

Understanding and Coping with Living Losses

Date: 22 March 2024

Time: 10 AM



Acknowledgement of Country

Carer Kafe acknowledges the Wurundjeri People whose traditional lands we operate on within the Kulin Nation.

We respectfully acknowledge all Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways where we work and live, and recognise their continuing connection to the land, water and community. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.



Your facilitator



Bryan Petheram

Counsellor, social worker and
group facilitator

About Griefline

National not for profit supporting the community for 30+ years

Support people experiencing loss, grief and loneliness

We want to change the way people think and talk about grief





Part 1: Understanding Living Losses

Defining 'Living Loss'

A loss involves change and a sense of realisation that a valued or cherished aspect of life has gone in the way we once knew it.

Living losses are these big or sudden changes in our lives, other than the death of a loved one.

Living losses may be unwanted or unexpected.

End of a relationship

Financial distress

Loss of home

Estrangement from loved ones

Job loss or retirement

Loss of abilities

Loss of health

Children leaving home

Addiction

Imprisonment

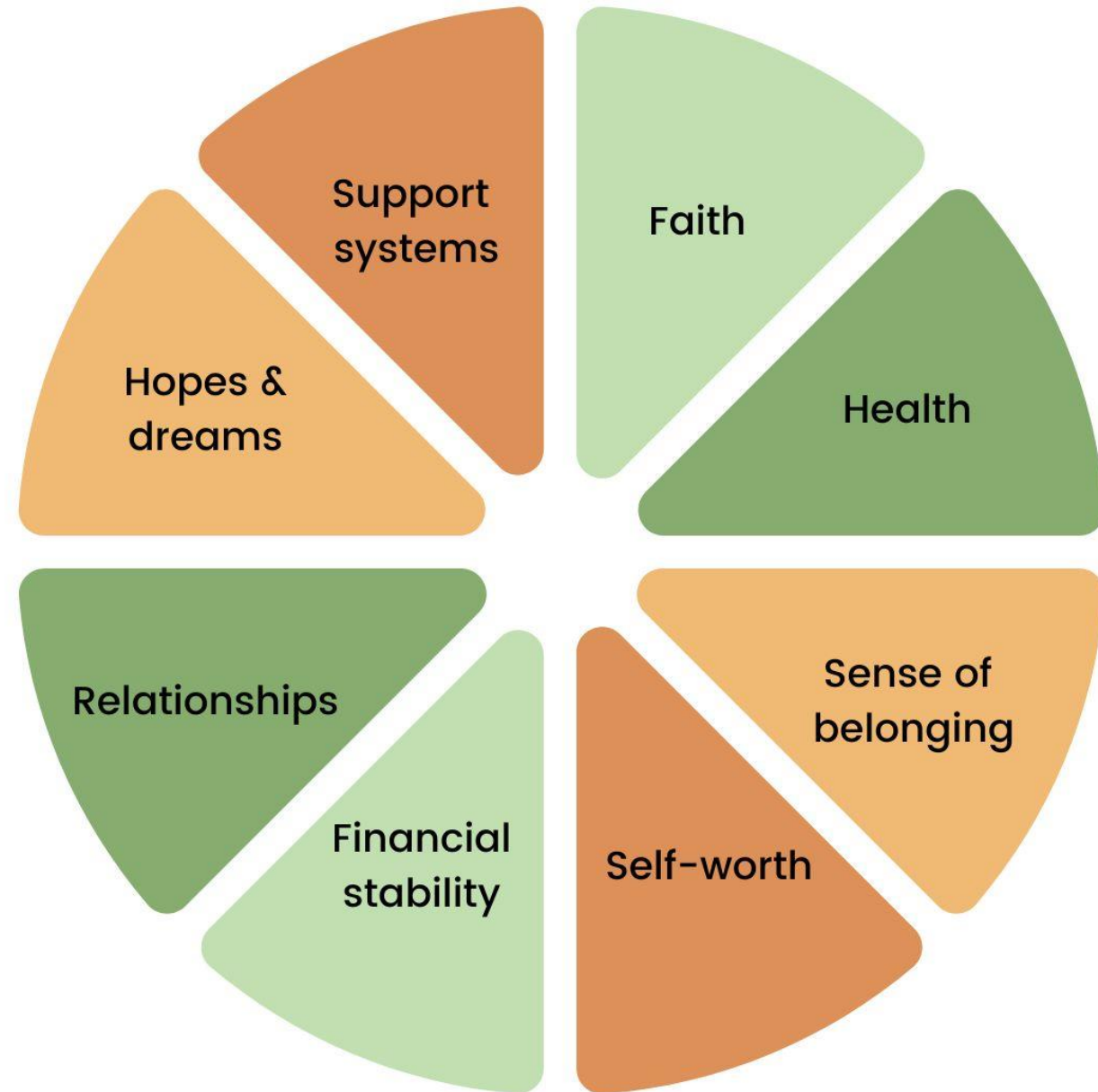
Loss of hopes & dreams

Loss of identity

Losses experienced by carers

- Loss of community and friendships
- Loss of connection with other family members
- Loss of stability and sense of control
- Loss of sense of purpose
- Loss of identity
- Loss of hope
- Loss of income

These losses apply for the carer themselves, and/or in relation to the parent of the children in care.





Living Losses and Grief

Many people relate grief only with death.

It's important to realise even living losses produce grief responses, which can be ongoing or even permanent.

When someone experiences a living loss, the thing that dies might be their hopes or dreams, a relationship, or an ability that has escaped them.

