what is already happening).

- This is something we naturally don't want to do.
- It is **easier to avoid**, repress or push away the pain of grief than it is to confront it.
- It is in embracing your grief, however, that you will learn to **reconcile** yourself to it.
- You will probably need to **"dose"** yourself in embracing your pain. If you were to allow in all the pain at once, you could not survive.

You may want to reach out to someone who doesn't try to take your pain and sense of loss away. Spend some time with him/her.



Open up the dam just a little bit each day.



Sometimes our body can be like a **dam**. A dam holds lots of water. The water is your emotions, thoughts and behaviors. If the water is released all at once, it can cause damage due to the pent up pressure. If you open the gate a little each day and let a little water out, it releases some of the pressure that is built up. So eventually, grief is more **manageable** and what is left in the dam is **a little less**.

Grief dosing – means to set aside time to grieve each day.

With that in mind, what have you done to “**open up the dam**” just a little bit?

Take a moment to write down your answers to the questions on **page 27**.

Note to Coach:
For grief dosing, if no one shares, use the example of setting time aside each day to look at a picture and allow yourself to grieve at that time.

Answers we are looking for: An activity, like watching a sad movie or bringing out things/objects that trigger the emotion.

27

What have I done that has helped me to move through my grief?

What have I done to “open up the dam” just a little bit?

For a period of time, it will be hard to **close the gates**. You will feel like the **flood waters** are ready to **spill over** at any time. You will learn, in time, by grounding yourself and with practice, to be able to close the gates for longer and longer periods. It will get easier to close the gates with practice.

What is grounding? Does anyone know?

Pause and wait for response.

Grounding is a way to keep or bring yourself into the present or the here and now.

How can you ground yourself to help close the gates for a time?

Answers we are looking for: meditation, journalling, ritual, social connection, mantra, drawing etc.

It is helpful to also ground yourself **before** opening the dam so that you can control the flow.



Tears

- Tears are normal and healthy.
- A cue to others that we need support.
- Releases toxins built up by stress.



Role of Tears

Having tears is **normal and healthy**. It is our way of showing a **non-verbal cue** that we need support. It also helps release the toxins built up in our bodies from stress. They could be another way to release some pressure from the dam.

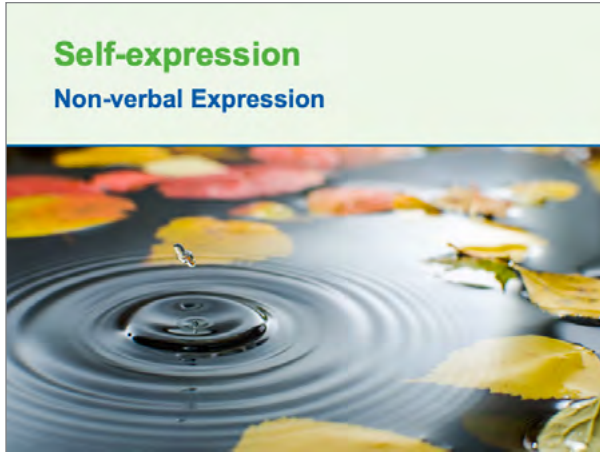
From “Why Humans Weep: unraveling the mysteries of tears”

(Dr. Ad Vingerhoets, Oxford University Press)

- Tears are unique to the human experience.
- Produced with different meanings (not all tears are the same).
- Theory of social signing – visual sign that someone is in danger or needs help (a non-verbal cue for support).
- Crying has been linked to human capacity for empathy as well as more positive emotions such as joy/ecstasy vs being limited to grief and sorrow.
- **3 types of tears** (“Crying: The Mystery of Tears,” Dr. Frey, 1985)
 - **Basal tears** – keep our eyes from drying out (produce 5 – 10 oz. daily).
 - **Reflex tears** – protect our eyes from irritants (smoke, dust, pollution).
 - **Emotional tears** – produced in response to a strong emotion (e.g., sadness). This emotional reaction to an event triggers the nervous system to release hormones producing tears. These tears contain high amounts of protein.

*Note to Coach:
Don't share with
participants unless
questions or
comments arise.*

Many believe that having a good cry is beneficial both emotionally and physically. There is currently no consensus to confirm this theory however, there are a number of scientists including Dr. Frey, a biochemist and director of psychiatry research at St. Paul-Ramsey Medical Centre, who asserts that, during times of stress, chemicals build up in our bodies and emotional crying is the body's way of releasing these toxins.



Self-expression

Non-verbal Expression

The symptoms we are experiencing can be a clue as to what we might need. When you think about your loss, what **feelings, thoughts, physical symptoms, spiritual issues, and behaviors** are you experiencing? You can use **pages 46 and 47** in your journal to help you focus in on a few.

28

Self-expression

Non-verbal Expression

When I think of my loss, what feelings, thoughts, physical symptoms, spiritual issues and behaviors am I experiencing? (You can refer to **pages 46 and 47** of your journal for ideas.)

You can jot down a few things on **page 28**. We will discuss this at the end of the exercise.

You can recognize your **symptoms as needs for healing**.

We are now going to give you an opportunity tap into your grief in a different way.

This next activity is to help you process some of these feelings without having to find the words. When you are overwhelmed, this calming activity can help you to refocus.

The point is to be less afraid of your grief.

Make yourself **comfortable**. Let go of whatever you are holding in your hands. If you find it difficult to concentrate, close your eyes. **Breathe slowly and deeply**, focusing your **thoughts** on your **breath**. Let your mind empty of thoughts. If any emotion comes up, allow it to come.

