

# Include a Charity 2021 Gifts in Wills Conference

15 September 2021



## Compassionate Conversations

Christopher Hall  
Chief Executive Officer  
Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement



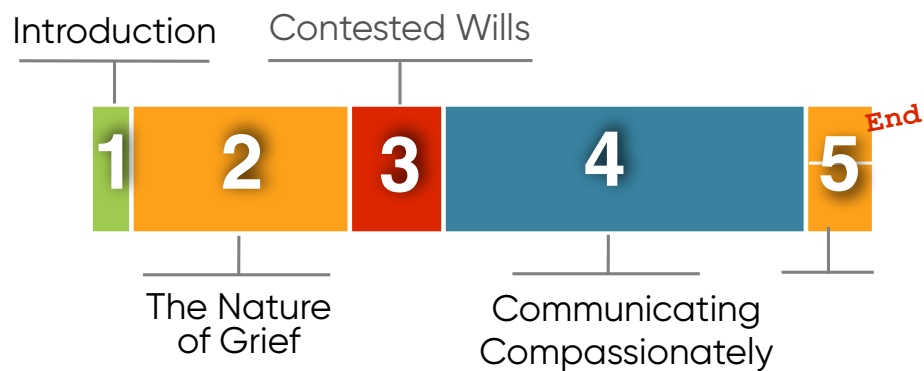
[www.grief.org.au](http://www.grief.org.au)



[c.hall@grief.org.au](mailto:c.hall@grief.org.au)



## Program Overview



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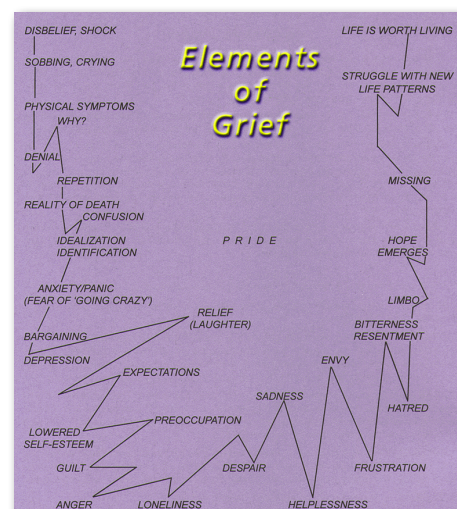
Introduction



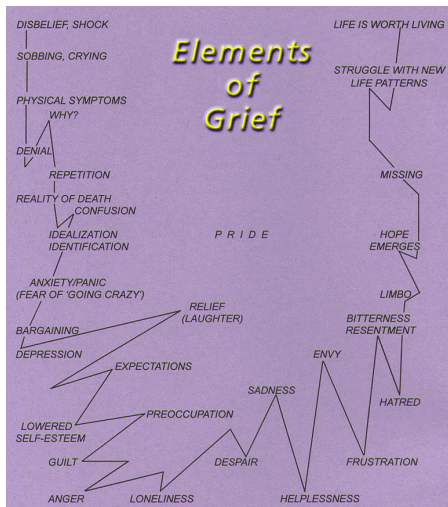
The Nature  
of Grief

## Common elements of the new approach to grief and bereavement

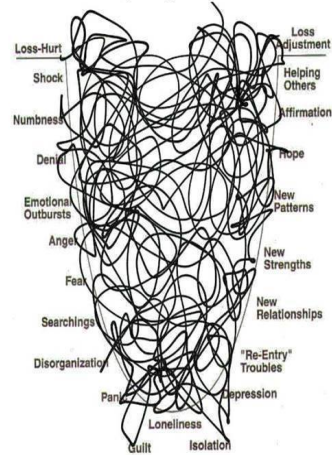
1. Scepticism about the universal and predictable "emotional pathway" that leads from distress to "recovery". Grief is **a more complex process** of adapting to loss.