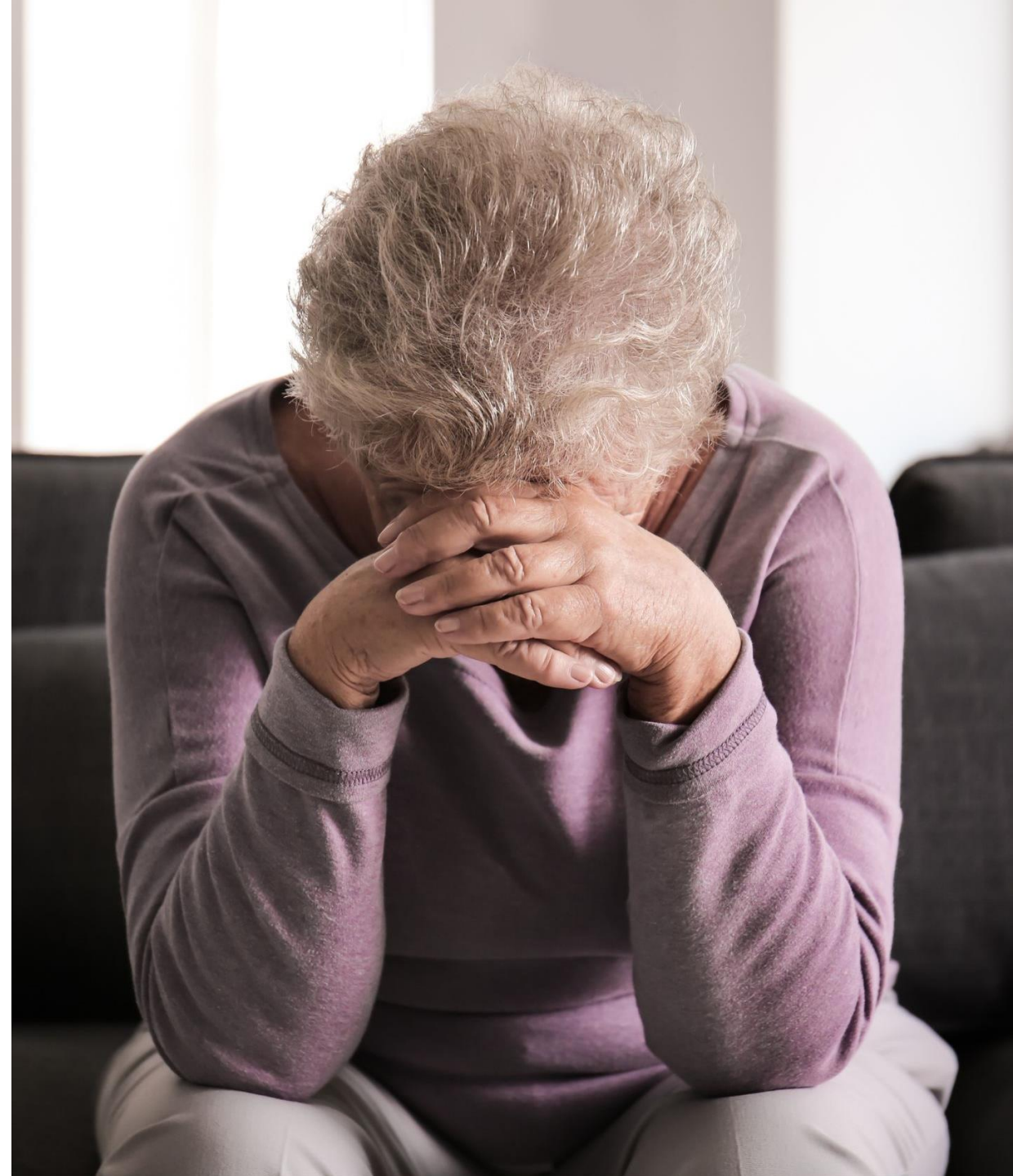
Defining grief

Grief is the normal and natural reaction to profound loss.

We can experience grief in response to losing someone or something that is meaningful in our life.

Grief is not something to be fixed or cured.

Grief exists to enhance our survival as human beings and is unique to each one of us.



Why grief is a deeply personal and individual experience

There's no right or wrong way to grieve, and each person's grieving process will be unique to them.



