

Dealing with Loss & Grief Workbook



For details on how to use this toolkit please refer to the instruction pages.
Created for the South Asian context.

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The use of the English language throughout the workbook is purposely kept local, colloquial and contextual to the intended
audience in South Asia.

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Edited© by AsiaCMS-South Asia Team | Published© by AsiaCMS

Why this tool kit?

The challenging times we live in currently have affected our lives, relationships, careers, finances, physical and mental health. It has aggravated our feelings of stress, anxiety, loss, grief and fear. We all need support and care to help us through these times. This tool kit is designed to aid our self-care, wellness and strengthen our support systems to deal with our multitude of feelings and challenges.

Who is this for?

It is primarily designed for South Asians, to work through the stress and struggles of life.. It is a self- reflective tool to help meander through these times.

This workbook is designed to be used in multiple ways:

- ◆ Individually for your own reflection.
- ◆ In small groups of two or more to work through and learn together.
- ◆ With a facilitator using it with individuals or small groups.

What this tool kit hopes to achieve:

- ◆ Provide a space to reflect on our challenges and validate our experiences and feelings.
- ◆ Help us become self-aware and accept that self-care is essential, and not selfish.
- ◆ Present options of practical self-care essentials that we can practise towards improving our coping mechanisms and wellness outcomes.
- ◆ Provide referrals and contacts when we need help.

Approach of the tool kit:

Narrative style, personalised, relatable, material that can be used independently or in small groups.

Guide to use this workbook (Individuals)

Each of us are unique and so are our journeys. We value your story, your feelings, your strengths and your struggles. You are free to use this material in whatever way works for you. The guidelines here are to help you through the process.

- ◆ Take all the time you need to reflect and express yourself in any form you are comfortable with - words, images, drawings, symbols and making things.
- ◆ The worksheets are there to help you reflect.
- ◆ Do not let the worksheets restrict you.
- ◆ Use the worksheets as an aid alongside any other material you may find helpful.
- ◆ After you have gone through the workbook, if you feel the need for support or help, please reach out to professionals, friends or family.
- ◆ If you do not have access to help, contact us via Facebook, Instagram or the email address given at the end of the workbook.



Guide to use this workbook (Facilitator)

The facilitator will guide the learning process at the pace of the participants. The role of the facilitator is to provide the right environment and encourage the participants on their journey of reflection, growth and healing.



- ◆ It is important that those who facilitate should practise the self-awareness and self-care model. Facilitators should grasp both the content and methodology. The key to the success of the process is the facilitator.
 - ◆ The facilitators can use their own creativity to engage with the group on this journey. The workbook provides scope for flexibility and creativity. The facilitator must be sensitive to the needs of their group members while using the material.
 - ◆ The facilitators should believe in the ability of the participants to be proponents of their own healing process. Without this, it would be hard to achieve the objectives.
 - ◆ Group processes begin with building trust. The facilitator has to spend adequate time with the group for trust to grow. They have to build a safe place with safe people for safe conversations. It is important to make time to hear stories, sing songs, play, laugh, cry and have fun together.
 - ◆ Ground rules of listening, respect, confidentiality and care have to be emphasized, as it is crucial that group members can trust and respect each other.
 - ◆ If there are more than 3 or 4 participants, it is recommended that there should be at least two facilitators. It could be one main facilitator and a co-facilitator for each session. This would help in supporting the main facilitator, in engaging with the group during small group activities and also to observe group dynamics and needs.
 - ◆ The facilitators need to debrief after each session and plan the next session based on feedback from the previous session. Be aware of the dynamics and reframe the upcoming sessions accordingly.
 - ◆ The facilitators should encourage the participants to be open and speak out freely. Therefore, one must allow the members of the group to proceed at their own pace.
- ◆ **The aim is NOT to finish the material as per the structure but to provide a platform for the group to explore, experience and reflect on issues that are relevant to them.**
- ◆ These are very intense sessions that may open up issues that have not been dealt with. Hence make sure the participants are prepared for this exercise and are willing to do it. It would be helpful to provide space for personal counseling or referrals, for issues coming up during the sessions.
 - ◆ If there are group members disrupting the whole group, do not ignore it. Spend time with them and try to find out the reason and work with them privately. If they still cannot work with the group, it may be wise to recommend one-on-one sessions with them at a later date.
 - ◆ Every participant in the group is important. Group sessions have to be interactive and group members should be encouraged to use a language that they are comfortable with.

