

Introducing myself

- National Coordinator CBUK (Scotland)
 - Mental Health Counsellor (all ages and especially bereavement)
 - Coach (children , young people especially)
 - Counselling Practice Supervisor
 - Design, write and deliver training courses
 - Consulting on mental health practice
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- I take a bio psycho social and holistic approach to our mental health

SGA

21st September
2024

Sean.Humphreys@ChildbereavementUK.org

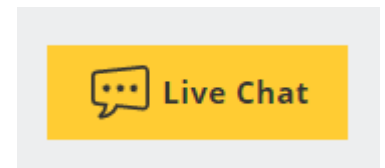


Child Bereavement UK supports families and educates professionals both when a baby or child of any age dies or is dying, and when a child is facing bereavement.

www.childbereavementuk.org



Call our helpline
0800 02 888 40



www.childbereavementuk.org

Housekeeping



...and each other

Areas we will explore...

- the impact of grief and bereavement on physical/mental health
- factors affecting the grieving process
- grief in the family: theory to aid understanding
- common reactions/behaviours and responding supportively

- myths and assumptions: what to avoid
- children's understanding and reactions at different developmental stages
- the impact on you as a teacher: maintaining your self care
- signposting – sources of support and information

1 in 29 pupils aged
5-16 years has been
bereaved of a parent
or sibling.

*Childhood
Bereavement Network*



Every year
approximately 6000
people in the UK die
by suicide.
These are deaths of
parents, grandparents,
relatives, friends and
school pupils.

*Child Bereavement UK
ONS, NRS, NISRA*

Aparent with a child
under 18 dies every
20 minutes in the
UK.

Childhood Bereavement Network

An estimated 16,100 UK children experienced the death of a parent from Covid-19-associated causes between March 2020 and December 2022

Imperial College, London



Over half of the 8 year olds in Scotland have experienced a significant bereavement.

What is grief?



Emotional rollercoaster

- Anger
- Fear
- Love
- Loneliness
- Envy
- Relief
- Guilt
- Tears
- Laughter



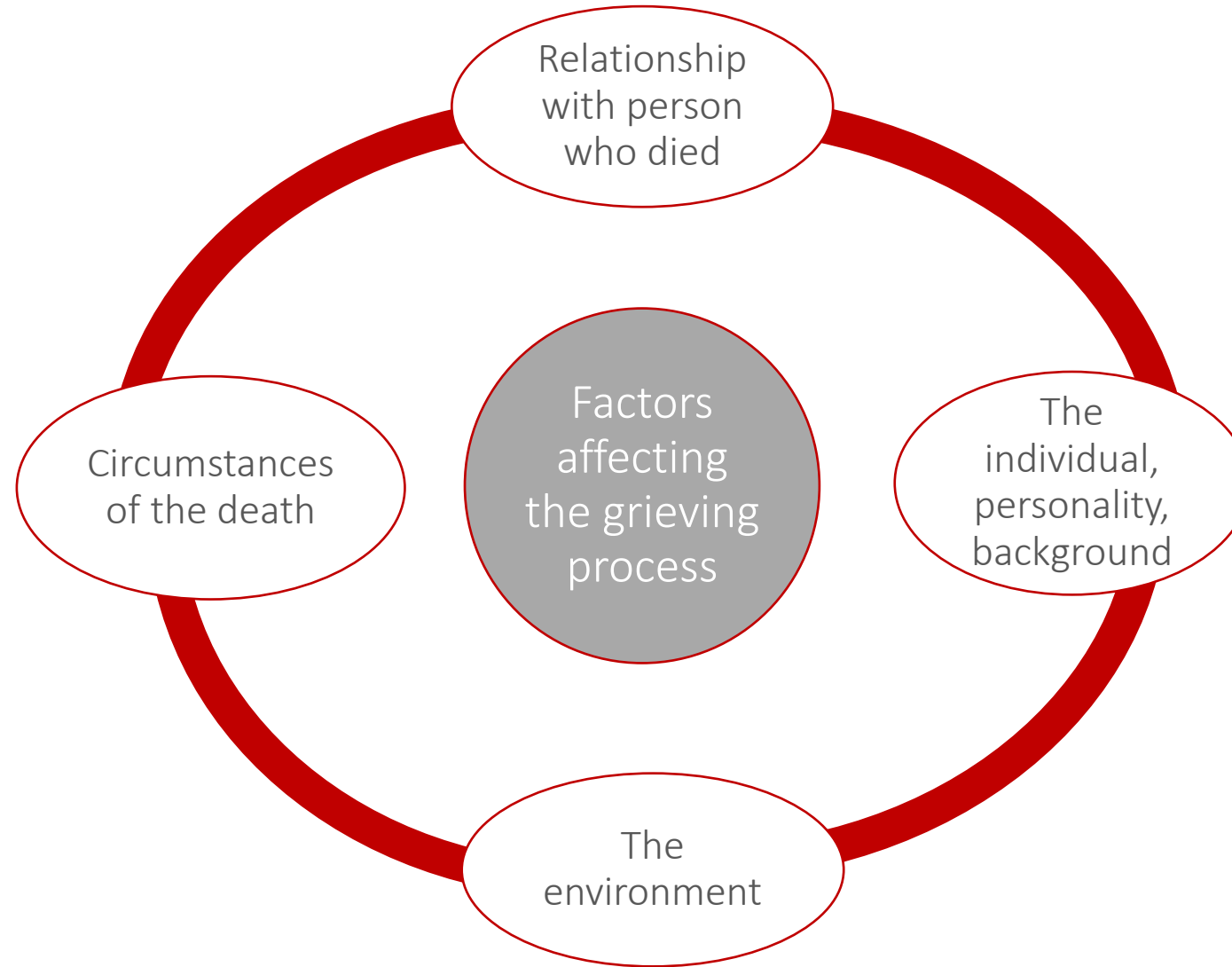
Grief impacts on many levels:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Cognitive
- Social
- Spiritual
- Practical