Personal factors



Nature of the loss



Support systems



Cultural and religious beliefs



Previous losses



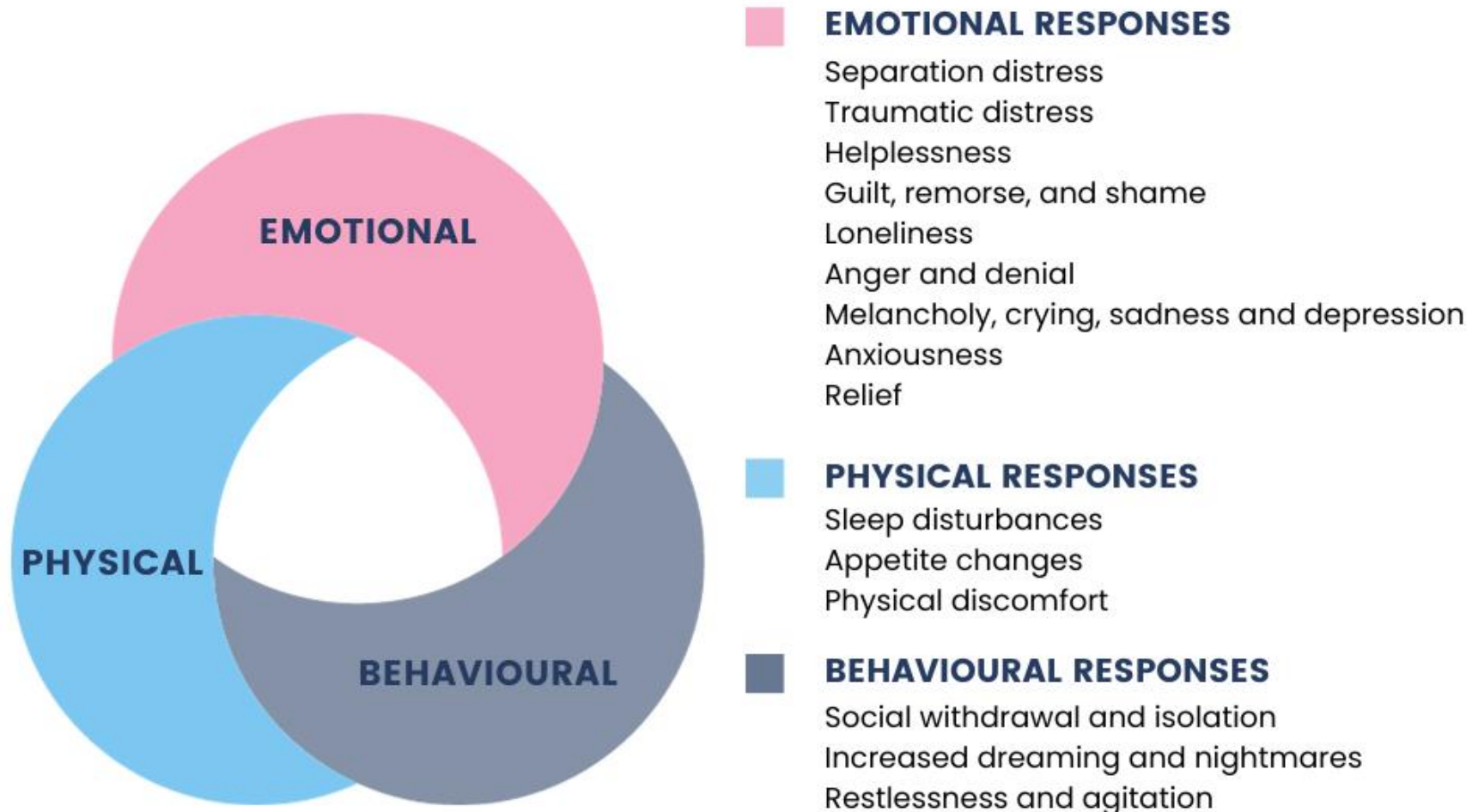
Unacknowledged (past) grief

Grief from previous living losses that may not have been recognized and processed can build up and become compounded.

Compounding grief is when all of your grief from over a lifetime gets compromised and then causes you to spiral downward over one tragic event.

Often when experiencing compounding grief, the person does not have time to process one loss before incurring another.

The range of grief responses



Navigating the ebbs and flows of grief

Some people describe grief as feeling like they're on a rollercoaster ride or as though they're being battered about at sea in a storm.

It's important to remember that the heartache ebbs and flows differently for each person.