Now think about your loss. **What does your grief look like to you?** Remember week 3, Inside and Outside Emotions, with the coloured paper? What colours did you use? Is that now a reflection of your grief?

What is there now? What do you feel inside? What emotion do you have right now? Use page 46 for emotions if you need it. If an emotion is there, what color is it? Is it an image? A word or series of words? Is it a song or a line from a song? Is it an activity you picture yourself doing or being part of?

Note to Coach:
 What medium are you curious about?
 What are you thinking?
 Draw that even if it's nothing.
 For those that are stuck, pick a colour that pulls you in or repulses you.

28

This exercise is an alternative way to tap into what we might not be consciously aware of. What comes to mind when I think of my loss. What does my grief look like to me? (use a picture, words, lines, colours, shapes or anything else to express what you see in your mind).

Options

- Use words, pictures, lines, colored pencils, chalk, coloured paper or markers to **express what your grief looks like to you**. If you don't want to use the page in your book, there is extra paper here.
- Touch something.
- Mould something (clay or play-dough).
- Draw or colour with eyes closed.
- Write a symbol.
- At home, you could dance or just move.
- We are looking for ways to express yourself besides speaking.

- Have participants **reflect on the emotions** that arose during the exercise (use list of emotions on **page 46** and grief reactions on **page 47**).
- Have participants **share their drawings and experience** (give individuals space to share as much or as little as necessary).
- If some participants did not participate: **It is ok if you struggled with this exercise. You may just have to sit with it. Come back to it later. You could use magazine pictures to make a collage... or any other ideas that come to mind.**

Group Discussion

We have been on a 6 week journey.

- What does your grief look like now?
- What feelings, thoughts, physical symptoms, spiritual issues and behaviours are you experiencing?
- Has the inside/outside emotions (week 3) changed the picture of your grief?
- Are there any other comments?
- Is there anything you were surprised by?
- How did you or could you adapt this activity?

28

How did I react to doing this activity (e.g. I felt tense)?



Active Healing

Homework

Write a Healing Letter or another form of expression.



Active Healing

Healing Letter

Read as they follow along in their journal.

29

Active Healing

Healing Letter

A grief letter or healing letter allows you a different kind of opportunity to express emotions and thoughts you have been holding in your heart and to express what you have left unsaid. It also gives you a chance to become conscious of what you would have wanted or needed to hear from your loss.

You can also write to yourself—what do you want to remind yourself of?

29

You can express yourself in a form that appeals to you. If you prefer another form of expression, you can use a poem, art, music or collecting something from nature.

You will have an opportunity to express yourself in a form that appeals to you.

- Instructions and healing letter are on **page 30**.
- There is additional space on **page 32** if you run out of room.
- As we mentioned on week 2 with your personal journal, you also have the option of **destroying** your **healing letter** after you write it as a way of **letting go**. This is also helpful if you are concerned about someone else reading it.
- If you prefer another form of expression, you can use art, music or collecting something from nature.

29

Do what feels right to reconnect with your life.

You can think about your letter or other expression right now.

If you need other ideas, go online and type in “**Grief letter**”.

Take time this week to **complete the exercise as homework**.

Homework

30

Homework

How do I plan to take care of myself this week?

Take time this week to complete the healing letter (or other choice). An example of what you could write for your **Grief letter** or **Healing letter**:

Dear _____

I want to take this opportunity to say how I feel about you/this loss.

Some things you could think and write about:

- Anger, sadness, regret, shame, guilt or any other feelings-you can use “How do I feel” **page 46** to help you identify feelings.
- I regret...
- I need to apologize for...
- I want you to know...
- I wish I would have said...
- I miss
- I’m ready to move on/this is how you will be in my life...
- I have changed because...

Signed _____

5 Minutes Off



5 Minutes Off



We will end our week with **5 Minutes Off**.

Remember, this is **optional**, so we invite you to participate if you wish **or** feel free to end your time with us. You will have an opportunity next week to view it again.



Cue video: **5 Minutes Off**

Week 7



Welcome to Alberta Journeying Through Grief™ Week 7

Please display name tent
Weekly reflection
Check-in



Week 7 up as participants arrive. Direct participants to start the Check-in on **page 33** and be ready for their small group discussion of last week's homework.

33

Check-in

WEEKLY REFLECTION: How did my week go? Did I write my healing letter (or other form of expression) this week? If yes, how was it helpful? If no, is there anything else that was helpful to me? What came up for me this week?

Allow for each individual the necessary time to reflect upon their thoughts, feelings, physical sensations, spiritual etc.

Check-in

Invite participants to share reflections in groups of two – four, encouraging them to give each person a chance to share.

Large Group

- Does anyone want to share how their week went?
- Did you do your **Healing Letter** or other form of expression this week? If yes, how was it helpful? If no, is there anything else that was helpful to you?
- What came up for you this week?

Give plenty of time for large group check-in.

What was familiar/unfamiliar/easy/hard/confusing/surprising about doing the homework exercise?

Questions to bring out discussion:

- Did you find anything helpful in “opening up the gates of the dam” a little bit?
- Was there anything you used to ground yourself?
- What did you discover about identifying or expressing your emotions this week?

Note to Coach:

Participants may not notice much change from week to week. Grief is a process. The tools will take time and reflection to begin the work of healing. Encourage participants to be patient with themselves. They may be tired/drained after these sessions. Participants may need more rest or other forms of self-care.