What can we do?

Some theory and understanding

Factors affecting the grieving process

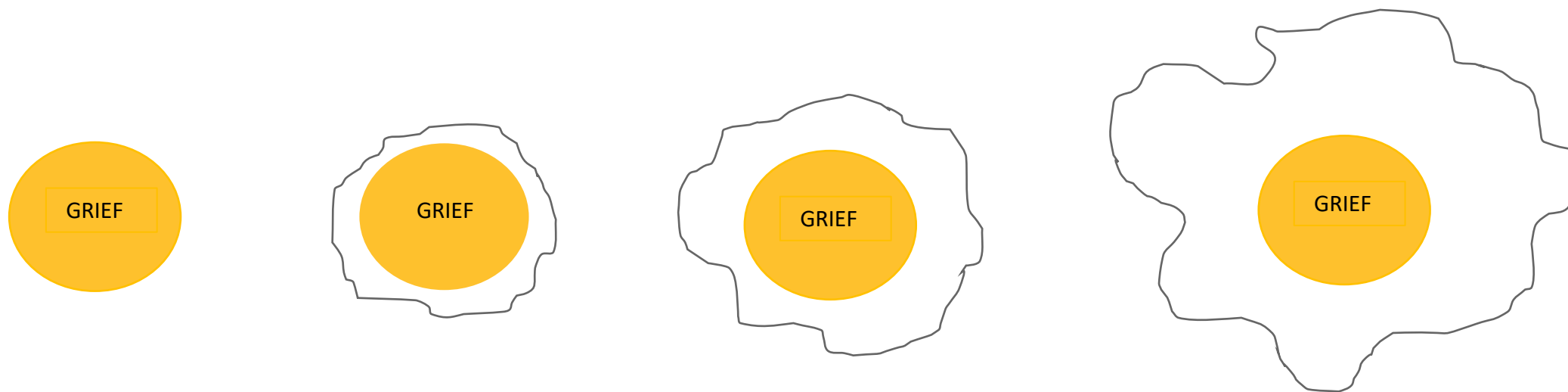


Grief: the tasks of mourning

- To accept the reality of the loss
- To process the pain of grief
- To adjust to a world without the person who has died
- To find an enduring connection with the person who has died in the midst of embarking on a new life