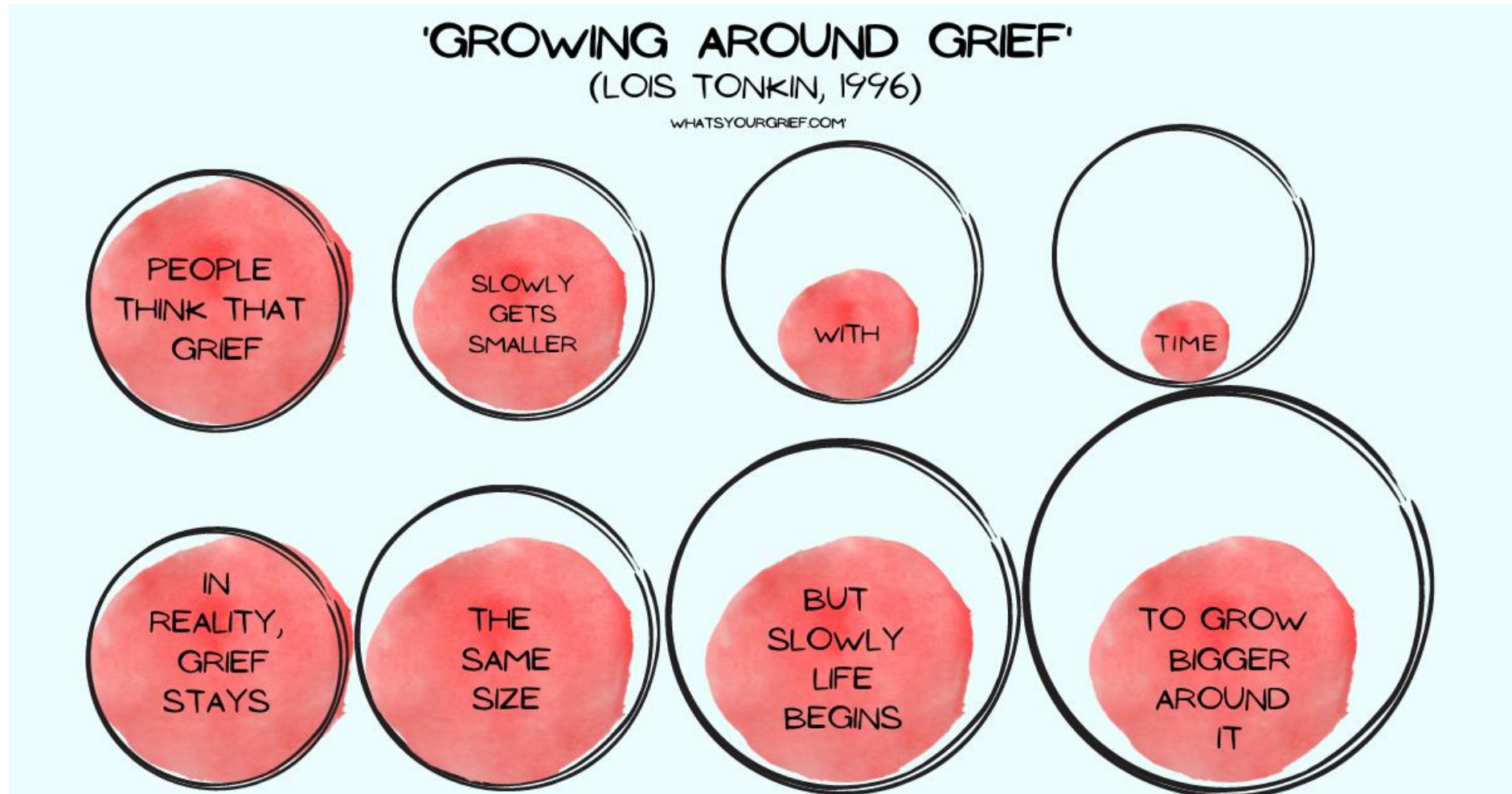
STAGES OF GRIEF



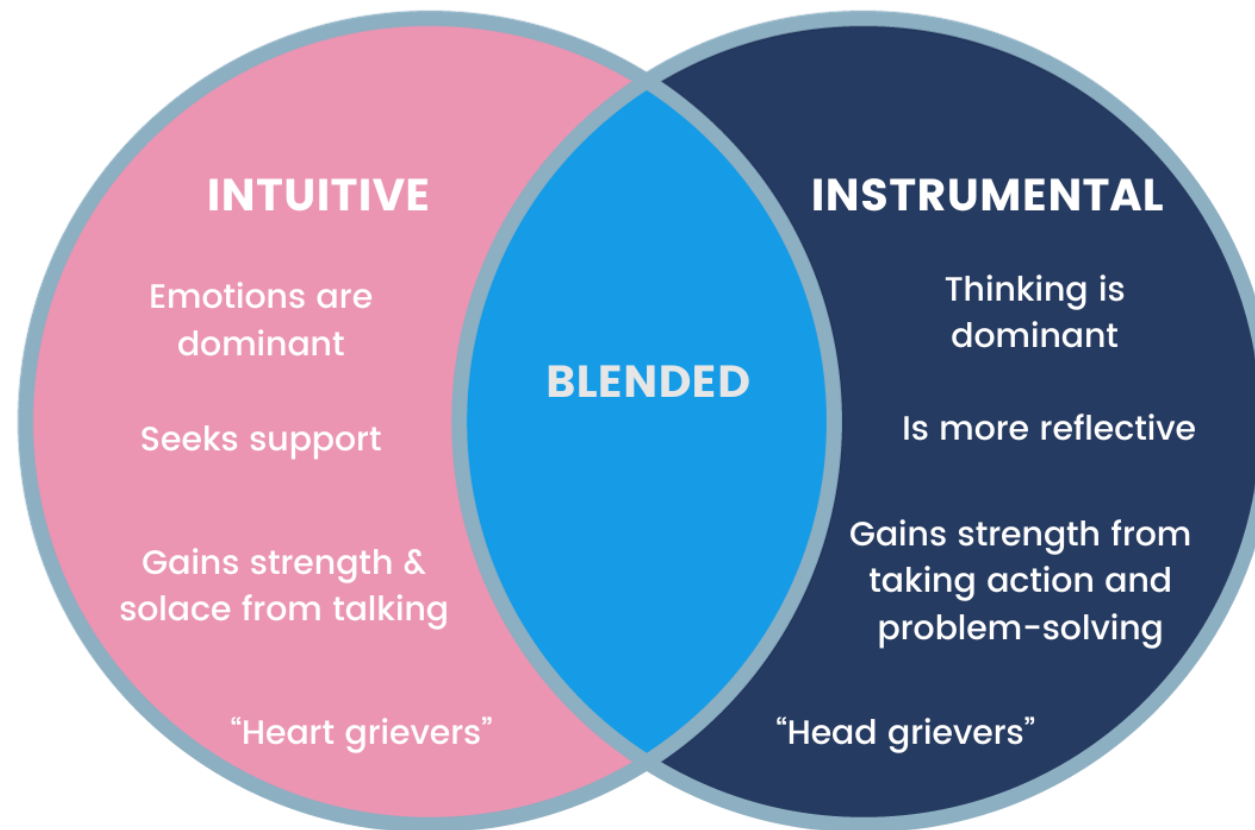
REALITY



Models of Grief



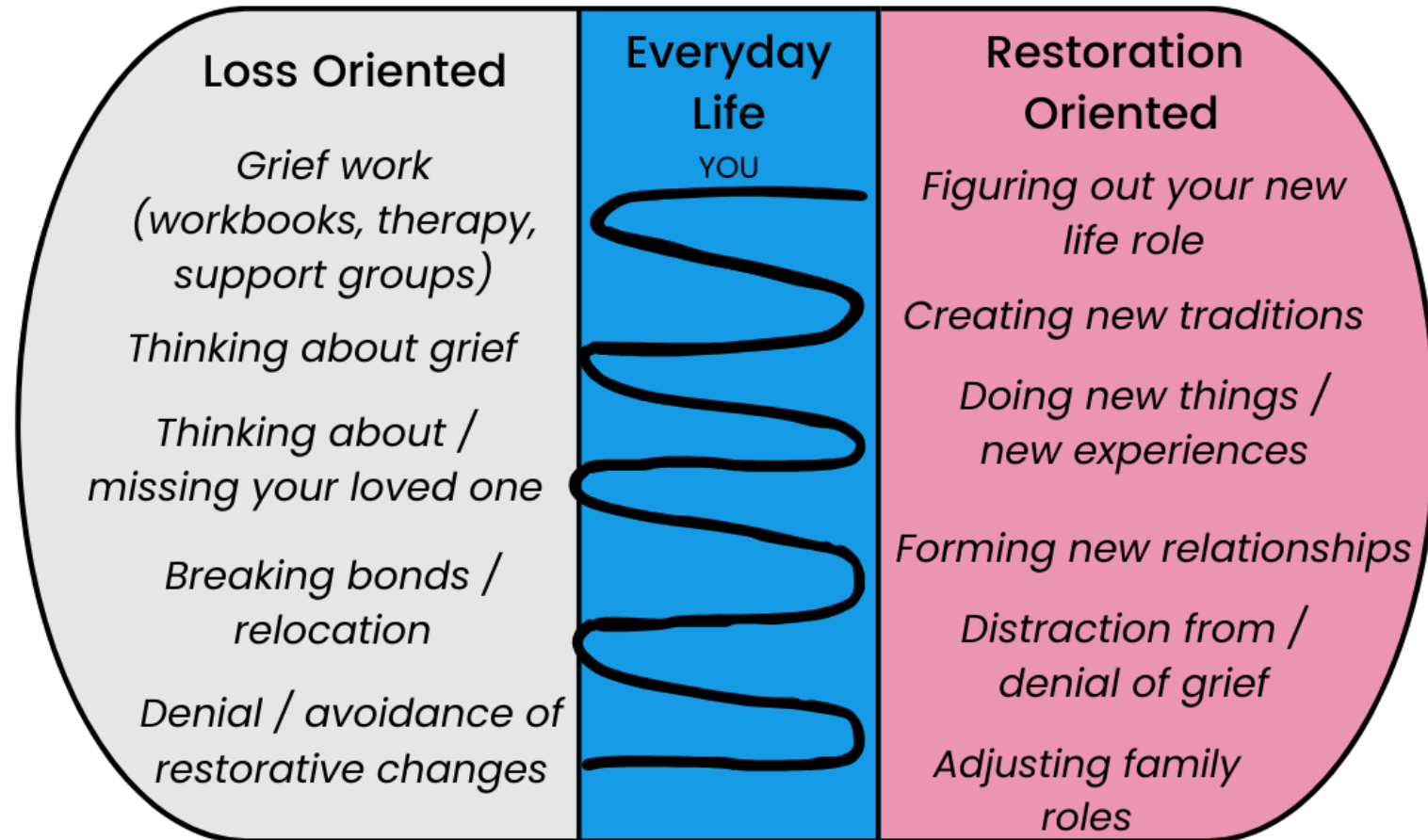
Models of Grief: Intuitive and Instrumental Grieving



Models of Grief:

Dual Process Grief

This model demonstrates how we oscillate between loss-oriented coping (things that focus on grief) and restoration-oriented coping (things that focus on rebuilding your life).





? Reflection

Did any of these models of grief describe your experiences?

Do you feel connected to or inspired by any of these models?



Part 2: Coping with Living Losses

Coping with grief

While there is no complete remedy for your loss, there are several things you can do that might ease your distress somewhat and help you navigate a way through your grief.

Let's explore some strategies.