Understanding Your Grief Journey

Ongoing Support: Get What You Need



Understanding Your Grief Journey

Ongoing Support: Getting What You Need

33

Understanding My Grief Journey

Ongoing Support: Getting What I Need

Today, we will be talking about getting what you need for ongoing support from others. We will look at who you have in your world to support you. We will also look at what is helpful and what is unhelpful support.

“I heal, in part, by allowing others to express their love for me. By choosing to invite others into my journey, I move toward health and healing. If I hide from others, I hide from healing.”

*Note to Coach:
A. Wolfelt,
The Depression of Grief.*



Six Needs of Mourning (Alan Wolfelt)

Receive Ongoing Support from Others



Note to Coach:
Adapted from A. Wolfelt,
Six Needs of Mourning,
Need #6.

Receive Ongoing Support From Others

One of Alan Wolfelt's Needs of Mourning that we want to look at today is **receiving ongoing support from others**.

- As mourners, we need the love and understanding of others if we are to heal.
- Don't feel ashamed by your dependence on others right now. Instead, revel in the knowledge that others care about you.
- Unfortunately our society places too much value on "carrying on" and "doing well" after a loss. So, many of us are abandoned by our friends and family soon after the loss.
- Grief is a **process, not an event**, and you will need the continued support of your friends and family for weeks, months and years to come.

Has anyone had the experience of having support and being surrounded by friends and family at the time of the loss... and then later in the grieving process, feeling left with limited support?

Why do you think that is?

Answer: people get busy, sometimes we don't know what we need or haven't expressed it.

There is a role we play in activating those supports and getting those needs met. It is important to know what we mean by support. We are all different, so what is supportive to one may not be for the next person. You can bring your own rules into it and these rules can change.

We are going to do an activity to identify some of the things people can say to us- these are neither good nor bad.



Discussion

How Others React to My Grief...



Discussion

What are some ways others respond to your grieving?

Coach write answers on board.

Some of the frequent or typical responses are in your journal on **page 33**.

33

How do others react to my grief? Here are some possible ways people may respond. Check the ones that I have experienced:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> It's been (6 months). You need to move on. | <input type="checkbox"/> It was just their time to go. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Let's not talk about the loss; let's go out and have some fun. | <input type="checkbox"/> Time heals all wounds. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I know how you feel. | <input type="checkbox"/> Try to look for the good in the situation. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life must go on. | <input type="checkbox"/> Be positive. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> You must be strong for... | <input type="checkbox"/> Your loved one is in a better place/you're better off this way. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> It could be worse. | <input type="checkbox"/> Try not to cry; crying won't change anything. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> At least she/he had a good life. | <input type="checkbox"/> Get up and move on. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life never gives you more than you can handle. | <input type="checkbox"/> It shouldn't matter so much. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Everything happens for a reason. | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Take a few minutes to answer the questions on **page 34 and 35**.

34

What are my needs at this specific point in my journey?

How would I feel if someone responded to me like this?

How can I communicate with them?

Helpful support:

35

Unhelpful support:

Why do I not reach out?

Where is the line between reaching out and burdening someone?

How can I get my needs for support met?

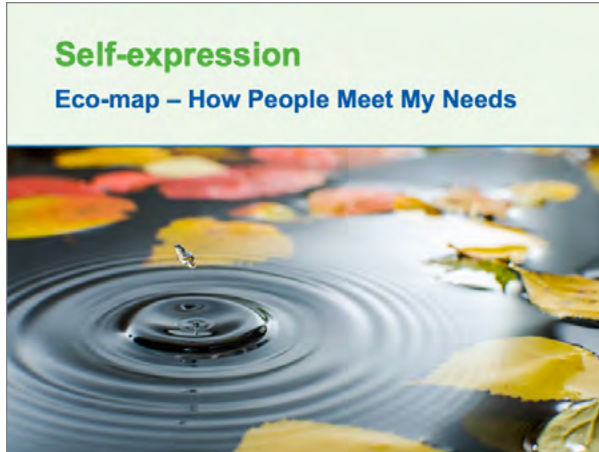
Discussion

Why do we not reach out?

Answer we are looking for: feel like a burden, feel like others don't understand, don't know how to communicate needs.

Where is the line between reaching out and burdening someone?

If you are saying these things to **yourself**, are you **turning away from your grief**? How can you show yourself better support?



Self-expression

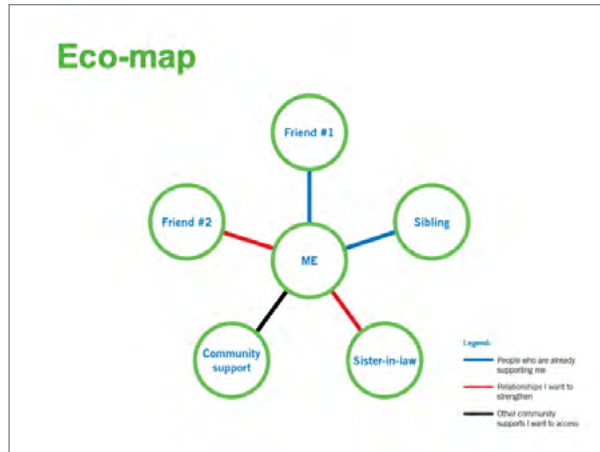
Eco-map: How People Meet My Needs

36

Self-expression

Eco-map: How People Meet My Needs

What will be your plan to receive ongoing support?



A tool to help you to visualize all of your supports is an eco-map. An **eco-map** is used to **identify** and **highlight** who you already have supporting you and who else you would like to lean on.

Show **PowerPoint** slide for example.