## Common elements of the new approach to grief and bereavement



### My experience



## Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (1969)



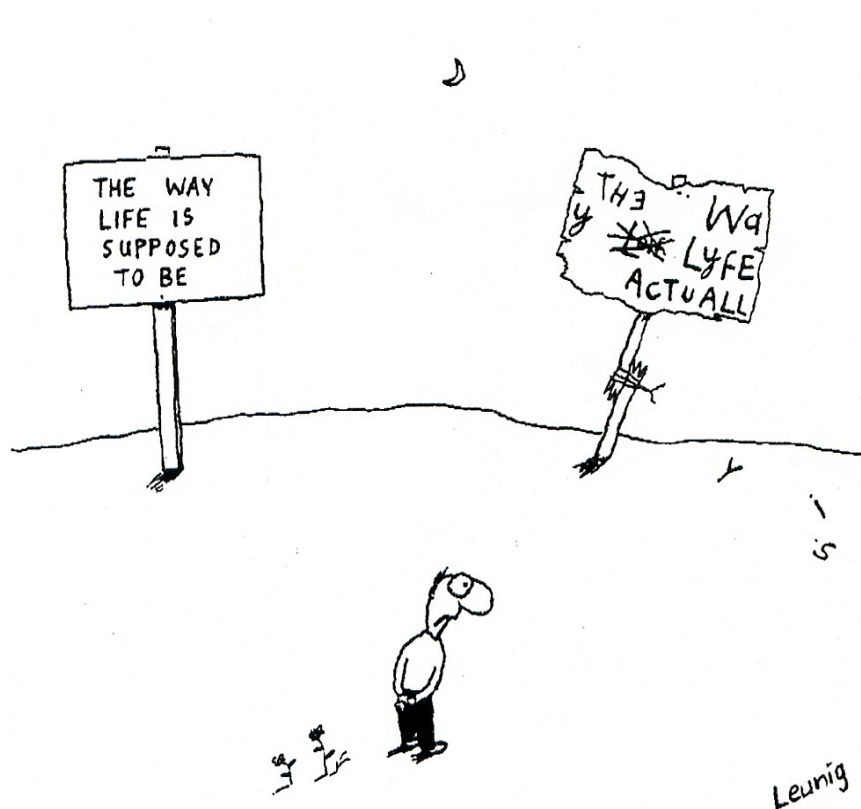
## Common elements of the new approach to grief and bereavement

2. A shift away from the idea that successful grieving requires “letting go” of the one who has died, and toward a recognition of the potentially healthy role of **maintaining continued symbolic bonds** with the deceased



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2. A shift away from the idea that successful grieving requires “letting go” of the one who has died, and toward a recognition of the potentially healthy role of **maintaining continued symbolic bonds** with the deceased
3. Attention to broadly **cognitive processes** involved in mourning, adding to the traditional focus on the emotional consequences of loss