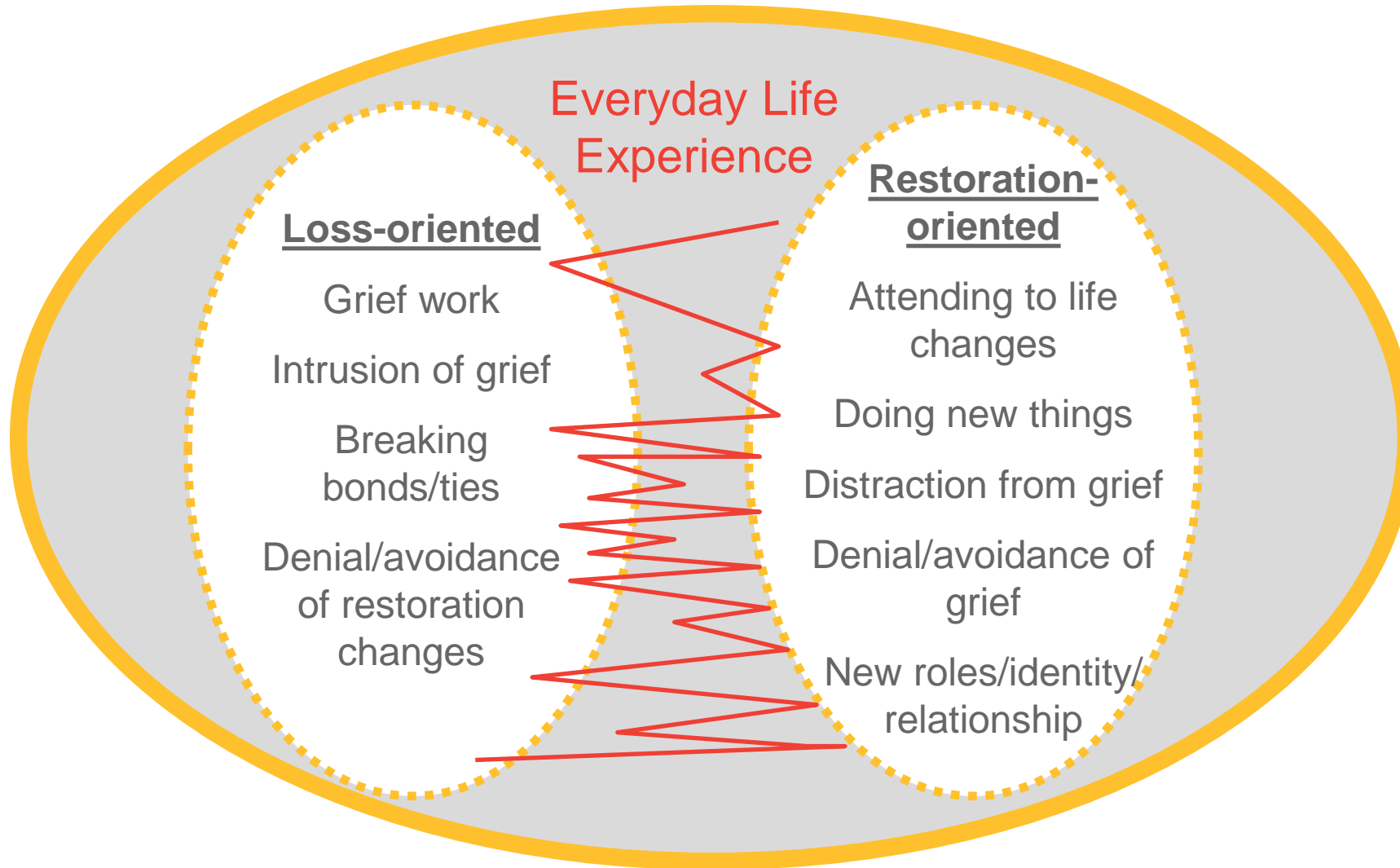
J William Worden, 2009

Growing around grief



Lois Tonkin 1996

A Dual Process Model of Coping with Bereavement



Puddle jumping



Understanding of Death During Development

Children under 2 years

- No understanding of the concept of death
- React to changes in their environment
- Impacted by emotional withdrawal of carer/s
- Expect changes in behaviour such as sleep, feeding and regression in developmental milestones