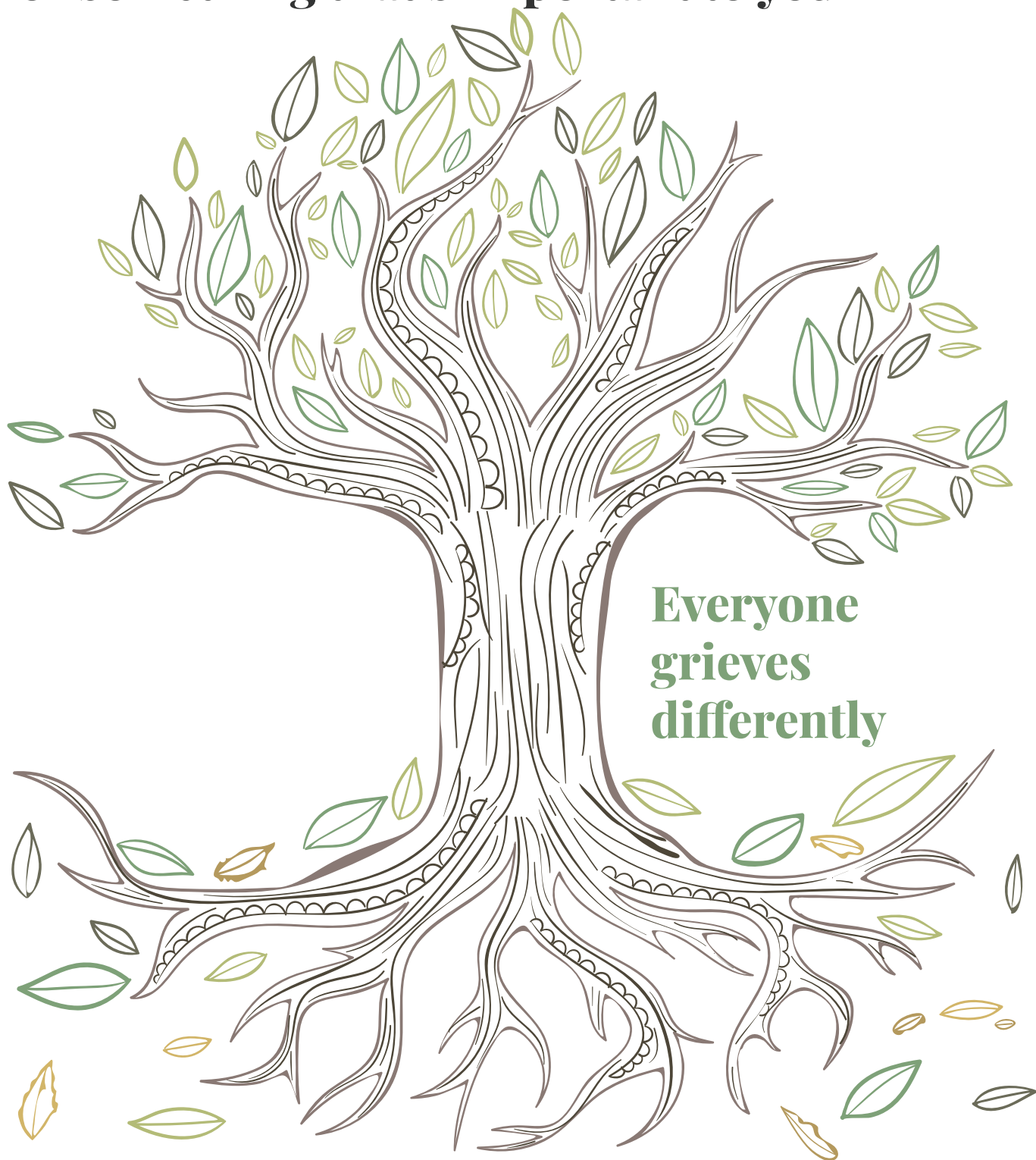


Acknowledging that we have all faced loss in our life and that these losses have affected our life, is the first step in dealing with our grief and loss.

Please take a few minutes to think about your loss and grief period. Express your losses in words, pictures, poems or any other form.



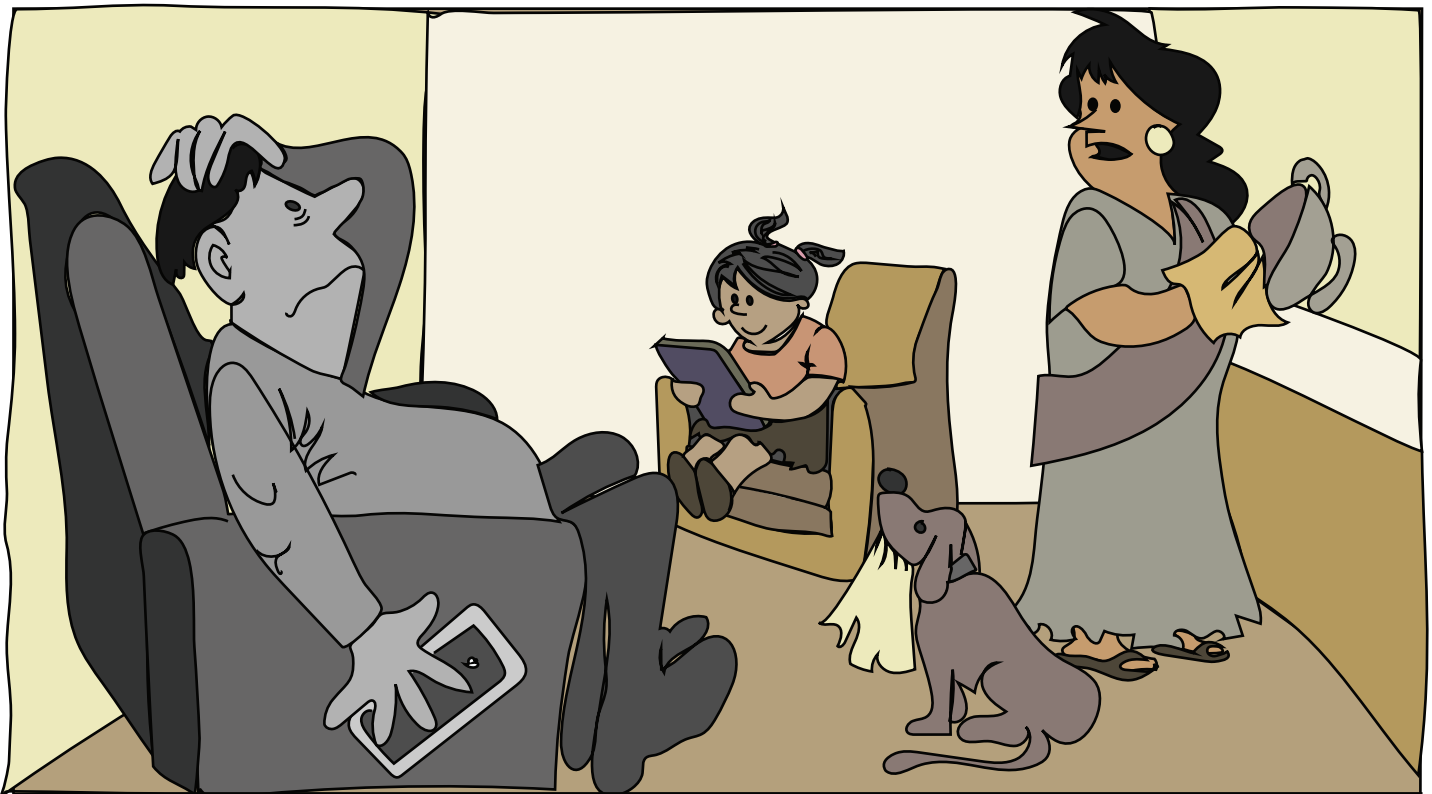
Grief is a natural response to losing someone or something that's important to you



If you understand your emotions, take care of yourself, and seek support, you can heal at your own pace in your unique way



I am lonely and lost even in the midst of people. Will I ever feel joy again?



No salary, no savings, can't pay rent, can't meet family needs, just can't take it anymore!

Loss is universal, yet very personal

We all face losses in our life regularly.
The losses can be big or small.
The loss we face can
affect us differently.
We all cope with loss in different ways,
what is difficult for one person can be
easier for another. Do not compare
yourself with other people...