Take care of your health

Some strategies include:

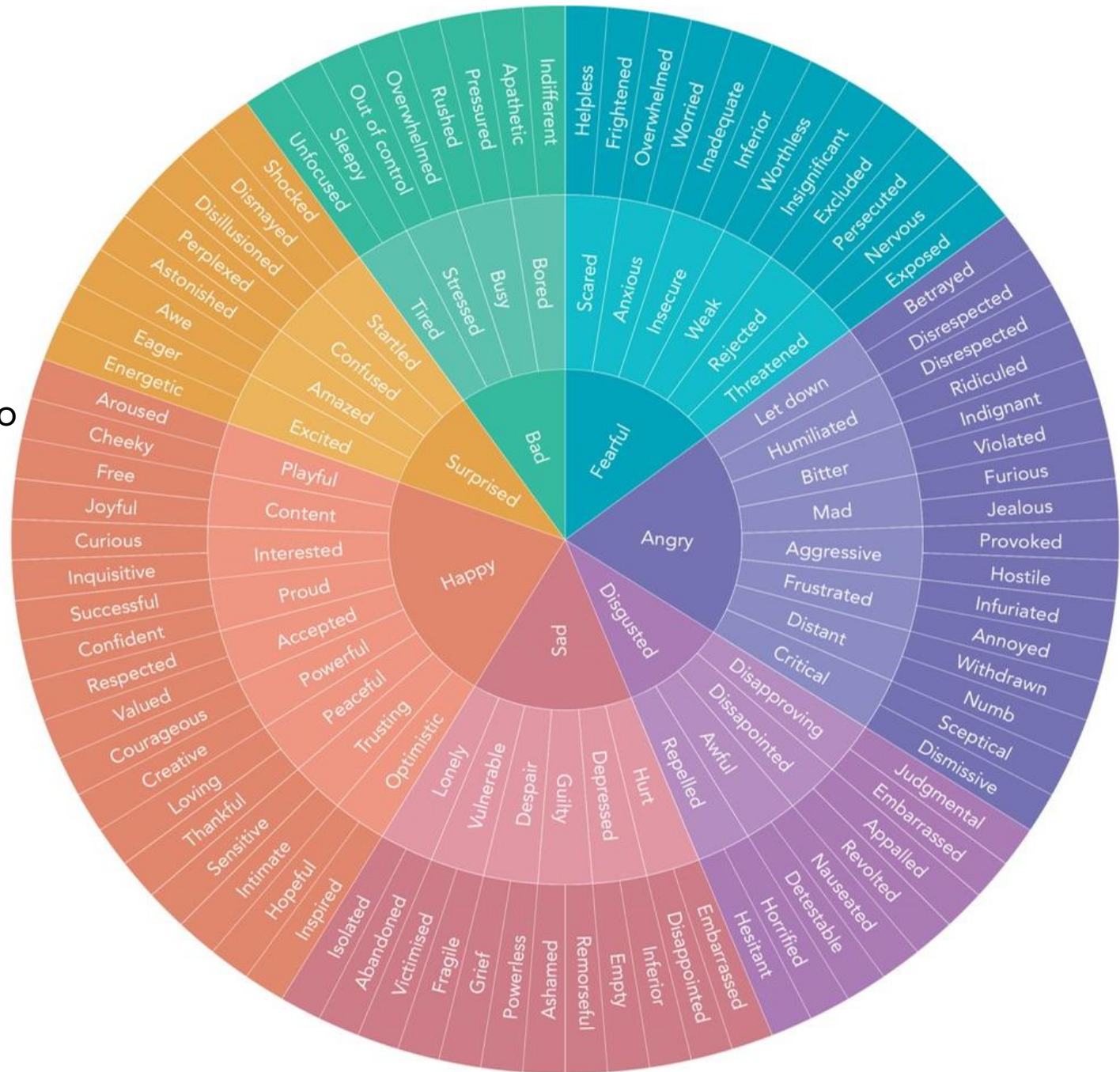
- Adapt your old routines to the changes in your life.
- Establish new routines.
- E.A.S.T. self care guide:
 - Eating
 - Activities
 - Sleeping
 - Time

Reflection

What are some other things you could do to look after yourself?

Practice self-compassion

- Allow yourself to feel compassion towards yourself and others.
- Notice and name your feelings.
- Accepting your feelings makes them easier to manage.
- Forgive yourself.





Seek help and comfort from others

- Reach out to family, friends, workmates, community members.
- Allow yourself to grieve in public – it's perfectly OK to have a cry.
- Share your story.
- Connect with people in similar situations, like here at Carer Kafe.
- Remember that it's ok to ask for and accept help.