- Use circles and lines to fill in your eco-map. Draw lines from you to the outer circle to indicate the strength of the support from that relationship.
 - people who are already helping you
 - relationships you want to strengthen
 - other community supports you would like to access
- We have put in titles—you can put in actual names—people and things to consider are listed on the left side of your eco-map.

For example, on our map, I used **blue** lines for the people who are already supporting me, **red** for the relationships I want to strengthen and **black** for other community supports I want to access. You make your own legend using the colours you want to use for the lines.

Take a few minutes to fill out your own eco-map. When you are finished, answer the question underneath it.

36

An eco-map is a way of documenting connections between you and the outside world. It can help you identify needs and what aspects are being fulfilled by whom. Who can you lean on?

Fill in the eco-map below:

Legend:

People who are already helping me

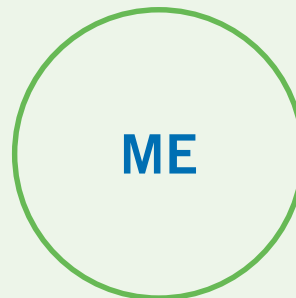
Relationships I want to strengthen

Other community supports I want to access

In your legend, use a different coloured line to represent each kind of relationship.

People/things to consider:

- Family
- Friends
- Extended family
- Colleagues
- Acquaintances
- Places
- Groups
- Service providers

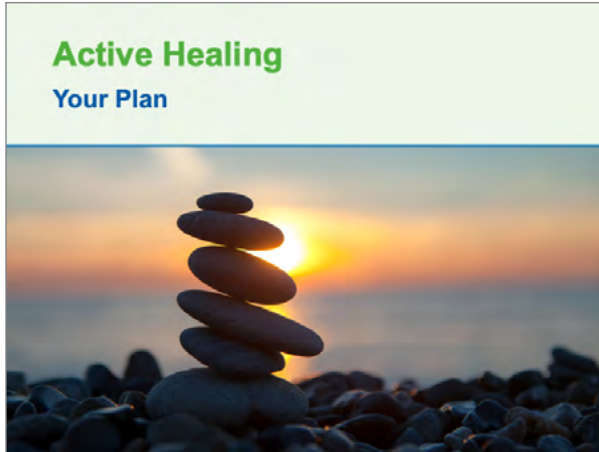


Discussion

If you are considering broadening your support system, who else might you consider to get your needs met? You may have to look outside your normal or usual support system.

Have individuals share.

What have they learned about themselves during their grief journey and what is their next step?



Active Healing

Your Plan

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Active Healing

My Plan

Homework

Are there any changes I would like to make to my support network?

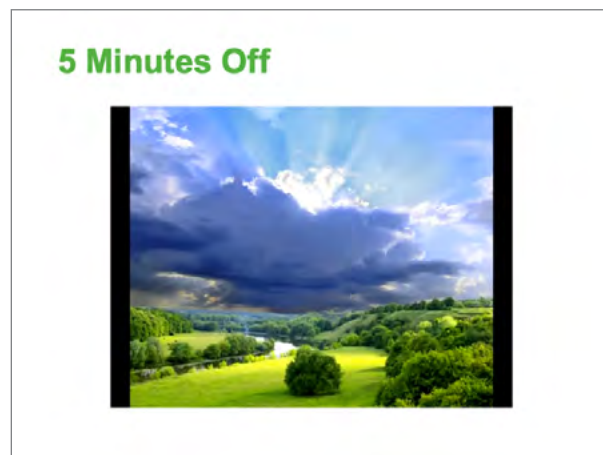
Before we finish the week with **5 Minutes Off**, we want to ask you how you want to close the group or say goodbye next week.

Ideas:

- Create a “Wordle or word art” together (brainstorm meaningful words and put them into an app that will create an image made out of the words—can be used for cards or posters)
- Bring food
- Spend more time in discussion
- Any other ideas? _____

As in other weeks, **5 Minutes Off** is **optional**, so we invite you to participate if you wish **or** feel free to end your time with us this week.

5 Minutes Off



We will end our week with **5 Minutes Off**.



Cue video: **5 Minutes Off**

Week 8



**Welcome to Alberta
Journeying Through Grief™
Week 8**

Please display name tent
Weekly reflection
Check-in



Week 8 up as participants arrive. Direct participants to start the Check-in on **page 39** and be ready for their small group discussion of last week's homework.

39

Check-in

WEEKLY REFLECTION: How did my week go? Did I make any changes to my support network? If yes, how was it helpful? If no, is there anything else that was helpful to me? What came up for me this week?

Allow for each individual the necessary time to reflect upon their thoughts, feelings, physical sensations, spiritual etc.

Check-in

Invite participants to share reflections in groups of two – four, encouraging them to give each person a chance to share.

Large Group

- Does anyone want to share how their week went?
- Did you make any changes to your support network this week? If yes, how was it helpful? If no, is there anything else that was helpful to you?
- What came up for you this week?
- How did you take care of yourself?
- Is there anything you noticed about your grief journey?

Give plenty of time for large group check-in.

What was familiar/unfamiliar/easy/hard/confusing/surprising about doing the homework exercise?

Question to bring out discussion:

- Did you make any discoveries about your new identity or new normal after the loss?

This week, we will look at our 3 sections, leave some time at the end to close the group and then to fill out the questionnaire that you did in week 1. We will have you fill out a Grief group participant evaluation as well.

Note to Coach:

Participants may not notice much change from week to week. Grief is a process. The tools will take time and reflection to begin the work of healing. Encourage participants to be patient with themselves. They may be tired/drained after these sessions. Participants may need more rest or other forms of self-care.