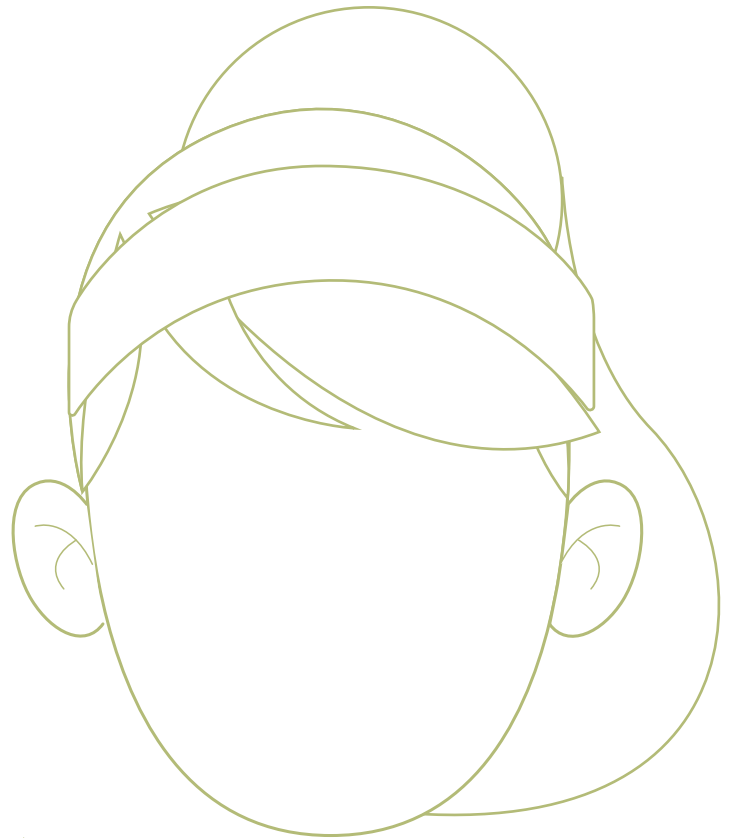
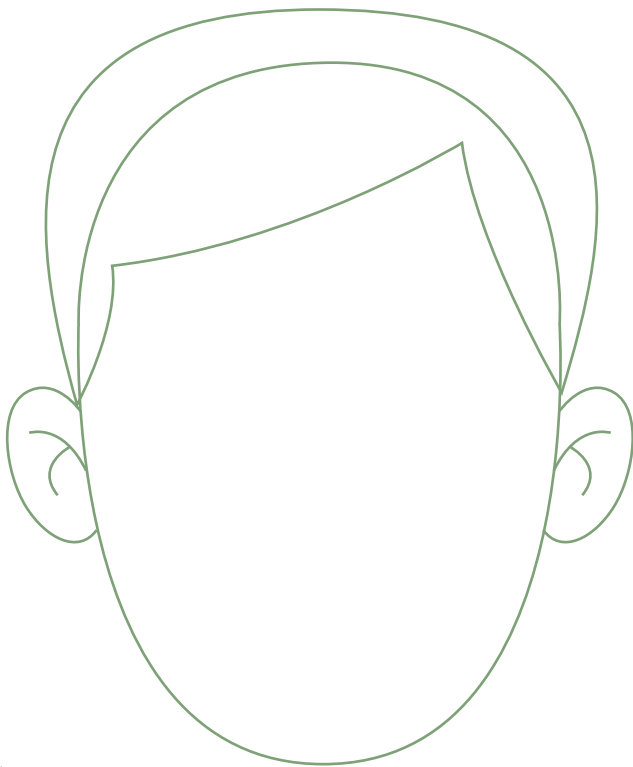
Every Loss is important

Even if it feels insignificant, do not
minimise or ignore your loss.
Your loss is significant to you!
Allow yourself to grieve.

Initial Reactions to Loss

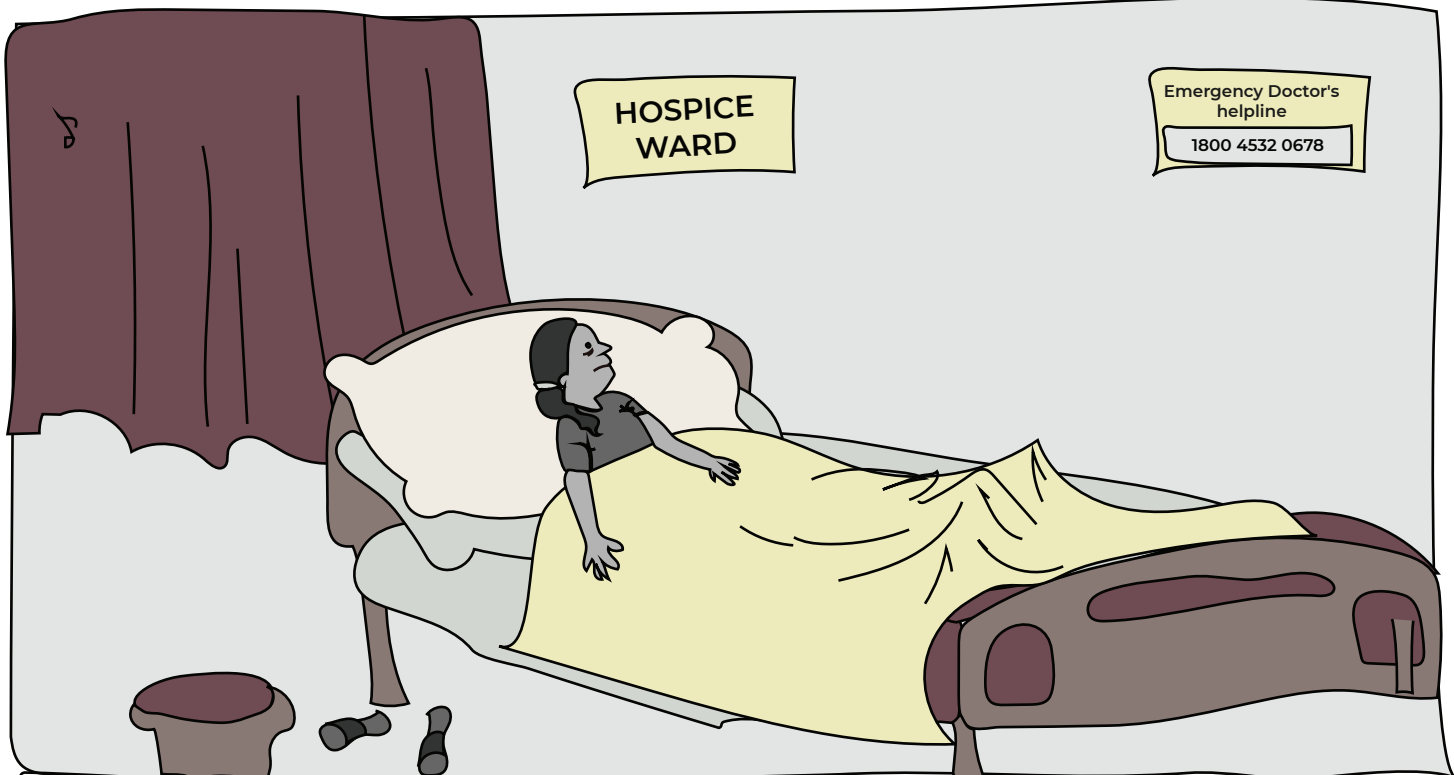
Each person deals with loss in unique ways. What was your initial reaction to loss?

Write in the boxes below or draw out the emotions you feel.





Appa's alcoholism and its treatment has taken all the money. Not paid the taxi EMI for six months. Will lose my taxi! How will I earn? Will Dad make it? Oh, I don't know what to do!"



Cancer treatment is exhausting in every way. This chemo is killing my body. I am in so much pain. Fear of death is giving me sleepless nights. If I am gone, who will take care of my daughter?

Loss requires a response, give yourself permission to grieve

Running away from or denying loss
will only hurt us.

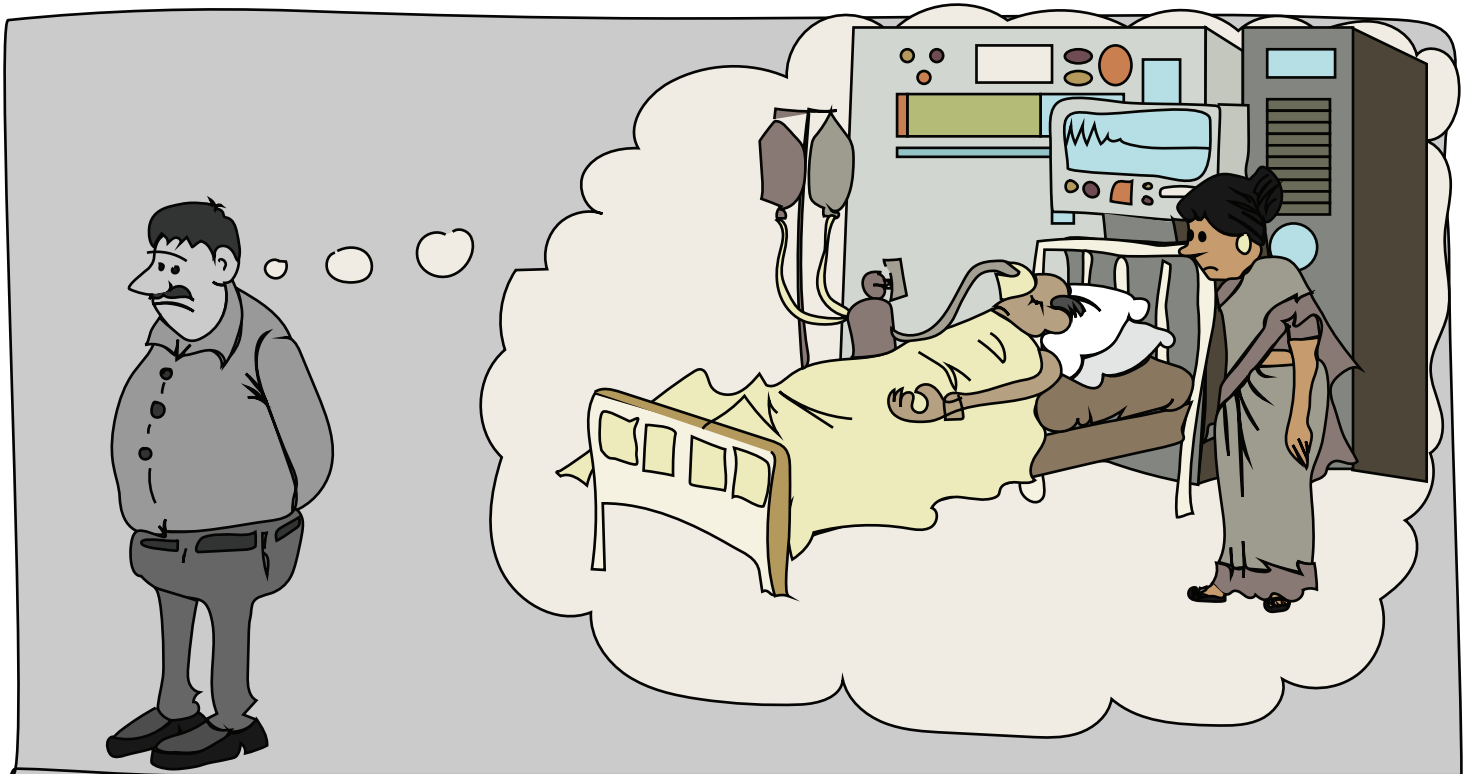
It is essential to accept our loss and
give ourselves time to grieve and ask
for support, in order to begin to come
to terms with it.

Everyone grieves differently, so allow
yourself to go through it in your own
way and in your own time.



How do you cope with loss? Do you see a pattern in your way of coping?
Express it in words, pictures, or any other form. Write, or draw your ways of coping in the boxes below.

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Dad passed away so suddenly. I wish I had more time with him. I wish I had visited earlier, but with the demands at work, I delayed. Now it is too late. How will I ever forgive myself?



Being a nurse is a high stress job, still I excel in it. But at home, I feel like a failure. My marriage is falling apart. He is often angry at me, I am scared for my safety. Family says work it out. Friends say end it and save yourself. I am confused, scared and lonely.

You might have also lost someone or something. Express your own story or journey of loss and grief.

A large, empty rectangular box with a double-line border, intended for writing a story or journal entry. The box is centered on the page and occupies most of the space below the introductory text. The border is composed of two parallel lines, one slightly offset from the other, creating a frame for the text.

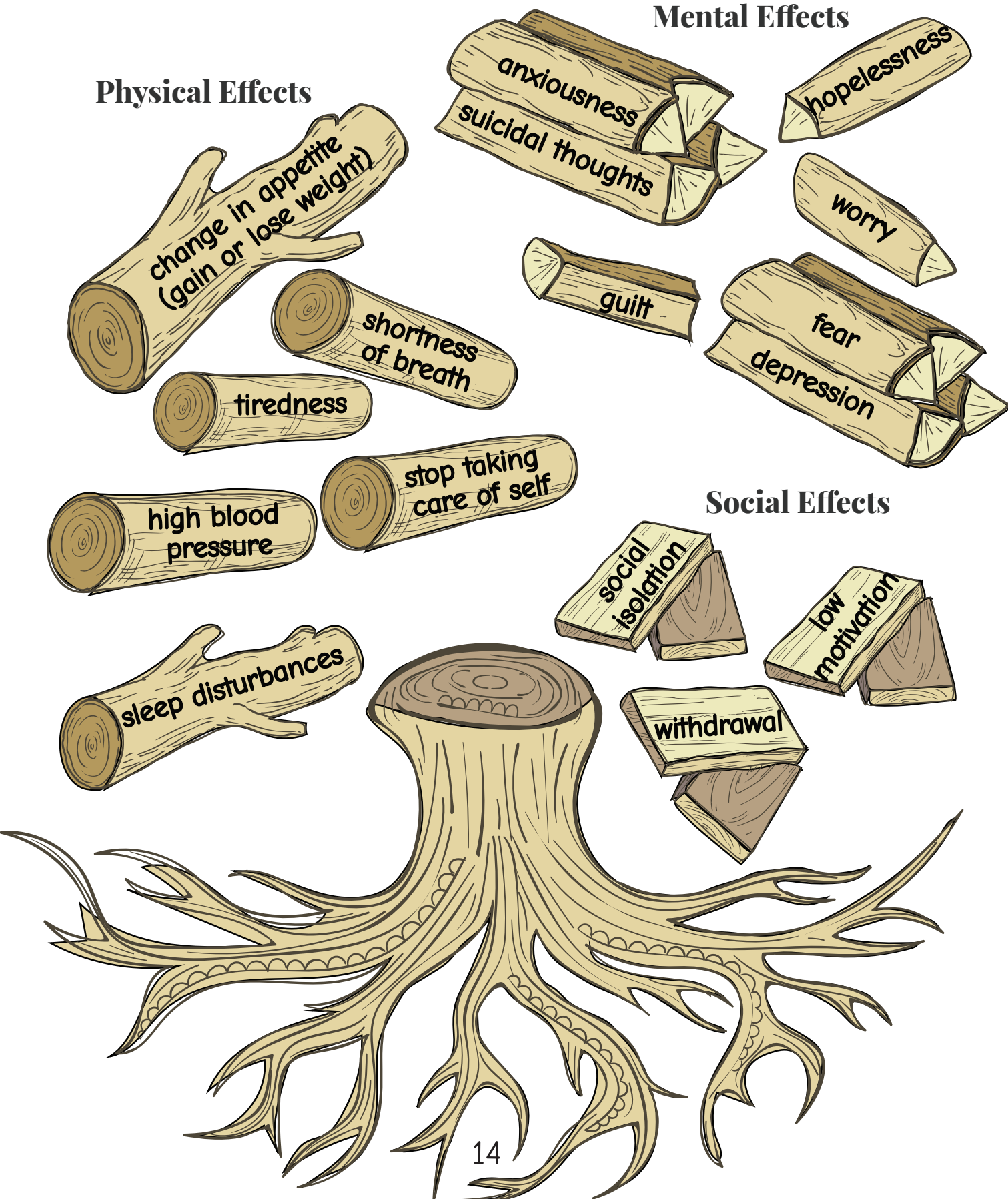
Effects of Not Grieving

If we ignore our grief and bottle it up, it can harm us physically, mentally and emotionally.

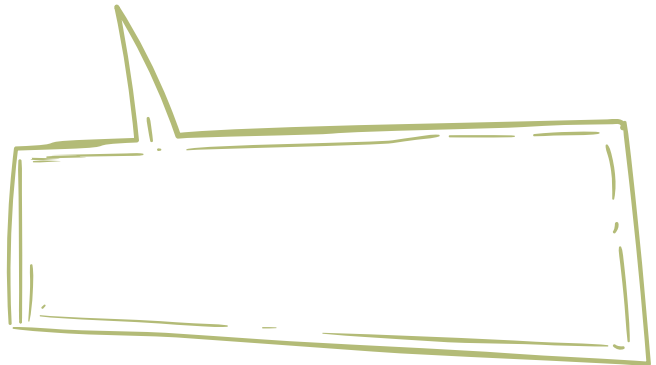
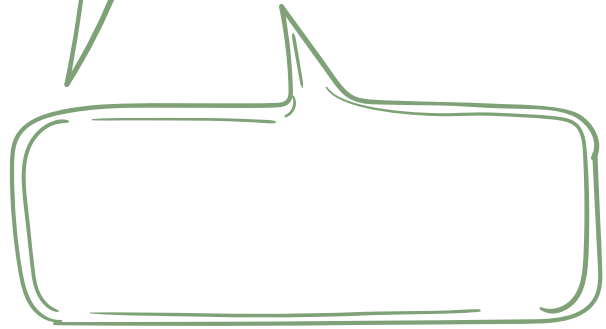
Physical Effects

Mental Effects

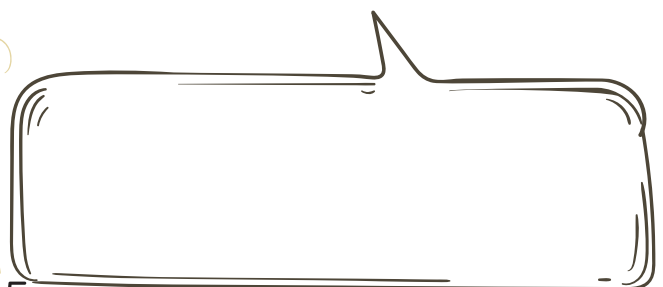
Social Effects



What has been helpful for you in coping with loss & grief?

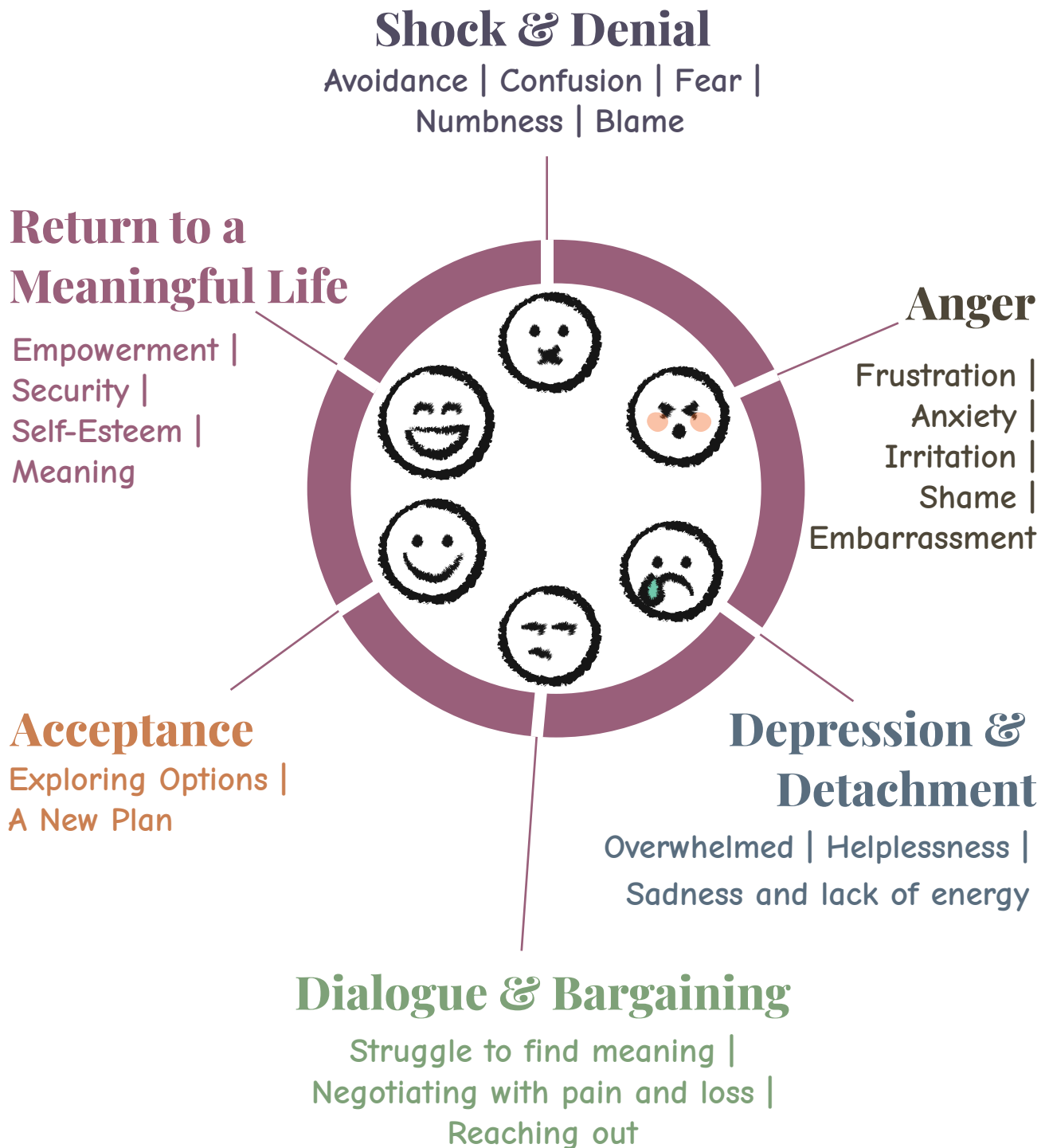


What has not been helpful while coping with loss & grief?



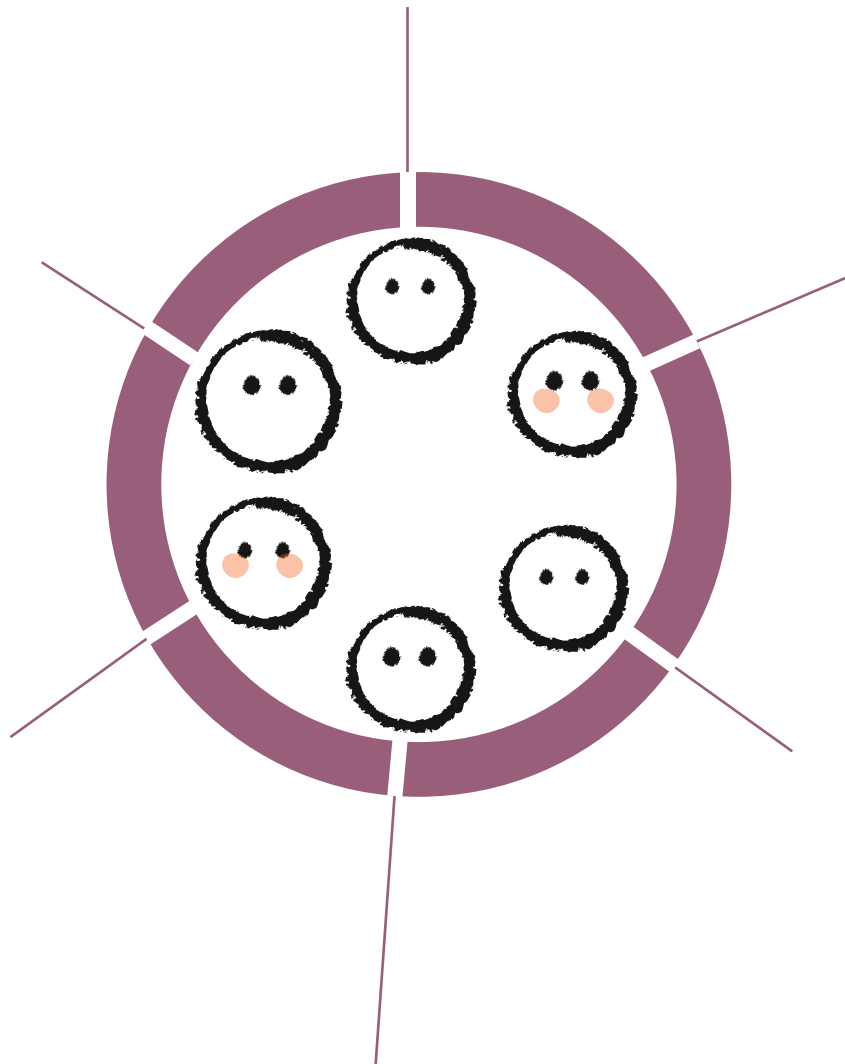
Grief Cycle

This cycle has five stages that a person usually goes through, but every person grieves differently. There is no specific time or order to this process, as it depends on the individual



Your pain is unique to you, and so is your healing!

Where in the grief cycle (see page 16) do you think you see yourself currently? What other stages have you experienced recently? Write, draw or express your feelings in any form.



Helping others go through Grief

Non-helpful things:

Everyone is going through this. Why are you making such a big issue of it? Get on with your life.

Whatever has happened, forget it. You need to take care of others. THINK ABOUT THEM. Don't be selfish.

Stop grieving and take charge of your life and family.

Weeping is for weak people. Men don't let loss affect them.

How long will you just sit and grieve? You need to move on with your life.

Helpful things:

You do not need to minimise or ignore your loss.

Not being able to express our grief or loss can affect us physically, mentally and relationally.

Feeling sad, frightened, or lonely is a normal reaction to loss.

Expressing your grief openly takes courage and is not a sign of weakness.

Give yourself time to heal.

Helping others go through Grief

Non-helpful things:

Helpful things:

Put on a brave front otherwise people will gossip.

Expressing your true feelings to your family and friends can help them get you through the grieving process.

Keep it private, inside the four walls of your house.

Sharing your feelings with a counsellor or close friend can be a good thing.

If you ignore your loss, the pain will go away faster.

Face your grief and actively deal with it, before it gets worse.

Look at them! They are not sad or crying!

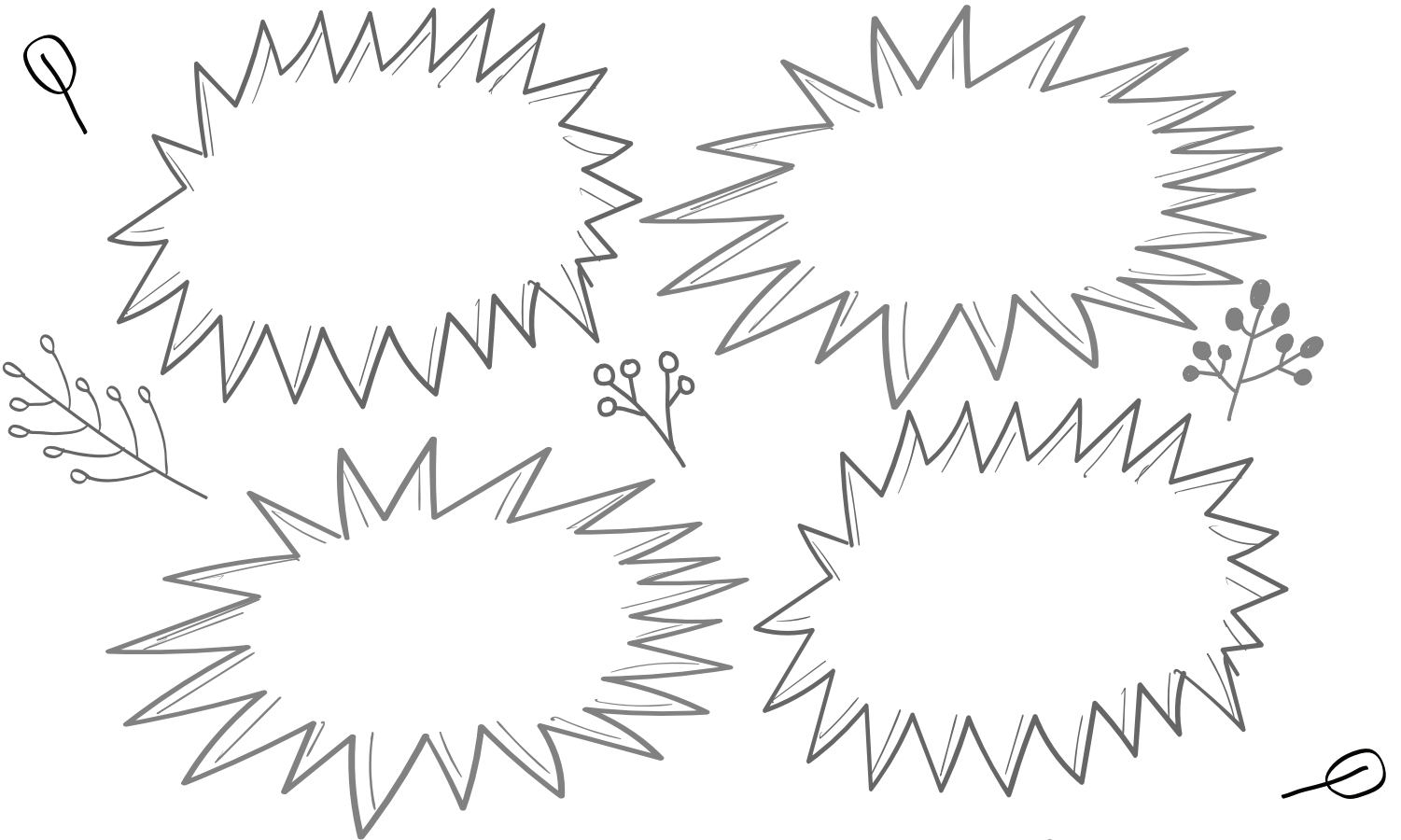
Crying is not the only response to sadness. Those who don't cry may feel the pain just as deeply as others. They may simply have other ways of showing it.

See how they are getting on with life. They have forgotten their loss.

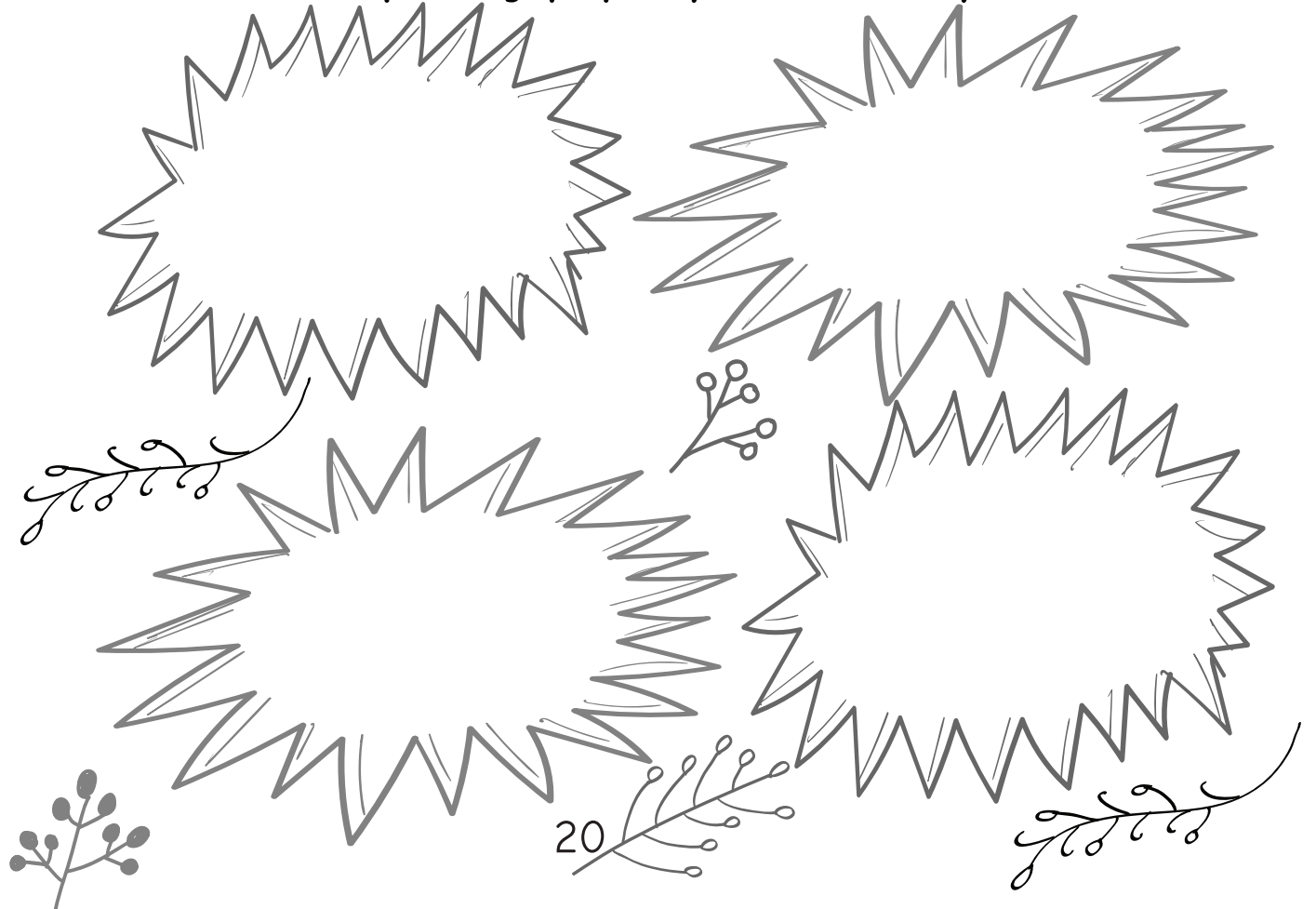
Accepting our loss is not the same as forgetting. The memories become a part of us.

Others supporting me in the journey

Things people have said and done that help you in your time of grief



How has the non-helpful things people say and do affected you?



Practical ways to GRIEVE

We can never replace what has been lost, but we can rebuild our lives and meaningful relationships by accepting our grief.



GIVE yourself time to grieve. Be gentle with yourself. Try not to judge yourself for not getting on with life.

RECEIVE support and help from loved ones and professionals or support groups: Time alone to grieve is needed, but also find ways to connect to a few people you trust.

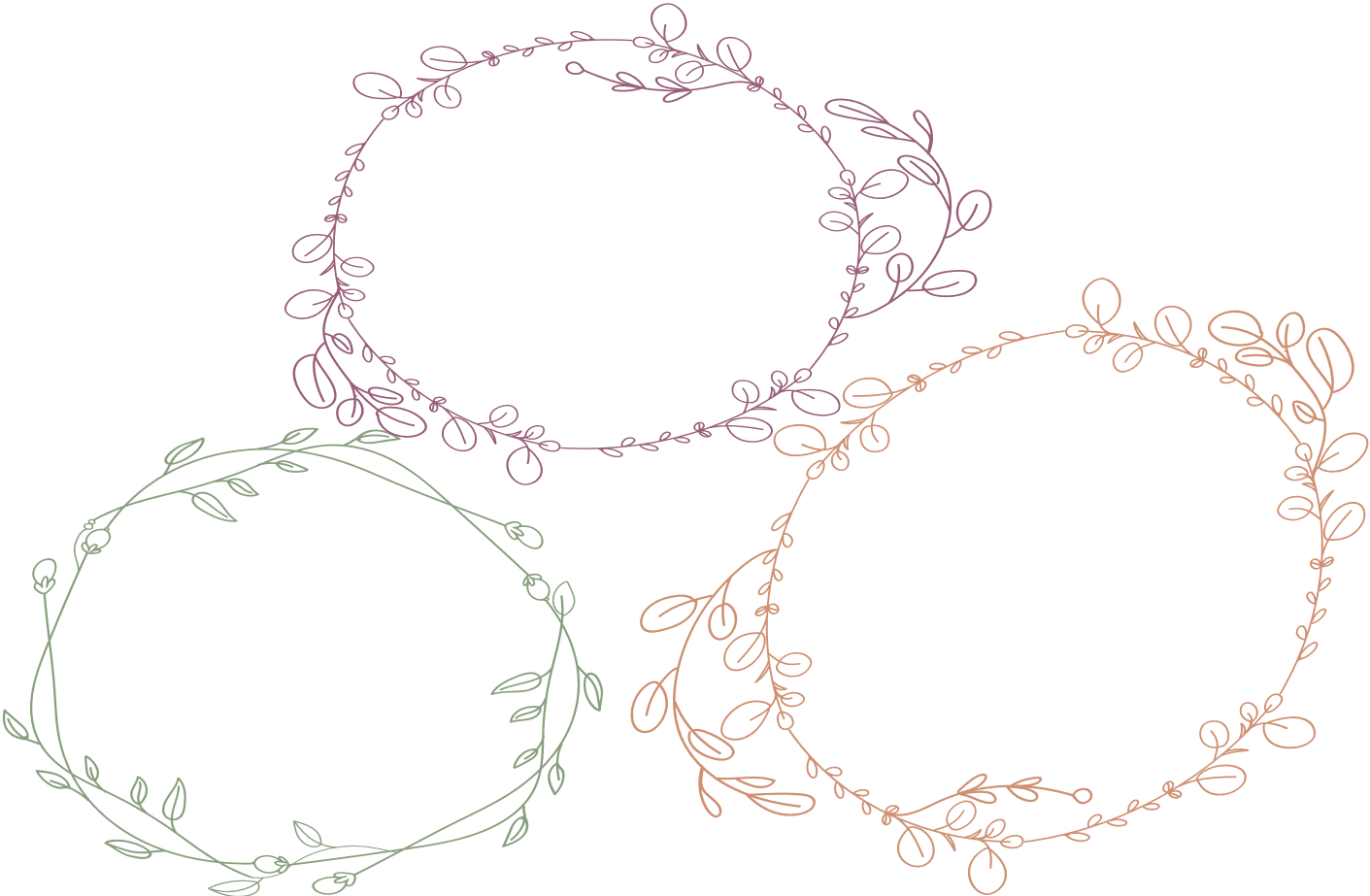
INCLUDE a healthy lifestyle. Try and have a regular daily pattern that works for you including enough sleep, exercise and healthy eating habits

EMBRACE all your emotions. Be mindful of all your feelings.

VALUE yourself and your unique journey of grief. You are unique and so is your journey of grief. So understand what works well for you and do accordingly.

ENGAGE in rebuilding your life. Set small and achievable goals that enable rather than overwhelm you as you journey slowly back into life.

Having gone through page 21, what are some practical and simple steps that you think might help you during your grieving process?



Support Group: Who do you see in your life who can support you in your grieving process? How would you like them to reach out?



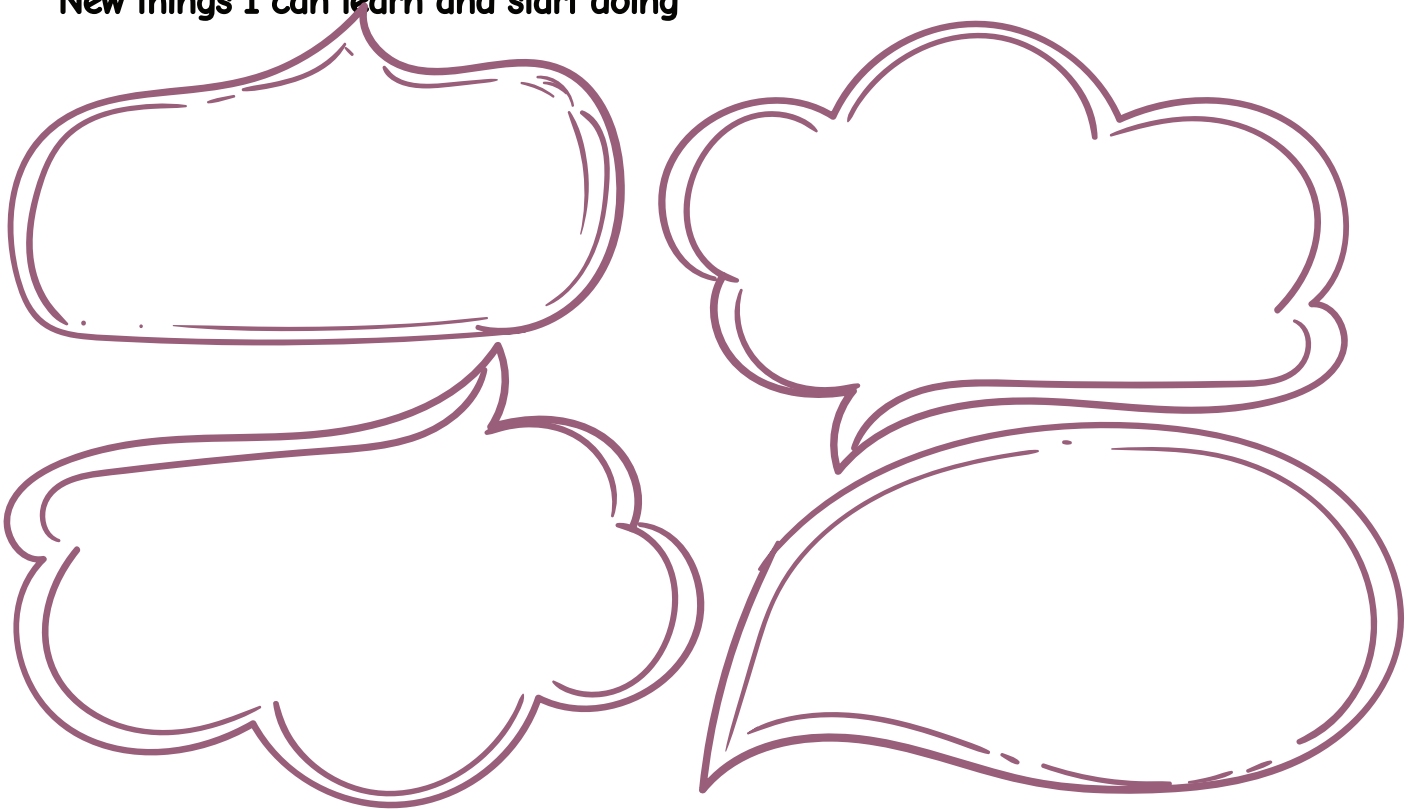
Journeying towards a new normal and building a meaningful life:

What can I do to build a meaningful life?

Things from the past that I want to revive or continue



New things I can learn and start doing



People I want in my life to build or strengthen my relationships?





Asia CMS

HELP is at Hand

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www.saantvanaorg.org