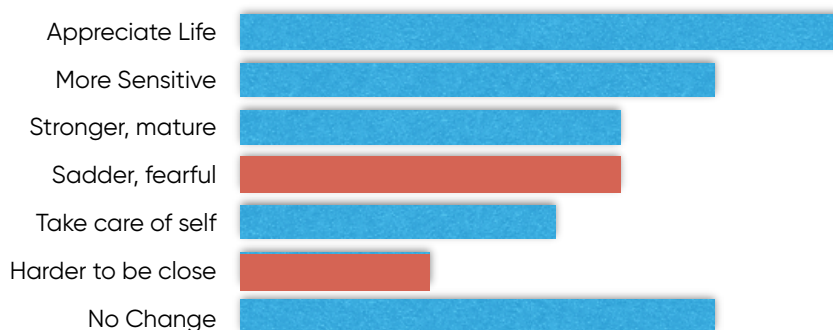


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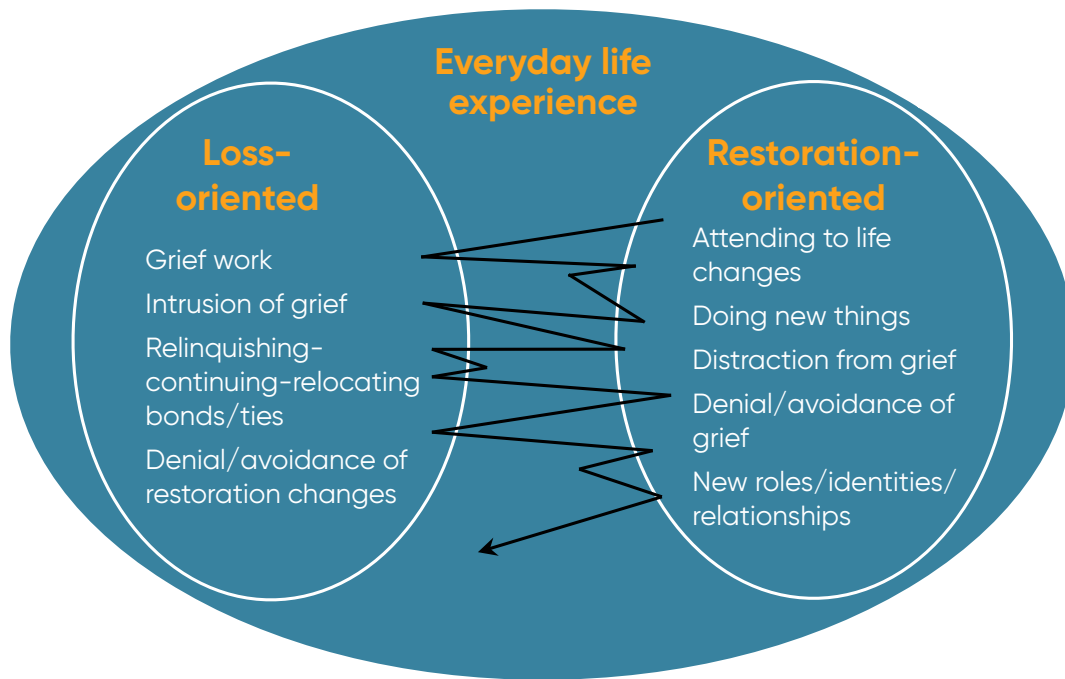
4. Greater awareness of the implications of major loss for the bereaved individual's **sense of identity**. Grief often produces a deep revision in the bereaved persons sense of self.

## Identity Reconstruction

*Neimeyer, R. A. (2001). Reauthoring life narratives: Grief therapy as meaning reconstruction. Israel Journal of Psychiatry & Related Sciences.*



■ Percent of 356 bereaved adults reporting:

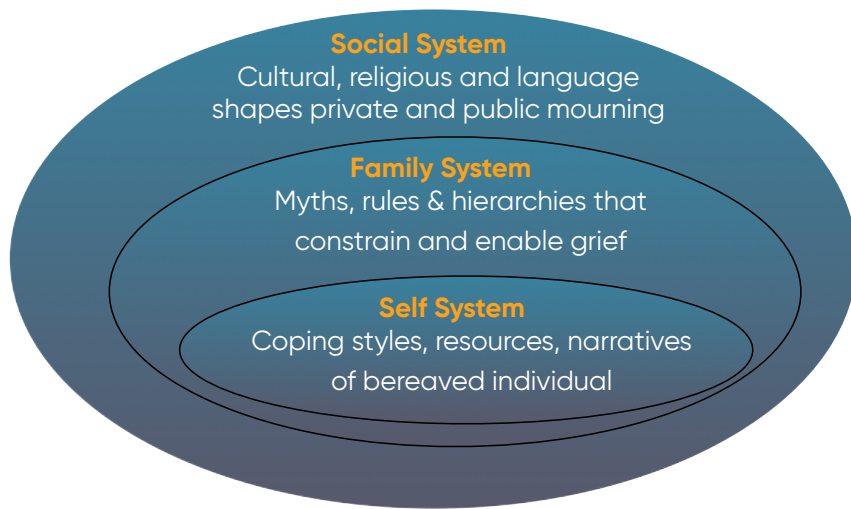


**Figure 1**  
Dual Process Model of Coping with Bereavement

## Common elements of the new approach to grief and bereavement

5. Increased appreciation of the possibility of life-enhancing "**post-traumatic growth**" as one integrates the lessons of loss
6. Broadening the focus of attention to include not only the experience of individual griever, but also the impact of loss on **families and broader cultural groups**.

# Systemic Contexts of Grieving



## Grief is...

### ...our response to loss

a multi-faceted experience:

- Feelings
- Physical
- Cognitions
- Behaviour
- Interpersonal
- Spiritual or philosophical

## Health Problems Problems: Prevalences

Stroebe M, Schut H, Stroebe W. (2007). Health outcomes of bereavement. *Lancet*. 370(9603):1960-73.