**Understanding Your
Grief Journey**
Exploring Your Self-identity



Understanding Your Grief Journey

Exploring Your Self-identity

40

Understanding My Grief Journey

Exploring My Self-identity

This week, we will talk about **creating a new self-identity and a new normal**. This is looking at who you were before the loss and who you are now. They are not the same. Your roles and beliefs change. You may be discovering something new about yourself. To know who you are takes time and investigating.



Six Needs of Mourning (Alan Wolfelt)

Create a New Self-identity and a New Normal



- The last of the **Needs of Mourning** is **Create a new self identity and a new normal**.
- Part of your self-identity was formed by the relationship you had with what you lost.
- You may have gone from being a “wife” to a “widow” or from an “employed professional” to an “unemployed person” **The way you defined yourself** and the **way society defines you has changed**.
- You need to **re-anchor yourself**, to **reconstruct your self-identity**. This is **arduous** and **painful** work.
- Many of us find that as we work on this need, we ultimately discover some positive changes, such as becoming more caring or less judgmental.
- Because our lives have been transformed by our loss/losses, life will never be the same again.
- We need to create a **new normal** through the expression of our grief and by focusing on expressing our grief outwardly (talking, writing, drawing, reminiscing)
- We never let go, so we need to take the good experiences and memories with us in a journey towards healing.
- Remember your **lifeline**—you have dealt with change before and your self-identity is continually changing throughout life.

Note to Coach:
Adapted from A. Wolfelt,
Six Needs of Mourning,
Need #4.

Note: Even if you think nothing has changed in your identity or role, it can be a very small change, for example, how you use your time. Some people experience a big change, others a smaller change. The intensity of change varies. It is on a spectrum, like a radio dial. The change takes time to discover and may not always be clear right away.

In the spirit of curiosity, to help you to discover some things about yourself and your identity, we are now going to do an activity.



Exploring Your Self-identity



Turn to **page 40** in your journal. This is a speed exercise. Complete each statement under the **spontaneous** column as fast as you can. Do not go back and rewrite your answers—just trust yourself. You do not have to answer every one; you can leave it blank if you cannot come up with an answer right away.

40

Who am I now and how might I incorporate my loss into my present life and my new normal?

Give participants about 3 – 4 minutes to complete their lists.

40

Instructions: As you explore your new identity, write responses to as many as you want by filling in the blanks as best you can. You will be given 4 minutes, so write the first **spontaneous** idea that comes to mind. You will be given more time later to write **reflective** responses.

	Spontaneous	Reflective
I value...		
I love...		
I believe in...		
I spend my time thinking about...		
I am energized by...		
I am drained by...		
If I wasn't afraid I would...		
Today, I'm one day closer to...		
I want to learn...		
I am motivated by...		
I am inspired by...		
My biggest supports are...		
Today I need...		
I am looking forward to...		
What gives me hope is...		
I am surprised by/that...		
It's ok that...		
I want others to know...		
It is important for me to know...		
It is important for me to...		
I feel most comfortable...		
I don't need to hang on to...		

Coach debriefing questions:

- How was that for you?
- Now read and see what you wrote. See if you agree with your initial answer.
- If you want to add or change anything, write those changes on the right hand column under **reflective**.

Give a few minutes for them to review and revise their lists.

- What do the two lists look like?
- Did the second list match your initial instinct?
- Were there any surprises?
- Was it helpful to reflect on some of these things?
- If so, how?

Reflect and answer the questions on **page 41**.

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As I reflect on my answers to these statements, what things seem the **same** and what things seem **different** after experiencing the loss?

What emotions came up for me as I did this?

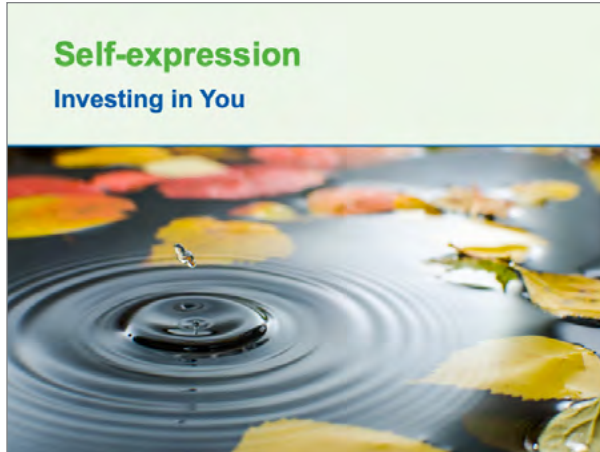
Is there something from page 40 that I want to explore or invest in now as part of my new self-identity?

Group Discussion

Debrief question by question with these objectives in mind. Help participants to consider:

- Their new identity is already there.
- They have been through loss before (see Lifeline on **page 16**).
- Plant the seed that life could get better again.
- Normalize stage of grief and where they are in accepting this new self-identity.

By picking one of these statements on **page 40**, it may be just the spark you need.