Primary age children

- Begin to understand that concept of permanence
- The development of magical thinking
- Understanding of the universality of death
- Often will present with extremes of behaviour
- Will often ask questions and reassimilate their narrative to incorporate new information
- Will often withdraw socially and be preoccupied

Children from 2- 5 years

- Interested in the idea of death
- No concept of permanence or irreversibility
- Think in concrete and not abstract terms
- Struggle with euphemisms
- Likely to engage in repetitive questions
- Struggle with separation from caregivers
- Regression in developmental milestones

Secondary age children

- Already navigating great times of change
- Don't want to be 'different' in any way
- Increased involvement with peers so may process grief outside the family
- Extremes of behaviour- behaving in a high risk way or hyper responsible

Some practical tools

Important role of school

- Familiar and trusted adults
- Routine
- Refuge
- Safe space
- Support



Every connection counts

- Listen
- Be honest (age appropriate and simple)
- Don't put pressure on your self
- Hold space
- Be prepared to ask for help/refer



Some Tips

Acknowledge
my loss and
say their
name

Listen to me
and
understand
my situation

Remember
that children
will re-grieve
at different
stages of
development

Be aware of
important
dates and
anniversaries

Permission
& Honesty
Time &
Space

Don't try to
make it better
with
minimising or
'at least'
comments

Don't be
afraid to
show your
humanity

Remember
your own
support

What young people say...

Time heals... give us some. ⤴

Give us space... we need it. 🌍

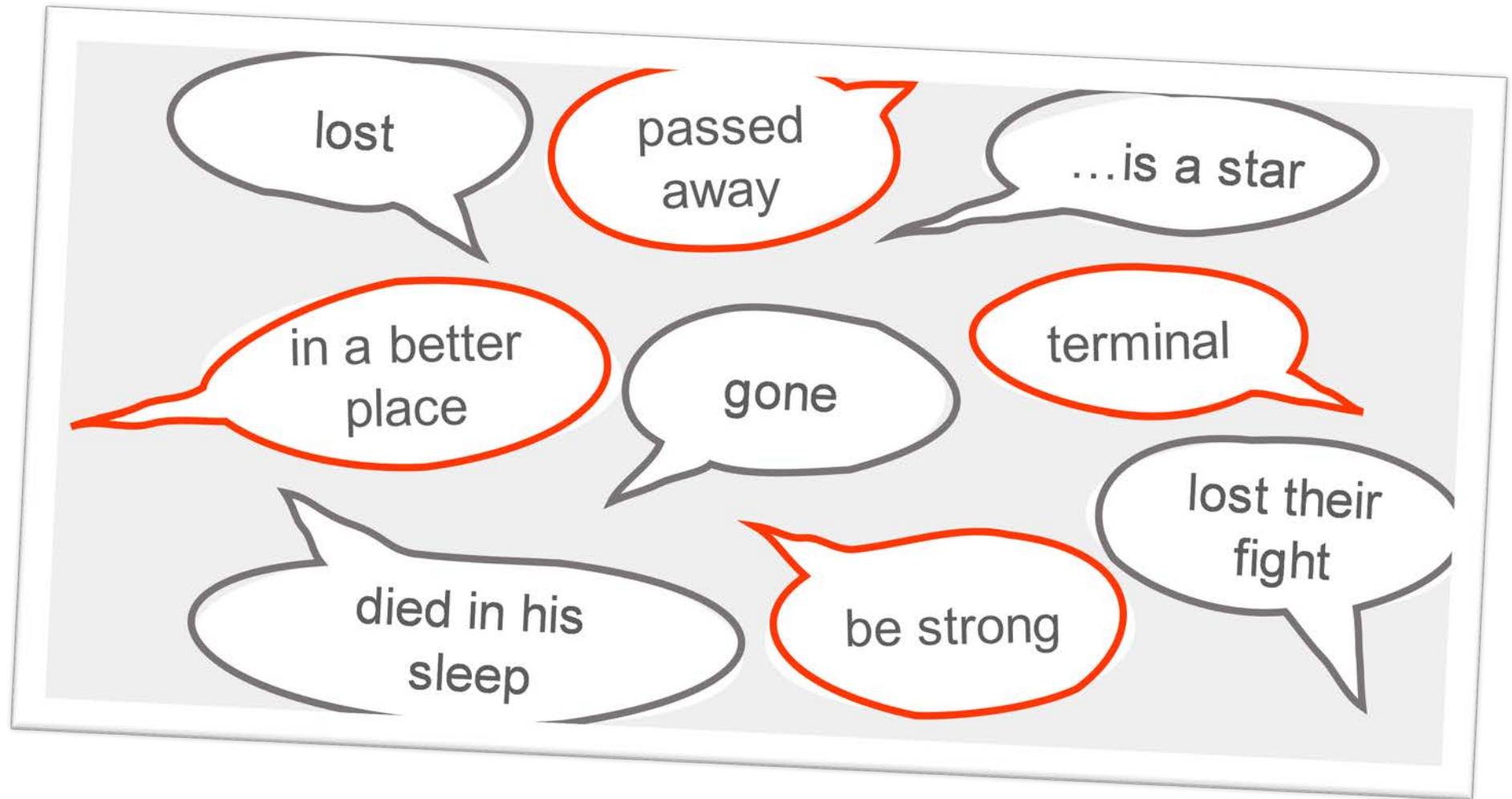
Don't keep asking us how we are..
It's annoying. -> ->

Cuddles help. ❤️

Let us show our emotions. ☹️

It's okay to laugh & have
fun. -> ->

The language of death



Explanations of death

Her heart stopped beating, she stopped breathing, and her brain doesn't work anymore.

He is not in any pain; he cannot feel hot or cold or hungry or thirsty.

They cannot come back, however much we may want them to.

Grief has an
end point

The first year is
the worst

Time is a
great healer

You can't grieve
something you've
never had

Children are resilient
so we don't have
to worry about them

Young children
don't grieve

If you're not
crying, you're
not grieving

Having a faith
helps in grief

Grief is less
when a death
is anticipated

Grief gets better
with time

Women grieve
more than men

The grieving
process is
predictable

The impact of this work

The loss of a loved person is one of the most intensely painful experiences any human being can suffer.

Not only is it painful to experience, but also painful to witness...

Bowlby

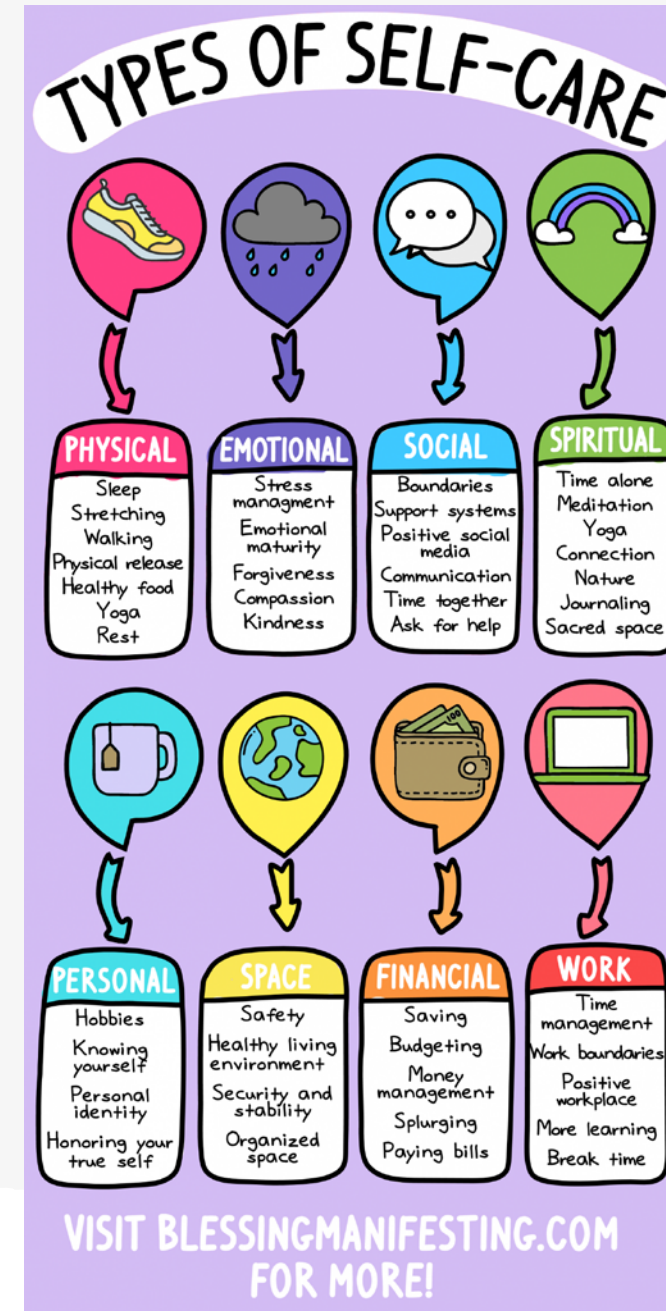
The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily, and not be touched by it, is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet

Remen

Self care for me



Self Care is
not just
bubble baths





UK TRAUMA
COUNCIL



WINSTON'S
WISH *ww*

Giving hope to grieving children



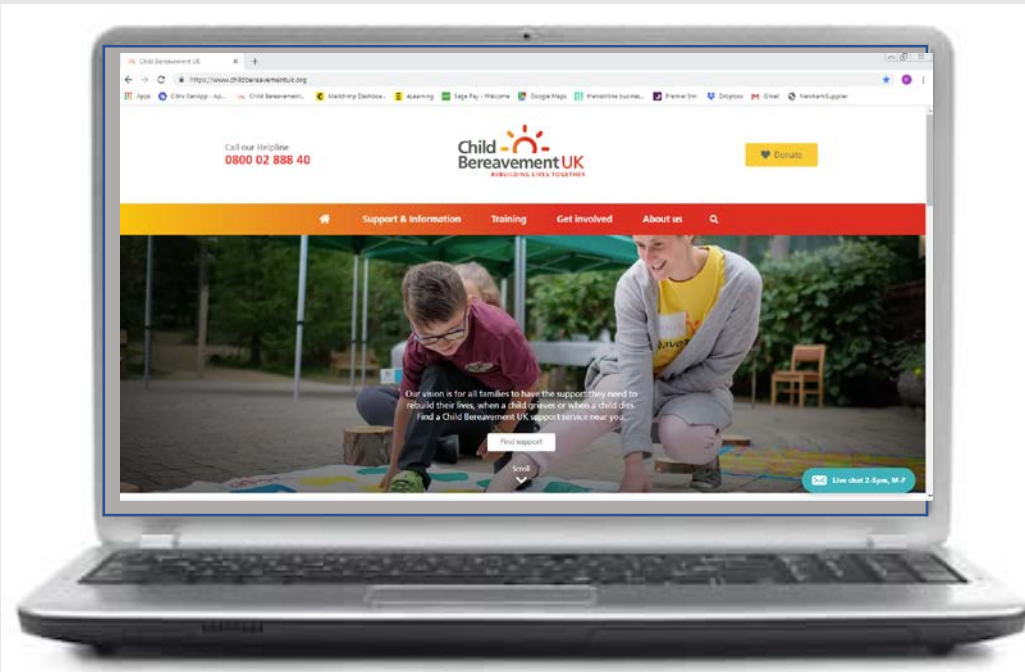
Call our helpline
0800 02 888 40



At a
Loss.org

Helping **bereaved**
people find **support**





www.childbereavementuk.org



support@childbereavementuk.org