Health problems/ disorder	Subgroup	Prevalence
Physical health difficulties (severe)	Young widow/ers	• <b>20%</b> (4-6 mths.) • 12% (after 2 yr.) • <b>cf 3%</b> married
Psychiatric disorders 1. PTSD	Partners	1st two years: • <b>50%</b> at 1 of 4 times • <b>9%</b> all 4 times
Psychiatric disorders 2. Clinical depression	Widow/ers	2 mths after the death • <b>24-30%</b> After 1 year: • <b>16%</b>
Complicated grief	Widow/ers	• <b>5-33%</b> acute grief period

## Styles of Grieving

### Intuitive



### Instrumental

Emotive  
Affective  
Social  
Seeking Support

Active  
Cognitive  
Solitary  
Problem-solving  
activity

### Managing Feelings

### Managing Cognitions

(Martin & Doka, 2000)

## Program Overview

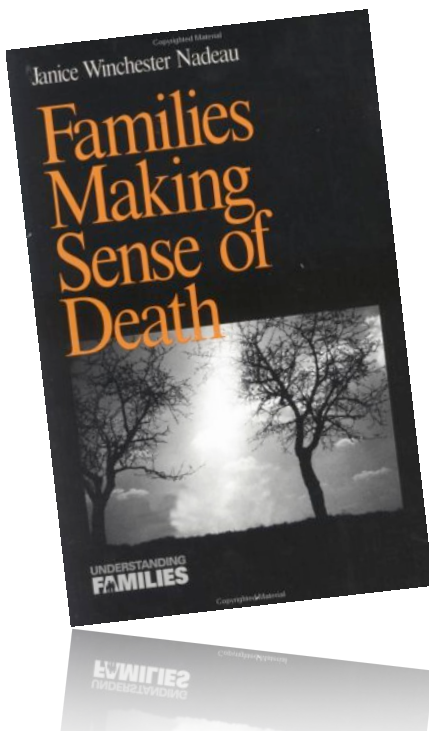


## Common Reasons for Contesting a Will

- **Type and quality of relationship with the deceased**
- **Exclusion and significant disparity in distribution**, where a family member felt a sense of entitlement to a better distribution
- Inadequate provisions to meet the needs of a family member

## Success Rate and Reasons for Contesting a Will

- **86% of claims are brought by immediate family:** either children of the deceased (63%) or partners (including ex-partners) (23%).
- **Adults children** are the most common claimants in will contests.
- **74%** of family provision claims by family (children or partners, including ex-partners) **were successful**.



Interviewed 48 members of 10 families about death of one of their members

Meaning-making processes included stories, dreams, comparison and "coincidancing"

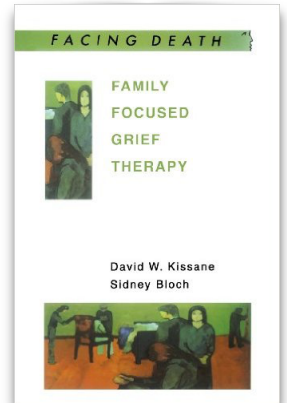
## **Families Making Sense of Death**

1. "Coincidancing"
2. What the death was not
3. That there is no sense to be made
4. Death was unfair or unjust
5. Philosophical meanings
6. The afterlife
7. Religious meanings
8. The nature of the death
9. Attitude of the deceased towards death
10. How the death changed the family
11. Lessons learned and truths realised

Nadeau, J. W. (1999).  
*Families making sense of death*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

## Family-focused Grief Therapy (Kissane & Bloch)

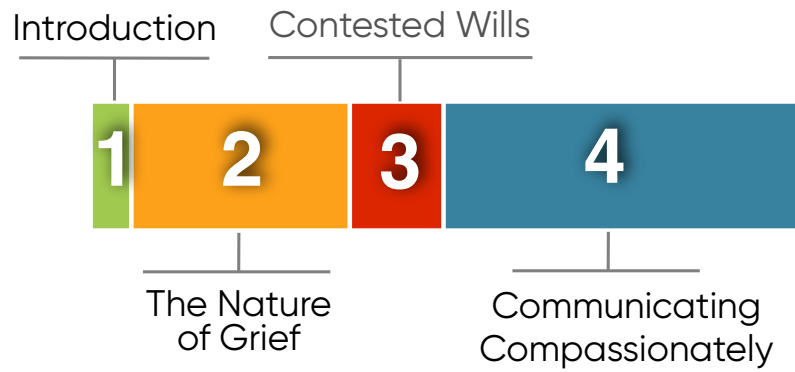
1. Supportive	Do well without FFGT	50%
2. Conflict Resolving	Do well without FFGT	
3. Intermediate	Improved with FFGT @ 6 mths	30%
4. Sullen	Improved with FFGT 6 & 12 mths	15%
5. Hostile	Not improved with FFGT - Refer for Individual Therapy)	



## Family-Focussed Grief Therapy Security in the Family

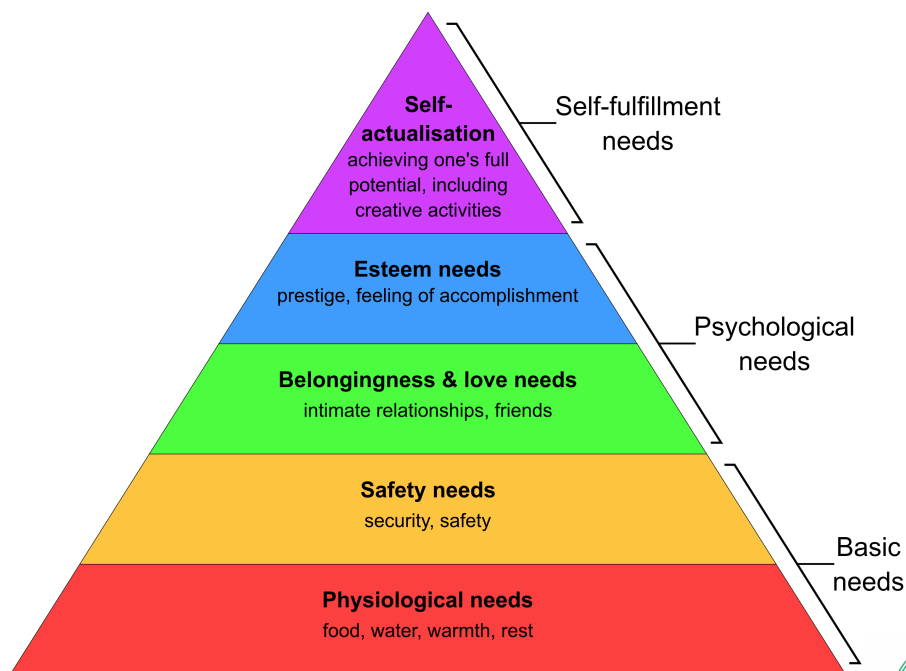
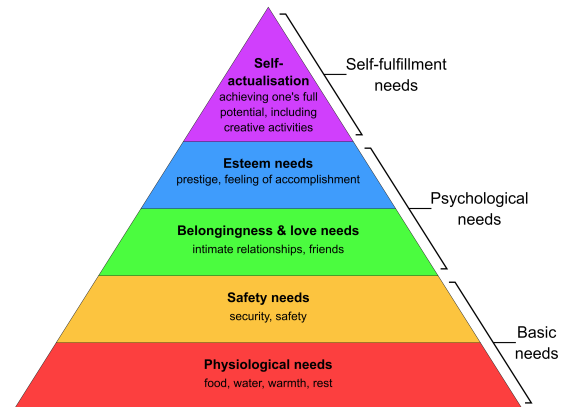
- Fostering the family's assets and strengths, improving communication.
- Helping family to identify concerns and making patterns of family functioning explicit.
- Encouraging the family to take responsibility for change.

## Program Overview



# Feelings & Needs

- Understanding your feelings and needs, and those of others, will help you a great deal as you build skills in communicating and connecting with others.
- Feelings and needs are closely related. Your feelings show you what you need and whether or not those needs are being met.



# Barriers to difficult conversations

- Lack of confidence
- Fear of reactions
- Religious/cultural knowledge
- Ethical/legal boundaries

## Barriers to effective communication

- Focus on self
  - "I had that problem..."
- Request / explanation
  - 'Why' questions
- Clichés and false reassurance
  - "It's all for the best"

## Barriers to effective communication

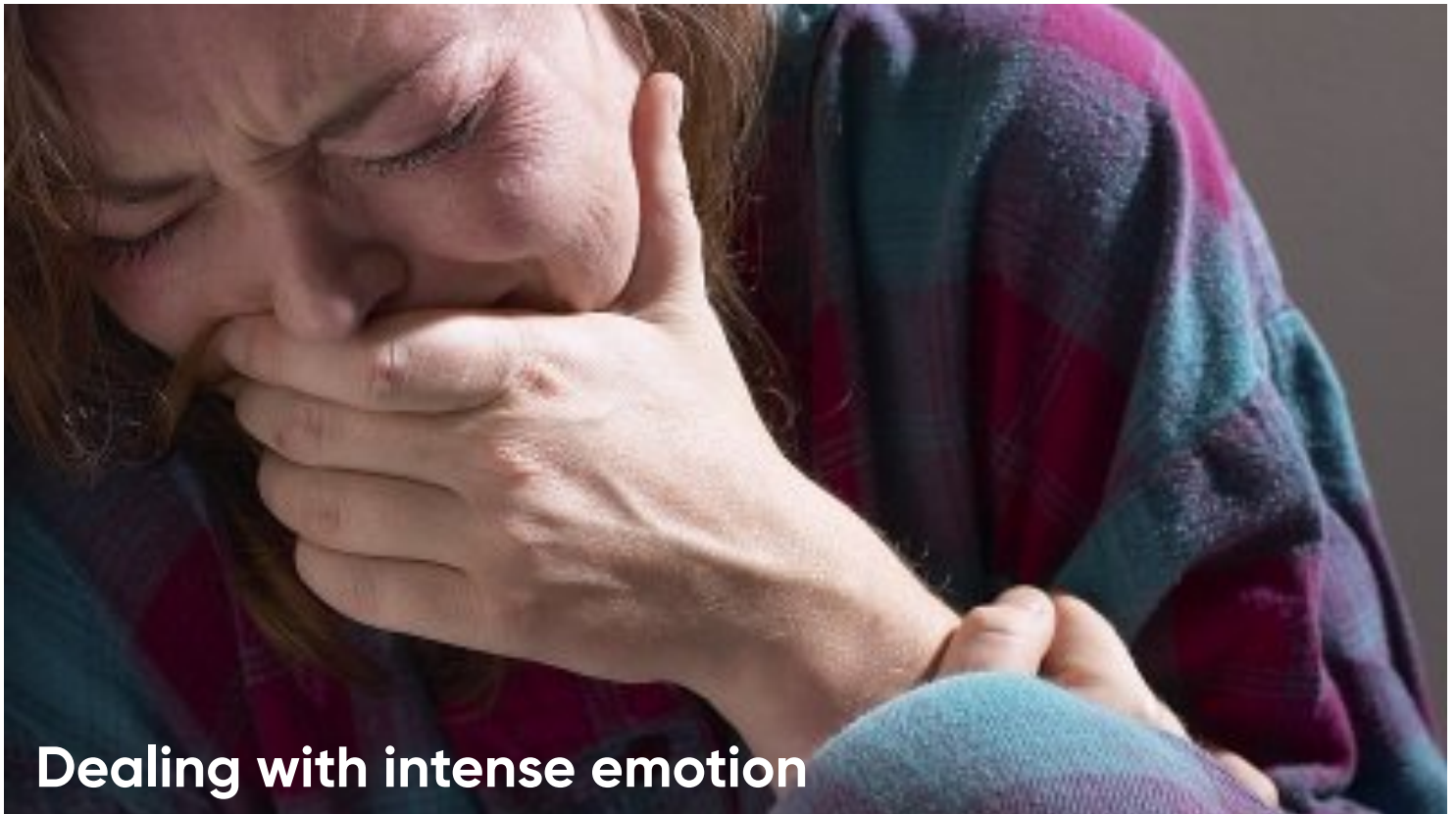
<b>Advising</b>	You should ...
<b>Devaluing</b>	Don't be sad Everyone has times like that
<b>Approval/Disapproval</b>	You shouldn't have done that
<b>Defending</b>	Making excuses
<b>Changing the subject</b>	What did you have for lunch?

## Create rapport

- Make sure you have sufficient skill
- Allow time
- Provide attentive interaction and skilled communication
- Treat people as individuals and be culturally aware

# Communicate effectively

- Empathy
- Active listening
- Restatement /Reflection
- Revisit conversations



**Dealing with intense emotion**

## **Dealing with intense emotion**

- Permit the expression of intense emotions without judgement
- Sit near the person without touching them
- Do not interrupt or talk
- Allow them to gather themselves and respond when they indicate they are ready. Ask if there is anyone/anything they need
- Feelings do not need to be fixed-just expressed
- Manage your own emotions appropriately

## **Acknowledge emotions and concerns**

- Explore and acknowledge fears, feelings and concerns
- Respond to distress
- Be honest without being blunt or giving more detailed than is desired

# Manage the flow of conversation

## Open questions

- Who, what, when, where
  - ✦ opens up dialogue
  - ✦ helps to explore issues

## Closed questions

- require a yes/no response
- useful if you are short of time or wish to wind up a conversation

# Ensure understanding

- Check their understanding and update continually
- Ask them to repeat the information in their own words so that you know they have understood the content of your conversation
- Provide written and verbal information if possible and in their language if appropriate



## The Narrative Impulse

*Why people tell us their stories of loss -*

- They seek safe and intimate contents of disclosure
- They believe that we can hear what others cannot
- They hope that we will validate their pain as real
- They seek a meaningful account of their experience in the telling

(Neimeyer)

## **The Gift of Witnessing**

*We serve people by listening differently -*

- Allow time for telling without interruption
- Explore the pain without over-identification
- Respond to metaphors and themes as well as audible content
- Prompt retelling in emotional and reflective, as well as factual forms
- Avoid superficial reassurance

**Actions** to undo helplessness & powerlessness

**Information and education** about effects of trauma and bereavement

**Social support** from family and peers - extensive discussions promote mastery of impressions and memories.

**Symbols and rituals** should be encouraged, supported and resourced as part of the recovery system

# The qualities and actions of effective helpers

## **1. Interpersonal skills**

- Verbal fluency
- Interpersonal perception
- Affective modulation and expressiveness
- Warmth and acceptance
- Empathy
- Focus on other

## **2. Clients feel understood and trust the person**

# The qualities and actions of effective helpers

**3. Effective helpers are able to form a working alliance with a broad range of clients.**

**4. The effective helper is influential, persuasive, and convincing.**

**5. The effective helper does not avoid difficult material.**

**6. The effective helper communicates hope and optimism.**

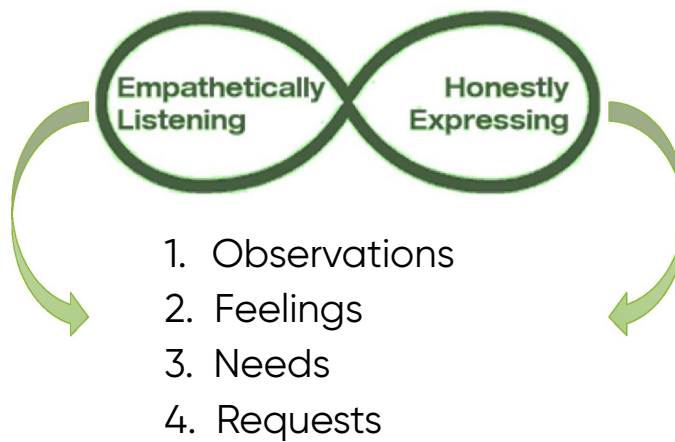
## The qualities and actions of effective helpers

- 7. Effective helpers are aware of the client's characteristics and context, such as culture, race, ethnicity, spirituality, sexual orientation, age, motivation etc.**
- 8. The effective helpers are aware of their own psychological process and does not inject his or her own material into the helping process.**
- 9. The effective helper seeks to continually improve.**

## What is good communication?

- Allows honest sharing of feelings, needs, and requests without putting ourselves or someone else down.
- It is speaking and listening respectfully, calmly, and fairly, with no blaming or shaming.
- It is clear and direct, with no one being manipulated, bullied, or avoiding the issue.
- Both people and their points of view matter equally.

# The 4-Part Nonviolent Communication (NVC) Process



Marshall Rosenberg, PhD

Clearly expressing how <b>I am</b> without blaming or criticizing	Empathically receiving how <b>you are</b> without hearing blame or criticism
<b>OBSERVATIONS</b>	
1. What I observe ( <i>see, hear, remember, imagine, free from my evaluations</i> ) that does or does not contribute to my well-being: "When I (see, hear) . . ."	1. What you observe ( <i>see, hear, remember, imagine, free from your evaluations</i> ) that does or does not contribute to your well-being: "When you see/hear . . ." <small>(Sometimes unspoken when offering empathy)</small>
<b>FEELINGS</b>	
2. How I feel ( <i>emotion or sensation rather than thought</i> ) in relation to what I observe: "I feel . . ."	2. How you feel ( <i>emotion or sensation rather than thought</i> ) in relation to what you observe: "You feel . . ."
<b>NEEDS</b>	
3. What I need or value ( <i>rather than a preference, or a specific action</i> ) that causes my feelings: ". . . because I need/value . . ."	3. What you need or value ( <i>rather than a preference, or a specific action</i> ) that causes your feelings: ". . . because you need/value . . ."
Clearly requesting that which would enrich <b>my</b> life without demanding	Empathically receiving that which would enrich <b>your</b> life without hearing any demand
<b>REQUESTS</b>	
4. The concrete actions I would like taken: "Would you be willing to . . .?"	4. The concrete actions you would like taken: "Would you like . . .?" <small>(Sometimes unspoken when offering empathy)</small>

Clearly expressing  
how **I am**  
without blaming  
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Empathically receiving  
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## Skills for Active Listening with Empathy

1. Pay attention – stay focused
2. Withhold judgment – be open
3. Reflect – acknowledge feelings, show you understand
4. Clarify – ask questions
5. Share – wait until you know they feel heard

## Active Listening with Empathy Helps To:

- Clarify the speaker's meaning and feelings
- Show emotional responses, such as support, enthusiasm, empathy
- Encourage the speaker to feel comfortable speaking up
- Avoid or reduce conflict and misunderstandings

## Listening to Understand and Reflect

- What is the speaker feeling?
  - \*What happened that resulted in those feelings?
  - \*What need or want is the speaker attempting to express?
  - \*What would the speaker like to have happen?

Learn to become more self-aware because there is a connection between the way we deal with issues in those we care for and the way we deal with these issues in ourselves.

Never underestimate what can happen when a person feels truly HEARD.

Speaking honestly while owning our feelings and needs when we speak, and listening with empathy can change the whole picture from disconnection to connection and from distance to closeness.



The work may cause us to **confront our own mortality** and that of our loved ones, **reawaken previous losses** and cause us to **anticipate future losses.**

While compassion allows us to empathise with the distress of others and to offer them comfort and consolation, it may also bring distress for us proportionate to the severity of their loss, the closeness of our identification with their situation and the degree to which our own earlier pain has been revived.

Raphael (1994)

## Personal strategies

Stress arises when there is a disparity between our ideals and visions, and the realities of our work situation ...

be realistic



## Personal strategies

- Know your buttons and triggers
- Recognise you're aroused/upset
- Consciously calm and relax yourself
- Accept your feelings
- Take time to choose your response.
- Respond as opposed to reacting
- Get another perspective
- Know when to refer on
- Listen to your body

## Personal strategies

- maintain good physical health and fitness
- adequate rest and nutrition
- relaxation training/techniques
- personally rewarding activities for rest and relaxation
- good personal emotional support (informal or formal)
- develop a sense of humour

## Personal strategies

- Sense of meaning and spirituality
- Interests outside of your work
- Commitment to family life and other relationships
- Commitment to education, personal growth and ongoing learning
- Understanding what works for you
- Develop your coping resources
- Use support

## Personal strategies

- Value what you have achieved and who you are
- Generate friendships of fun and intimacy
- Develop conscious strategies to unwind and relieve stress

## Personal strategies

- The importance of self-listening: what is happening inside me?
- How does this person's story intersect with my own?
- Understanding our limitations: to know when to refer, to seek support for ourselves
- To take account of our own needs with respect and gentleness

## How You Can Use the NVC Process



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movement**

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