Self-expression

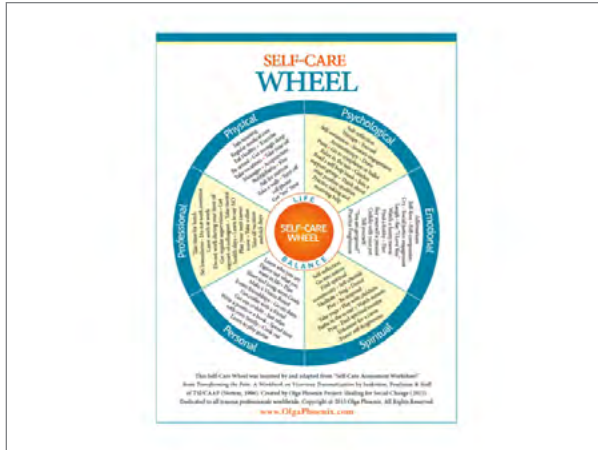
Investing in You

42

Self-expression

Investing in Me

Now, we want to take some time to explore—where are you right now in accepting that you **have a new identity** as a result of this loss?



Take a look at the Self-care Wheel on the slide and in your journal on **page 43**. You may remember this from week 1.

Take some time to review the Self-care Wheel.

Give a few minutes to answer the questions on **page 42**.

42

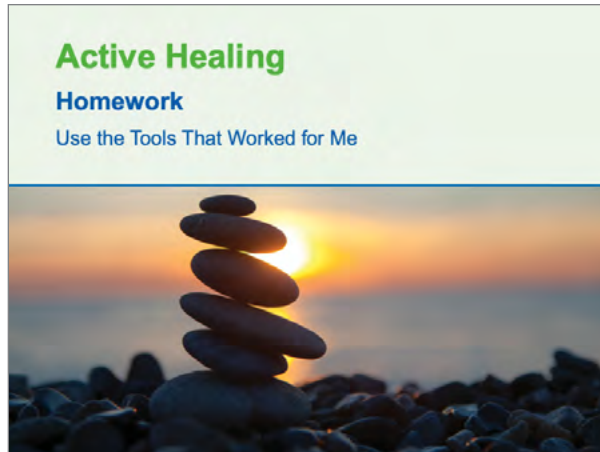
Self-expression

Investing in Me

Continuing to explore who you are now and what your future might look like, look at your Self-care Wheel.

Reflecting on the Self-care Wheel, what do I need more of to nurture me?

What other ways am I already caring for or nurturing myself?



Active Healing

My Active Healing Toolkit

44

Active Healing

My Active Healing Toolkit

In order to motivate you to continue on your journey and keep on the path, we will give you a few minutes to reflect on the tools you already have in your backpack, which ones you want to add and which ones might you want to try at a later time.

Review healing toolkit questions (page 44 of workbook)

Participants can work on the journal questions in class **or** it can be assigned as homework if you have chosen an alternative activity to end the group.

44

Write all the things that were helpful on my journey. Refer to page 45 for a reminder of the tools.

What was I not ready for yet?

How would I know when I am still climbing my mountain? When I need to revisit the tools?

How would I know when I need to reach out (e.g. counselor, family, group)?

Where am I on the mountain?

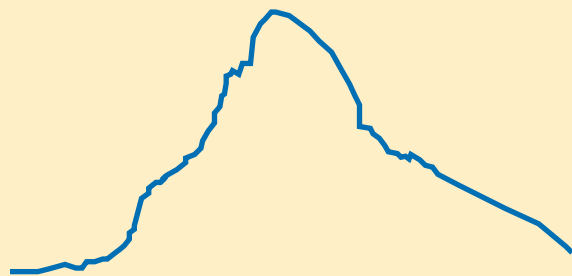
How do I plan to take care of myself this week?

Discuss in group afterwards.

In regards to the fourth question, coach review grief vs. depression.

Optional: Share where you are on the “mountain” with the group.

Coach can draw a “mountain” on the flip chart. Have participants take turns to mark where they are on the mountain now. After they have done this, comment:



If you felt you went backwards or stayed the same, that is okay. Maybe you have been opening up things that have been dormant for a while. This class may have given you a chance to process and look at those things.

Closing Activity

In order to **provide closure** and give you the **opportunity to say goodbye** to one another, we will now spend some time on: _____.

Choose a closing activity as decided at the end of week 7 or give options now:

- Create Wordle or word art together
- 5 Minutes Off
- Spend more time discussing **page 44** and where they are on the mountain
- Share food or cards
- _____

Homework

Continue to use the tools that worked for you. If you found journaling or another form of self-expression helpful, we encourage you to make a date with yourself to **do it on an ongoing basis**. Be brave and try new tools and forms of expression.

Questionnaires

Have participants tear out Adult attitude to grief scale (page 49) and Grief participant evaluation (page 51) from the journal.

Questionnaires: allow about 10 – 15 minutes.



Thank you for coming!



Thank you for coming!!

Background

Background Information For Grief Classes

Purpose: to invite opportunity for a healthy healing process—for people with any kind of loss.

What is the difference between loss, grief, and mourning?

Loss: The process of losing something or someone that we are attached or connected to. (dictionary)

Grief: The constellation of internal thoughts/feelings when you experience a loss. (Alan Wolfelt)

Mourning/healing: Expressing grief outwardly. “You don’t heal from the death of someone because time passes, you heal because of what you do with the time.” (Alan Wolfelt)

Traumatic grief: “The person experiences a death and there is something about the death itself (e.g. violent death) or something about the person’s experience about the death (related to insecure attachment or conflicted relationship with the deceased) that gives rise to symptoms associated with trauma.” (William Worden)

Complicated grief: “We are unable to reinvest into life and/or we are still experiencing the pain of the loss.” (William Worden)

View the client as the expert on their grief

(Law of Detachment) Adapted from Deepak Chopra, M.D. The pioneer in the field of mind body medicine and *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*

- Allow myself and those around me the freedom to be as they are (accepting where client is at with their grief). I will not rigidly impose my idea of how things should be. I will not force solutions on problems, thereby creating new problems. I will participate in everything with detached involvement.
- In my willingness to accept uncertainty, solutions will spontaneously emerge out of the problem, out of the confusion, disorder, and chaos. Through the wisdom of uncertainty, I will find my security.
- I remain open to an infinity of choices and all possibilities (reframing).

Acknowledge client's loss

Ensure that we say something to the individual when they introduce their loved one and/or talk about their loss. Be genuine and validate their loss/mourning (e.g., “You must miss your dad.”)

Companioning: A form of client centered talk therapy

Adapted from Alan Wolfelt, PHD, C.T. *The Depression of Grief: Coping With Your Sadness and Knowing When to Get Help*

Companioning: The art of walking alongside someone in grief

Tenet one: Companioning is about being present to another person's pain; it is not about taking away the pain.

Tenet two: Companioning is about going to the wilderness of the soul with another human being; it is not about thinking you are responsible for finding the way out.

Tenet three: Companioning is about honoring the spirit; it is not about focusing on the intellect.

Tenet four: Companioning is about listening with the heart; it is not about analyzing with the head.

Tenet five: Companioning is about bearing witness to the struggles of other; it is not about judging or directing these struggles.

Tenet six: Companioning is about walking alongside; it is not about leading or being led.

Tenet seven: Companioning is about discovering the gifts of sacred silence; it does not mean filling up every moment with words.

Tenet eight: Companioning is about being still; it is not about frantic movement forward.

Tenet nine: Companionship is about respecting disorder and confusion; it is not about imposing order and logic.

Tenet ten: Companionship is about learning from others; it is not about teaching them.

Tenet eleven: Companionship is about compassionate curiosity; it is not about expertise.

The companionship model:

- Emphasizes the transformative, life changing experience of grief (“new normal”).
- Observe, “watch out for,” “bear witness,” and see value in soul based symptoms of grief.
- Bereaved person guides the journey; “teach me” is the foundational principle.
- Is a normal shift from relationship of presence to relationship of memory.
- Recognizes the need for the mourner to actively mourn.
- Grieving person expresses the reality of being “torn apart” as best he/she can.
- Quality of care monitored by how well we allowed the griever to lead the journey.
- Denial helps sustain the integration of the loss from head to heart. It is matched with patience and compassion.
- Show up with curiosity; willingness to learn from the griever.
- Honor the mystery; facilitate the continuing “search for meaning,” no urgency to solve or satisfy the dilemma.

Create a space for healing

Lorraine Hedtke, Narrative Therapist, MSW, ACSW, LCSW, PHD has published in numerous professional journals with John Winslade, PHD in the area of bereavement.

Lorraine states that there must be “a medium to successively build a new form of relationship with a person who has died” from the book *Bereavement Support Groups: Breathing Life into Stories from the Dead*. She further states “while it may seem crazy to suggest a relationship with a dead person, establishing just that brings relief. It provides a vehicle for those living with what can be debilitating pain to achieve their desired reconnection with those who have died. What is involved here is to create a model facilitating this continuing relationship. When a person dies, the old script of how to connect to that person is suddenly erased and previously familiar ways to interact fail. There are sources of relief for the bereaved...to create new bonds.” Lorraine views a process that allows “for both letting go of the stories that no longer serve the living, while reincorporating other stories to build strength and resilience, and, in the process positioning the living and the dead in a place of agency and love” (preface to chapter 2).

Connect, empathize (Van Der Kolk and Irvin D. Yalom)

“Acting is not about putting on a character but discovering the character within you: you are the character, you just have to find it within yourself-albeit a very expanded version of yourself” (Tina Packer from *The Body Keeps the Score* by Bessel Van Der Kolk). Metaphorically speaking, empathy is looking outside the window of another. What you see is not your world, but the world of the other; thus, you are the mirror and the reflection is the other. Biologically speaking, one of the architects of empathy is the mirror neurons. They are our “neural WiFi” (page 58), helping us to wirelessly connect, communicate, and be in sync with one another within a particular space and zone of proximity; thus, true connection and empathy is not an art in acting, but an art of discovering and seeing the reflection of the other.

Modalities**Grief work and grief therapy involves: The process from grief to healing (mourning)**

Grief work: Adapted from Therese Rando, PHD, Clinical Psychologist, Thanatologist and Traumatologist. Taken from *How to Go on Living When Someone You Love Dies* (page 16).

Grief Work “requires the expenditure of both physical and emotional energy...The term ‘Grief Work’ describes the tasks and processes that you must complete successfully...The term shows that grief is something you must work at actively if you are to **reconcile** it in a healthy fashion. It demands much more than merely passively experiencing your reactions to loss: you must actively do things and undertake specific courses of thought and action to integrate and **reconcile** your grief.” This group will utilize Alan Wolfelt’s Tasks of Mourning to demonstrate the processes of healthy healing.

Grief therapy: Adapted from William Worden, PHD, ABPP, Fellow of the American Psychological Association and Founding Member of the Association of Death Education and Counseling. Taken from *Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy: A Handbook for the Mental Health Practitioner, Fourth Edition* (page 155).

“The goal of grief therapy is to **reconcile** the conflicts of separation and to better adapt to the death. The **reconciliation** of these conflicts requires the patient to experience thoughts and feelings that he or she has been **unable to address previously**. The therapist provides the social support necessary for successful grief work and essentially gives the patient permission to grieve, permission that may have been lacking around the time of the death...One way to enhance the Therapeutic alliance is to recognize and acknowledge the difficulty some people may experience when they reopen a past loss. The greater the underlying conflict with the deceased, the more resistance there will be to exploring painful thoughts and feelings. Resistances are constantly monitored and worked with as a part of the therapy process.”

Alan Wolfelt, PHD, CT: Reconciliation, adapted from *The Depression of Grief: Coping With Your Sadness and Knowing When to Get Help* (page 109) and workshop material.

“The word Reconcile comes from the middle English for *to make good again*. This is the essence of reconciliation in grief—*to make your life good again*. Reconciliation acknowledges transformation, and literally means an entire change in form. You are a different person. *New normal* not *old normal*. You don’t heal from the death of someone because time passes, you heal because of what you do with the time.”

Narrative therapy

Lorraine Hedtke, MSW, ACSW, LCSW, PHD and John Winslade, PHD *Re-membering lives: conversations with the dying and the bereaved.*

“When we think in terms of narrative continuity, we are free to construct conversations that are not bound by limited notions of ‘reality.’ In these conversations, we can invite out the ongoing significance of membership through the practice of remembering. Such conversations encourage people to bring forward the best possible experience of relationships in the face of the emergency of death. Even when we are faced with hardship, remembering gives us a clear path for making comforting meanings during confusing and challenging times.” (pages 2 and 3)

Mindfulness and existential work

Robert A. Neimeyer, PHD in Psychology who has done extensive research in the area of grief and loss, recently expanded his research to include mindfulness, grief/loss, and existential work. He edited the book *Techniques of Grief Therapy: Creative Practices for Counseling The Bereaved* 2012 in which several leading experts in the field added their published work. The following academic work was written by Joanne Cacciatore on page 17 of the book and entitled *A Mindfulness Guide Through Grief.*

“Generally traumatic grief during early therapy manifests in a state of intense existential suffering. It is imperative then that clinicians establish first and foremost a safe place where in clients are able to *be with* their grief, turning towards the loss, allowing the loss to find expression. Here the goal for the client is to enter an endogenous state of pause, becoming fully attuned to—mindful of—their changing emotional processes through contemplation, emotional transparency with self and other, and self-compassion and awareness. A client can be aided toward expression...through mindfulness based activities such as weeping, meditation and prayer, emotion journaling, three minute breathing space or conscious deep breathing, creative arts (music, arts, poetry, symbols – linking objects) and help-seeking. Significantly the cultivation of these capacities for mindful awareness in the client requires a similar cultivation of a grounding mindfulness in the therapist as a foundation for their mutual work (Cacciatore & Flint, 2012). Once clients have become attuned to their experience they may be better able to enter a state of therapeutic reflection with the clinician by surrendering to the grief.” This can generate a necessity to examine a new purpose in life.

Sameet Kumar, PHD in Psychology has done research in the area of grief and loss and Mindfulness. Taken from the book *Grieving Mindfully: A Compassionate and Spiritual Guide to Coping With Loss*.

According to Dr. Kumar “Mindfulness helps you develop a sense of patience with and acceptance of the ups and downs of grief. As you continue on your grief journey your practice of mindfulness meditation and mindful activities also deepens. This is in part because grief heightens your awareness of life in general, as does mindfulness. Each moment develops a delicate precious potential that is far beyond our tendency to take “small things for granted and live in anticipation of future tasks and events.”

Normalizing/validation

Use constant, consistent and natural validation & normalization of thoughts, feelings and experiences of the individual/group.

Healing needs/touchstones (Alan Wolfelt)

- Open to the presence of your loss
- Dispel the misconceptions about grief
- Embrace the uniqueness of your grief
- Explore your feelings of loss
- Recognize you are not crazy
- Understand the **Six Needs of Mourning** (this is the foundation of the 8 weeks)
 1. Acknowledge the reality of the loss
 2. Embrace the pain of the loss
 3. Remember your loss
 4. Develop a new self-identity
 5. Search for meaning
 6. Receive ongoing support from others
- Nurture yourself
- Reach out for help
 - Seek reconciliation, not resolution
 - Appreciate your transformation

Experiential process

Defined by: Lewis, L.H. & Williams, C.J. (1994). In Jackson, L. & Caffarella, R.S. (Eds.). *Experiential Learning: A New Approach* (pages 5 – 16). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Taken from Ryerson University.

“In its simplest form experiential learning means learning from experience or learning by doing. Experiential education first immerses learners in an experience and then encourages reflection about the experience to develop new skills, new attitudes or new ways of thinking.”

Empowerment

As defined by Therese Rando and adapted from her research on the “Treatment of Complicated Mourning.”

“Empowering individuals in therapy is a critical goal for most types of treatment. The mourner may be given explicit control of such issues as timing, content, pacing, depth, and so forth. In the frequent situation where resistance is high because of the fear of being overwhelmed by affect, empowerment is particularly necessary and fruitful. If mourners feel they have control, over time they will be more open to exploring dangerous or painful areas. Such control decreases the sense of helplessness, lack of control, and fear of being overwhelmed that the mourner often feels in the face of coping with the loss. It challenges passivity.”

Resources

General Questions

Other general questions that may be helpful, depending on skills or participant feedback:

How will you share this skill with others? How might this skill impact other areas of your life?
How does that skill relate to what is meaningful for you?

If you were to do this skill again – what would you keep the same? What would you do differently?

If you kept practicing this skill – what would you notice? What would your friends and family notice?

How would you know this skill is working for you? How might you know it is not working for you right now? What changes would you make to make it more worthwhile?

How did this skill impact your mood, behaviour and thinking?

How might this skill affect you now? In the future?

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