Feeling safe and empowered

? Reflection

What does safety look like to you?

What are things in your control that you could do to feel safe?





Future outlook

- Set goals, even if they are short-term
- Re-establish a sense of identity
- Consider your values and make plans that align with them
- Create purpose
- Take it one step at a time.

Taking a mindful approach to coping

- Helps you become more aware of thoughts during difficult times.
- Allows you to stand back a little from your thoughts and assess their usefulness.
- Choosing to reject or accept your thoughts.





Mindful breathing

- Helps calm an anxious mind or tension in the body.
- Can be done anywhere and at any time.
- Simply involves focusing on the body as the breath enters and exits.

Mindful breathing technique

You can use this technique as a daily reminder for yourself or share it with someone else.



A simple mindful breathing technique

Find a comfortable position. Perhaps sitting upright in a chair with a straight spine.

Close the eyes or lower the gaze.

Pay attention to the movement of the chest and try to shift the inhale and exhale down to, and up from, the belly.

Feel the air in the nostrils and the temperature of the breath as it leaves the body.

Continue this focused attention on the breath for a few minutes.

Start with a few minutes per day and build over time.



Note: it is normal for the mind to wander. If it does, it should be acknowledged without being hard on oneself. Just gently bring the attention back to the body and breath.



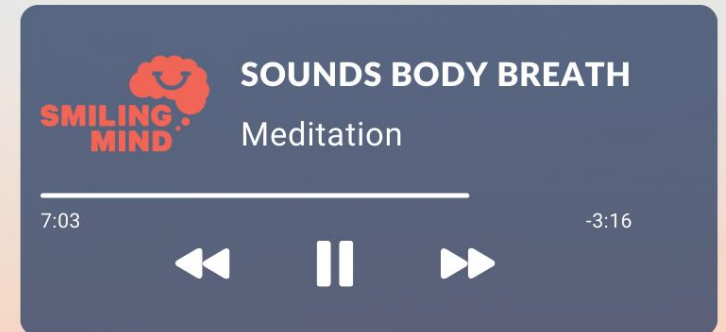
Meditation

Sitting with our thoughts and feelings which although difficult and overwhelming at times, allows us to create a space for ourselves – to connect with our body and mind, find acceptance and healing.

Sounds, body, breath meditation

[The meditation](#) has been selected specifically for Griefline by the psychologists at Smiling Mind.

The meditation is suitable for beginners and can be practiced sitting in a comfortable chair or lying down.





Express your feelings through journaling

- A powerful, stress-relieving tool often used when practicing mindfulness.
- Acts like a confidante.
- A space to untangle confusing thoughts.

Reflective journal prompts

- The hardest time of day is...
- I could use some more...
- I could use some less...
- Today, I am really missing...
- I am ready to feel...
- I find it helpful when...





? Reflection

Can you find the time and space in your life to practice a couple or maybe more of these coping strategies?

Griefline's programs and services



Prevention & education

Online self-help resources

Self-paced online learning & workplace training

YouTube series & podcast

Translated fact sheets



Early intervention

National telephone support

- toll-free grief support line
- toll-free loneliness support line
- request a callback service

Online community forums

Bereavement support groups



Specialised care

Grief & bereavement sessional counselling & support programs

- Integrating grief (VIC & NSW only)
- Pre-VAD and post-VAD groups

Griefline resources

Grief Helpline: **1300 845 745**

G'day Line (for loneliness and isolation): **1300 920 552**

Grief and loss resource hub

Fact sheets

YouTube series:

Courageous conversations

Community and connection comes in all forms.



Are you ready for a courageous conversation? Join Matthew Jackson as he explores loneliness during lockdowns and how to show up for your mates in hard times.

Support for Carers



Kinship Carers Victoria <https://kinshipcarersvictoria.org/contact-kcv/>



Foster Care Association of Victoria <https://www.fcav.org.au/contacts/fcav-contacts>

Permanent
Care and
Adoptive
Families



Permanent Care and Adoptive Families <https://www.pcafamilies.org.au/contact>

Session Feedback

Scan QR code or use weblink



<https://wkf.ms/44VSSth>



Thank you!

For training visit: carerkafe.org.au

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The Carer Kafe program is hosted by three agencies working in partnership: **The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare**, **Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)** and **Kinship Carers Victoria**. Carer Kafe is supported by a Governance Group, which includes the following organisations:

