



2026 EDITION

**Alberta**  
**Journeying**  
**Through**  **Grief™**

**8-Week Workshop: Journal**

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**Name**

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## Adult Attitude to Grief Scale - Week 1

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Gender

Man  Woman  Transgender man  Transgender woman  Non-Binary  Prefer not to answer

Prefer to describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth (MM/DD/YYYY) \_\_\_\_\_

Please place a check mark (✓) to indicate your response to the attitudes expressed in the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. I feel able to face the pain which comes with loss.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. For me, it is difficult to switch off thoughts about the person I have lost.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I feel very aware of my inner strength when faced with grief.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I believe that I must be brave in the face of loss.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I feel that I will always carry the pain of grief with me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. For me, it is important to keep my grief under control.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Life has less meaning for me after this loss.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I think its best just to get on with life and not dwell on this loss.*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. It may not always feel like it but I do believe that I will come through this experience of grief.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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We are collecting this information according to the requirements specified in the Health Information Act of Alberta, sections 27 (1)(a), (g)



## Please read this while you are waiting for class to begin.

**Alberta Journeying Through Grief™** is a **Red Deer Primary Care Network program** designed by psychologists and clinical social workers with the support of family doctors.

It is an 8 week program that empowers you to understand and cope with your grief and support emotional healing. Each week you will learn new skills that will help you in your journey through your grief. We will challenge you to try the skills out during the week. You will discover a few skills that you find work the best for you. You have the biggest influence over your journey through your everyday choices.

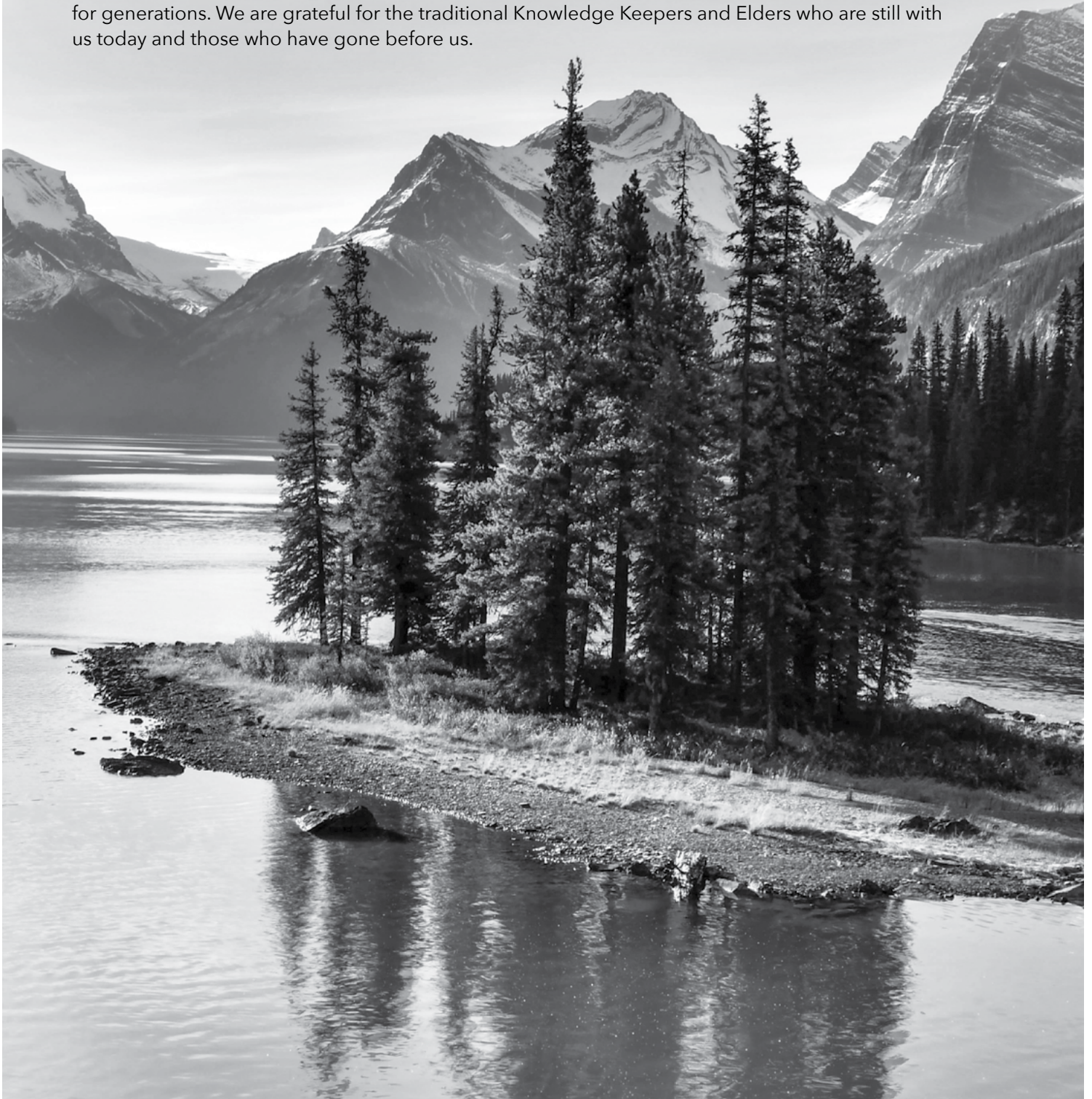
## To get the most out of this workshop:

- Make a healthy healing process your priority.
- Practice the weekly grief skills.
- Make grief skills a part of your life moving forward.
- Attend all classes.

“Our grief, though naturally difficult, is a source of energy within us. When we outwardly mourn, we unleash this amazing healing force.” - Alan D. Wolfelt

## Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit who have lived in and cared for these lands for generations. We are grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders who are still with us today and those who have gone before us.



## 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.

## 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 okay. 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?

## Evaluation

RDPCN conducts evaluation of all workshops. Your involvement and feedback help us ensure high quality workshops.

- All evaluations are voluntary.
- Any information provided, will be kept confidential.

All information collected from the workshop will be aggregated into reports. No individual participants will ever be identified. Comments that participants provide about the workshop may be used for reporting purposes but will not be used in any way that can identify individual participants.

- To show progress and as part of the care provided by the RDPCN, it may be necessary to communicate aspects of the evaluation with your family physician.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, I consent to participate in the workshop and am aware that these workshops collect data for evaluation purposes.

_____	_____
Client/guardian signature	Date
_____	_____
Client PHN	Name of Family Doctor
_____	_____
Name of clinic	Location of Clinic
_____	
Facilitator's signature	

Information on this form is collected under the authority of section 33(c) of FOIP and/or section 20 (b) of HIA (pursuant to sections 27.1 and 27.2 of HIA) for the purposes of providing health services and carrying out planning and resource allocation, health system management, public health surveillance and health policy development. For more information about the collection of information on this form, please contact the Executive Director, Red Deer Primary Care Network at 403.343.9100.

## Workshop Format

The **program format** is two hours a week for 8 weeks.

Each week begins with a **Check-in and you will have opportunities to practice the skills that will help you to work through your grief.**

### Check-in: Weekly Reflection

We will always start each week with a check-in. This is an opportunity to reflect upon the week before and share what skills you tried, what you did for self-care, and anything you have noticed about your grief journey.

### Grieving, Living, and Mourning Activities

This will help you to go inside of yourself and reflect on your grief, to explore and express yourself through mourning, as well as grieve and live at the same time. You will engage in exercises to deepen your healing and reinvest in life.

### Connection Time

Throughout the workshop you will have the opportunity to express yourself in a way that feels right for you. A time to share while having the support from the group. You may share something about yourself, your experience or share something about the person who has died. It is also o.k. not to share as we all have different comfort levels with this.

### Silence

There may be moments of silence throughout this workshop to allow space for internal processing (without the pressure to speak), deeper reflection, and emotional release. It can be a way of honouring your deceased loved one as well as yourself.

### Homework/Home Practice

Lastly, you will have an opportunity to plan for the practice and integration of workshop information and skills. This will be a valuable part of your grief journey as it reinforces learning, promotes self reflection/emotional processing, and strengthens devotion to healing.



## Grief Activity: Waves of Grief

As for grief, you'll find it comes in waves. When the ship is first wrecked, you're drowning, with wreckage all around you. Everything floating around you reminds you of the beauty and the magnificence of the ship that was and is no more. And all you can do is float. You find some piece of the wreckage, and you hang on for a while. Maybe it's some physical thing. Maybe it's a happy memory or a photograph. Maybe it's a person who is also floating. For a while, all you can do is float. Stay alive.

In the beginning, the waves are 100 feet tall and crash over you without mercy. They come 10 seconds apart and don't even give you time to catch your breath. All you can do is hang on and float. After a while, maybe weeks, maybe months, you'll find the waves are still 100 feet tall, but they come further apart. When they come, they still crash all over you and wipe you out. But in between, you can breathe, you can function. You never know what's going to trigger the grief. It might be a song, a picture, a street intersection, the smell of a cup of coffee. It can be just about anything...and the wave comes crashing. But in between waves, there is life.

Somewhere down the line, and it's different for everybody, you find that the waves are only 80 feet tall. Or 50 feet tall. And while they still come, they come further apart. You can see them coming. An anniversary, a birthday, or Christmas. You can see it coming, for the most part, and prepare yourself. And when it washes over you, you know that somehow you will, again, come out the other side. Soaking wet, sputtering, still hanging on to some tiny piece of the wreckage, but you'll come out.

Take it from an old guy. The waves never stop coming, and somehow you don't really want them to. But you learn that you'll survive them. And other waves will come. And you'll survive them too. If you're lucky, you'll have lots of scars from lots of loves\*. And lots of shipwrecks.

The Loss Foundation © 2011-2023

\*You may have had a complicated relationship with the person who died. The turmoil does not necessarily leave with them. When they're gone, we lose not only the difficulties and challenges, but we also lose the hope that everything could have been right between us.

## Reflection

What are my reactions and thoughts about this poem? What stood out for me?

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# Grief Activity: Understanding Your Grief Journey

## Terms of Grief

**Grief** is the internal thoughts and feelings when you experience a loss.

**Loss** is the process of losing something or someone that we are attached to or connected to.

**Mourning** expresses grief outwardly.

**Depression** is persistent sadness and a lack of interest in previously enjoyed activities. Grief can morph into depression. We just want you to be aware that there are other resources available to you if you need them, such as one-on-one counselling and other workshops that are available.

## Mourning Activity: Mourner's Bill of Rights Card

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?" The **Mourner's Bill of Rights** gives you permission to do what you need to do.

### Reflection

Which **Mourner's Bill of Rights** right do I relate to the most? What stands out?

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# Living Activity: Self-Care

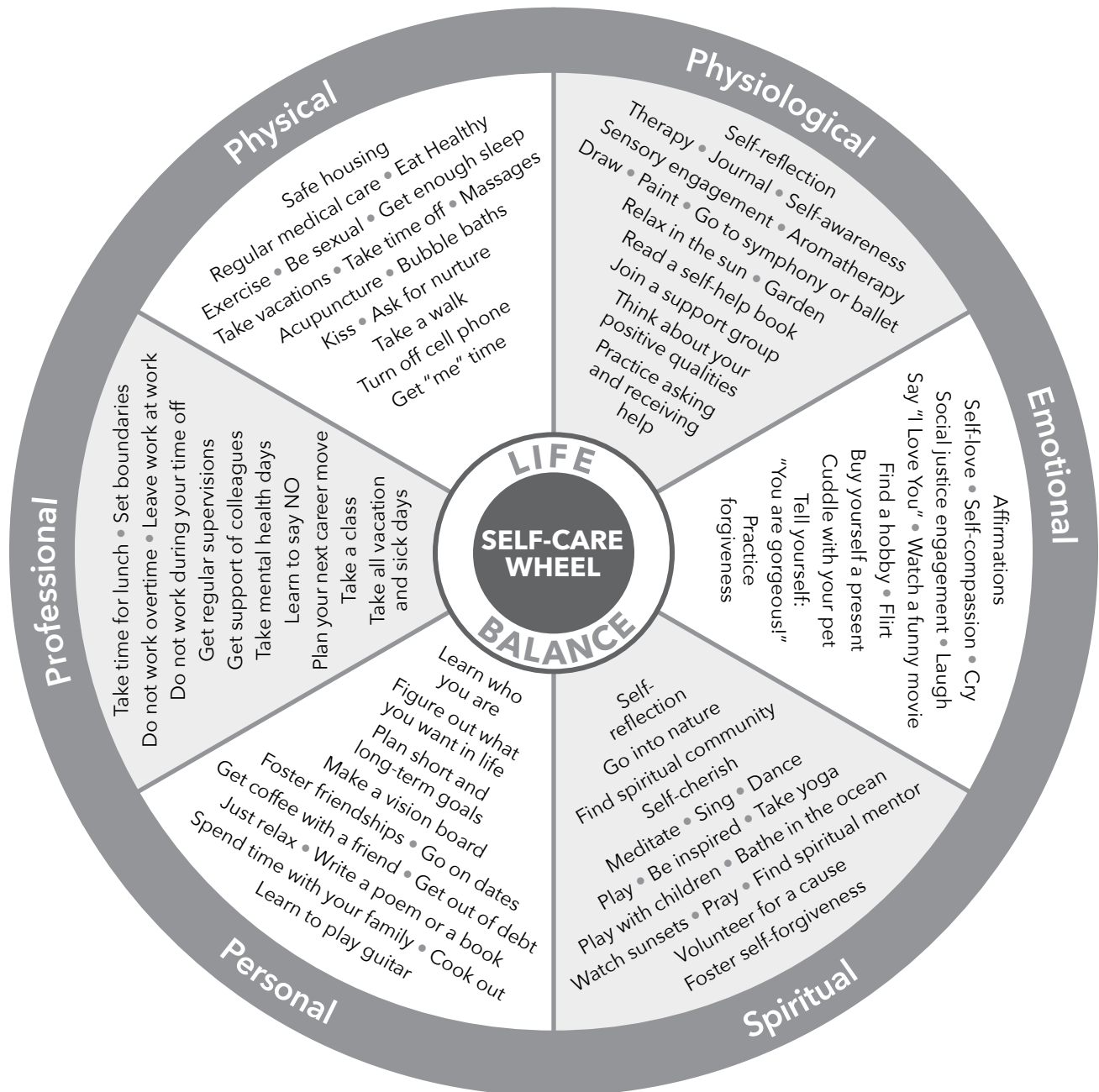
**Self-Care** includes preventive measures to keep your mind, body and spirit balanced. People who practice adequate self-care experience reduced stress, increased productivity, improved health, and better work-life blend. Regular self-care can also help prevent burnout and compassion fatigue.

## 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.

Look at the **Self-Care Wheel**. What are you doing now to take care of yourself and write it in the blank wheel. Is there anything new that you want to try? Add this to your wheel in another colour.

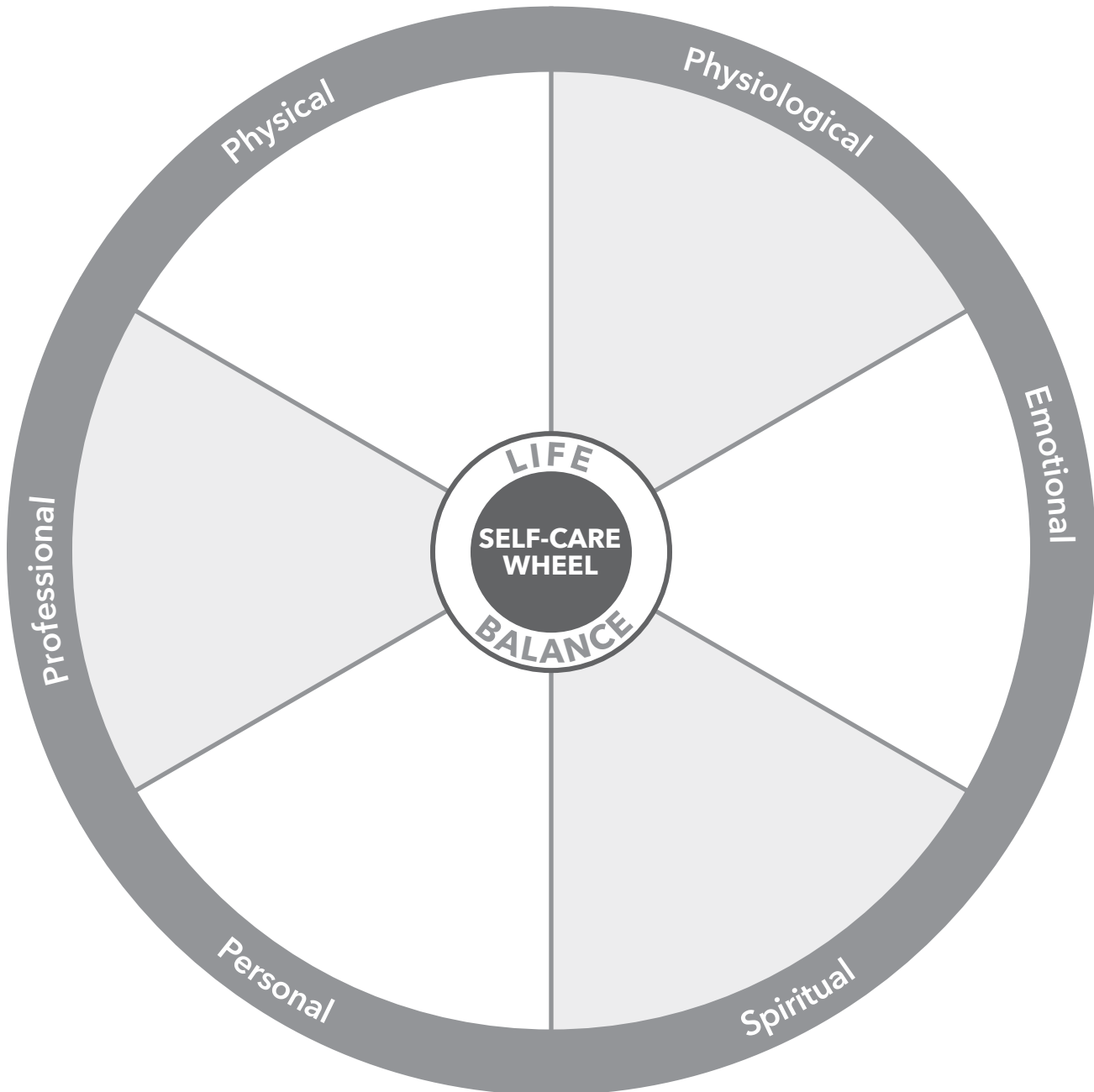
## Self-Care Wheel



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.

[www.OlgaPhoenix.com](http://www.OlgaPhoenix.com)

## My Self-Care Wheel



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.

[www.OlgaPhoenix.com](http://www.OlgaPhoenix.com)

## Reflection

### My Self-Care Plan

Why is it important for me to do this self-care?

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What will cue me that I need self-care?

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## Homework

What is one thing from the **Self-Care Wheel** that I could do this week?

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What will I need to be successful? How will I plan for this? Are there any materials required? Day and time?

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If you like the **Self-Care Wheel** exercise and would like to explore other ways to improve or increase your self-care, go to Chrome. <https://www.healingtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Self-Care-Planning-Guide-for-Individuals-FINAL.pdf>

## Week 2 Check-in: Weekly Reflection

How did my week go? What did you do for **self-care**? 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?

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You may not notice much change from week to week. Grief is a process. Using the tools/skills shared in this workshop, as well as engaging in reflection, are an important part of healing. Be patient with yourself, remember this is a journey. You may notice that you are tired or drained after these sessions. It is important to be kind to yourself and ensure that you are resting and practicing **self-care**.

## Grief Activity: 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: smell, sight, sounds, touches, tastes, movement, position, behavioral sequences, visceral reactions.” - The Body Remembers, p. 44

## Mourning Activity: Emotional Agility

### How Do I Feel?



#### Happy

- Thankful
- Content
- Comfortable
- Excited
- Relieved
- Confident



#### Embarrassed

- Self-conscious
- Isolated
- Inferior
- Ashamed
- Guilty
- Confused



#### Anxious

- Afraid
- Confused
- Nervous
- Skeptical
- Worried
- Cautious



#### Sad

- Disappointed
- Regretful
- Depressed
- Disillusioned
- Pessimistic
- Tearful



#### Angry

- Frustrated
- Grumpy
- Annoyed
- Irritated
- Offended
- Spiteful



#### Hurt

- Jealous
- Betrayed
- Shocked
- Victimized
- Deprived
- Abandoned

### Why Label Emotions?

Brings frontal lobe part of the brain back online (this is the reasoning part of your brain). Remember when you flip your lid, you lose your choice, and your response becomes automatic.

- Self-validates your experience.
- Reduces physiological arousal.
- Provides response choices.
- Reduces activating anxiety/threat response.
- Avoiding emotions from building up (think of a boiling pot).

## Reflection

How have I managed intense emotions in the past? What helped?

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How do I respond to my emotions now?

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What are some of the things I do when I'm having a hard time to ease my suffering?

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## Self Expression: Body Reaction Exercise

Label the emotions that came up during the body reaction exercise.

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Emotions can fluctuate when you are grieving, this is normal and okay. If you feel your emotions are overtaking you, consider deep breathing exercises and grounding. You can look at your **Self-Care Wheel** from **Week 1** to try and comfort yourself.

Remember the **Waves of Grief** poem on **p. 8**.





You can use **How Do I Feel?** on **p. 69** 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:

- **The meaning of loss:** Write down your thoughts about death as a universal and personal experience. Focus on the unique experiences and if they have some meaning to you.
- **Significant loss/death 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.
- **Any other significant loss as an adult:** Same as above except for age.
- **Hurting:** Write down your present wounds and compare them to earlier times. What are the differences?
- **Helping:** Write down what has helped you to cope with or heal your wounds.
- **Healing:** How are you healing your current grief?
- **Needs:** What are your current needs? What would help you be self-respecting and caring of yourself right now?
- **Unfinished business:** What curiosities and unanswered questions do you have about your losses)? What was left unsaid?
- **Now:** In what way do you currently relate to your losses)? What do you notice about your present experience of being here and interacting with losses) in the past?
- **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 journaling."

## Homework

### Journal

Set up your **personal journal** and write on a few of the suggested questions that speak to you. We encourage ongoing journaling 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.

What is my **self-care** plan for this week?

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## Week 3 Check-in: Weekly Reflection

How did my week go? What came up for me this week?

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Did I try journaling? What did I notice? If I did not write a journal, did I find other ways to express myself?

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Was I able to identify and label emotions? How did I cope with them?

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## Grief Activity: Embrace the Pain of Death: Grief Dosing

It is **easier to avoid**, repress or push away the pain of grief than it is to confront it.

Embracing your grief helps you to move toward healing.

**Grief Dosing:** Means to set aside time to grieve each day. For example, setting aside time each day to look at a picture and allow yourself to grieve at that time.

**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.

### Reflection

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

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What have I done to close the dam, even a little bit?

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## Grounding


**Grounding** is a set of simple strategies to detach from emotional pain. Distraction works by focusing outward on the external world rather than inward toward the self.

- **See:** Acknowledge five things you can see around you.
- **Touch:** Notice four things you can feel physically, such as the texture of your clothes or the ground beneath your feet.
- **Hear:** Identify three things you can hear.
- **Smell:** Acknowledge two things you can smell.
- **Taste:** Notice one thing you can taste.

## Mourning Activity: Exploring Feelings

Manage strong emotions with this meditation exercise-flow.

**Flow Neuroscience** (August 31, 2019)

 [youtu.be/KS8p\\_YiolHc?si=YuyhlfJMZohwefgQ](https://youtu.be/KS8p_YiolHc?si=YuyhlfJMZohwefgQ) (5:07)

## Living Activity: Non-Verbal Expression

When you think about the person who died, what feelings, thoughts, physical symptoms, spiritual questions, and behaviors are you experiencing? You can use **Resources: How Do I Feel?** on p. 69 and **Normal Grief Reactions** on p. 70 in your journal to help you focus in on a few.

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Now think about the person who has passed away. What does your grief look like to you? If an emotion is there, what colour 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? Grab some markers and a paper and start to doodle or draw what your grief looks like.

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 the person who died. 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.

## Homework

### Ride the Wild Horse Meditation



[helpguide.org/wp-content/uploads/Beginning-Meditation.mp3](https://helpguide.org/wp-content/uploads/Beginning-Meditation.mp3) (16:27)

I will listen to this meditation \_\_\_\_\_ times this week?

What is my self-care plan for this week?

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## Week 4 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 not, is there anything else that was helpful to me? What came up for me this week?

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# Grief Activity: Healthy Attachment and 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, okay? 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.

- Adapted from Alan Wolfelt, *Understanding Your Grief*, p. 54

## Reflection

Am I doing anything right now that I believe is an unhelpful behaviour?

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Is there anything that is keeping me stuck?

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If yes, what changes do I need to make?

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## Mourning Activity: Remembering the Person

When we experience the death of someone, they live on in us through memory.

To heal, it might be helpful to actively remember the person and commemorate them.

### Reflection

#### Activating My Memory: Remember My Loss

How do I remember the person who has died and honour my memories?

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## Links

Today, we will be talking about **links**.

Linkages are something that helps you to experience your loss in a positive way. They are often reminders of experiences and feelings.

- **Links** can help you to feel connected to your loss.
- The **link** can be a memento such as a recording of the person's voice, a favourite toy or clothing, a special place, a thought.
- The **link** 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.
- **Links** may also change overtime.

## Rituals

Rituals create a space to honour what matters most and to welcome insight, growth, and healing.

- 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.

## Reflection

How can I use **rituals** to strengthen my connection with my lost loved one, and my relationship with myself?

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## Living Activity: Design Your Own Ritual

- **Favourite Meal:** Cook, or go to your loved one's favourite restaurant, and gather friends and family to share and toast or celebrate your loved one.
- **Item of Remembrance:** Carry a remembrance item, piece of jewelry or a handkerchief share what this means to you with others.
- **Art:** Create visual or musical art in your loved one's memory. Share your art with others.
- **Giveaway:** Give a cherished item that belonged to your loved one to a special friend.
- **Make a Donation:** To a special charity your loved one supported.
- **Altar of Remembrance:** An altar is a space where you collect meaningful things that represent your loved one. Include candles, photos, leaves, flowers, and personal items.
- **Candle of Remembrance:** Select a dedicated candle to light for your loved one. Light their candle at a certain time of day or on special occasions.
- **Letter of Love:** Often there are many things left unsaid when someone dies, especially unexpectedly. Writing unsaid words and blessings to the departed can be deeply moving.
- **Time in Nature:** Go to one of your loved one's favourite spots. Have a picnic, talk or think about best and favourite memories and stories.
- **Gravesite Mementos:** Leave something on your loved one's gravesite that they would enjoy.
- **Memory Scrapbook:** Fill a scrapbook with photographs, and other memorabilia from your life together.
- **Favourite Music:** Spend time listening to your loved one's favourite music.
- **Favourite Movie:** Host a movie night with family and friends to watch your loved one's favourite movie. Or watch it by yourself and pause when you need to feel your grief.
- **Tree Planted:** Plant a tree or flowers in a special place in your loved one's memory.

## Homework Activity

Here is a way to incorporate **ritual** and a linking object.

### Choose a Meaningful Object

Grief rituals benefit from incorporating a meaningful physical object. If possible, select an object with a connection to your loss. For grieving the loss of a loved one, this might be a cherished piece of jewelry, an article of clothing they wore, a gift they gave you, a letter they wrote, or a photograph.

## Homework

### Journal

We encourage ongoing **journalling** throughout the 8 weeks and beyond. Today we would like you to reflect on one memory that you thought of today.

Remember that you can use other forms of self-expression such as drawing or making a collage if journalling is not something you enjoy.

### Self-Care

Build in some time for **self-care**. Look at your self-care wheel for ideas. Explore other meditations if interested. What is my self-care plan for this week?

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### Design or Perform a Ritual

Consider either **designing or performing a ritual** this week. When you perform the ritual (now or in the future), you may want journalling about the experience.

Remember to embrace the memory of my connection!

## Week 5 Check-in: Weekly Reflection

How did my week go? Was there anything surprising that came up during the week? If not, is there anything else that was helpful to me?

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# Grief Activity: Legacy

For a moment let us consider the idea that the person who died never leaves us fully.

They always remain with us in ways such as spirit, through memories, lessons, and values they leave behind, in the ways that they lived their life.

The **legacy** 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.

## Reflection

The person in your life who has died has left a mark on you. What is that mark? What is the legacy of knowing the person who has died?

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# Mourning Activity: Expressing Inside and Outside Emotions

The purpose of this section is to reflect on the emotions that you keep hidden or have trouble naming.

## Reflection

What new awareness did I gain from this experience?

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

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

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

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## Living Activity: Significant Events

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 as it can give you a greater sense of control.

As you plan for a **significant event**, you might want to consider what you want and don't want during this time. Although planning can help you feel more in control, it is also important to be flexible with yourself. It's okay to change your mind depending upon how you feel the day of.

## Homework

### Legacy

How might I incorporate the person who died into my present life?

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## Planning for a Significant Event

As you plan for a **significant event**, you might want to consider what you want and don't want during this time. Although planning can help you feel more in control, it is also important to be flexible with yourself. It's okay to change your mind depending upon how you feel the day of.

The following questions might be helpful in planning for an upcoming **significant event**.

What is the **significant event** that I am planning for?

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How would I like to celebrate this event? What is it that I want to do? Consider use of ritual.

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What is my plan for how I will cope? What might I need and how will I get those needs met?

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How do I plan to take care of myself before and after the **significant event**?

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What is my **self-care** plan for this week?

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## Week 6 Check-in: Weekly Reflection

How did my week go? Was there anything surprising that came up this week for me?

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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?

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# Grief Activity: Making Sense of the Death and Searching for Meaning

## Whys, What Ifs, Shoulds, and Other Questions

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?”**

The questions that arise following loss can provide information about what we might need, the emotions that we are experiencing, and shed light on where we are in our grief journey.

For example:

- **“Why did this have to happen?”**  
Tells us that we have a desire to understand reasons behind the loss.
- **“Why did this happen to me/us?”**  
Might arise from a sense of unfairness/injustice.
- **“Why didn’t I do something sooner?”**  
Reflects guilt or regret.
- **“Why is no one talking about him/her/they?”**  
Reflects desire to acknowledge the loss and the impact it has had.

We know that there are many different questions that come up when we are grieving and that these questions may change over time. To help get you started on exploring your own questions, we are going to take a few moments to reflect upon one.

Let’s start small and just reflect on one question you have.

Use the questions below, if you want.

## Reflection

What is one question that I have?

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What feelings are attached to this question?

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Does asking this question help me find meaning or provide a clue as to what I might need?

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

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Often, we get stuck in the questions because we do not like the emotions attached to them. There may never be an answer to the questions that you have. But we can change the relationship with the question and how it is impacting us. Giving yourself permission to feel whatever you are feeling (guilt, anger, sadness) and finding a way to express it is important.

# Mourning Activity: Healing Letter

A **grief letter** or **healing letter** allows you 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 the person who died.

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.

## Idea for the healing letter

Dear, \_\_\_\_\_

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

Some things you could think and write about...

- Anger, sadness, regret, shame, guilt or any other feelings
- You can use **How Do I Feel?** on **p. 69** of this journal 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...





# Living Activity: Restructuring Your Life

## Creating a New Normal

- Do I know how to do the role or task? Does this include having to learn new skills? Do you know how to acquire that new skill?
- Do I give up the events and activities linked to my loved one's role? (another loss).
- Do I have another person/organization fill my loved one's role? Will this be hard due to financial reasons, limited support, hard to ask for help?

## Reflection

When you notice something, or someone linked to your loved one what happens for you? (feelings, body sensation, thoughts, memories)

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What do you normally do with your grief in these moments? (try to ignore, self-soothe)

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Is there a way you can acknowledge these moments more compassionately towards yourself?

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Write a list of things you are now doing, that the person who died always did for you (what your new roles), or what have you lost (caregiving).

New or Lost Roles	Emotions/thoughts attached to this	What do I need?
<p><i>Example: New Role</i> Mowing lawn</p>	<p><i>Example:</i> Angry. I don't want to do this, I don't know how to use the machine, and I don't want to fill it with gas or maintain it.</p>	<p><i>Example:</i> I am going to hire the neighbourhood boy to come and cut my lawn.</p>
<p><i>Example: Loss Role</i> I no longer need to make a meal for anyone.</p>	<p><i>Example:</i> Sadness and Loneliness. I have to eat alone now.</p>	<p><i>Example:</i> I have to adjust to this. I will need to get used to this. I could eat in front of the TV for company, call or FaceTime, or invite a friend over for dinner, so I am not always eating alone.</p>

## Homework

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

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Take time this week to complete the **Healing Letter (Grief Letter)** or other choice. Refer to **pp. 50-52** in your **journal**.

Explore **Your New Normal (Role)** over the next week.



## Week 7 Check-in: Weekly Reflection

How did my week go? Was there anything surprising from my **eco-map** last week?

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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?

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# Grief Activity: Ongoing Support: Getting What You Need

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. (Wolfelt, *The Depression of Grief*)

## Receive Ongoing Support from Others

There is also an inverse benefit to feeling supported and connected, particularly when faced with stressful life challenges. Social support improves mental, physical, and emotional health outcomes and has been studied extensively within varying disciplines over the last 40 years with similar results. Strong social support safeguards against the negative psychological and physiological responses to stress; it is a buffer of protection that aids coping. (Cacciatore J, Thieleman K, Fretts R, Jackson LB, 2021 May 27, Para. 3)

## Mourning Activity: Supportive Actions in Grief

### Acts of Emotional Caring

- Remembering the person who died
- Speaking his/her name
- Sharing memories
- Acknowledging important dates and holidays
- Emotionally sensitive communication

### Emotional Support

- Bring present
- Allowing the expression of grief
- Listening
- Being available
- Devoting time
- Bring open to grief emotions
- Not trying to fix or rush grief
- Refraining from unsolicited advice
- Timeless support

### Instrumental Support

- Assistance with childcare, meals, financial support, yard work, and housekeeping
- Written notes and gifts

### Appraisal Support

- Sense of connection with like others
- Support groups
- Extended communities (faith, schools, neighbourhoods)

Based on looking at the chart on p. 59:

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

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How can I get my needs for support met? What helpful support do I need?

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How will I communicate these needs to my supports?

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## Living Activity: Building Your Own Support

Who is in my life that can help me meet my needs.

**Identify** and **highlight** who you already have supporting you and who else you would like to lean on, or services you would like to access.

Specifically, what support do I need from others? Consider your role in meeting these needs.

**Partner:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Friends:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Family:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Coworkers/Boss:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Community:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Homework

Are there any changes I would like to make to my support network? If so, what steps will I take to meet my needs?

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What is my self care plan for this week?

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## Week 8 Check-in: Weekly Reflection

How did my week go? Was there anything surprising from my eco-map 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?

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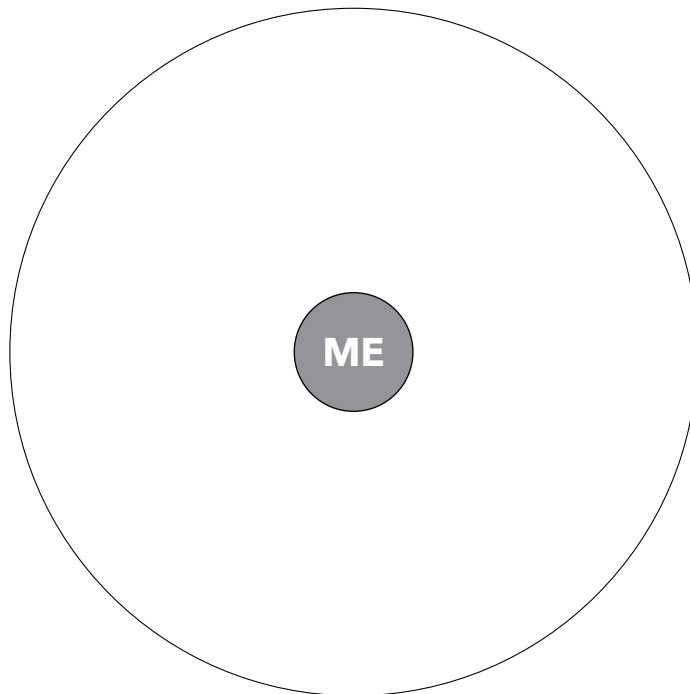
# Grief Activity: Active Healing

Adapted from the Red Deer Primary Care Network Balance Wheel

## The Healing 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.



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

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### 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

## Living Activity: Exploring Your Self-Identity

We will look at creating a new **self-identity** and a new normal.

### 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...		

## Reflection

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

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What emotions came up for me as I did this?

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

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## Homework

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

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What are one or two things I can do this week to recharge for the journey? What is my **self-care** plan for this week?

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**We encourage you to 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.



## How Do I Feel?

Here is a list of some common emotions to help you better describe how you are feeling.

- |                                       |                                     |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agonized     | <input type="checkbox"/> Lonely     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Angry        | <input type="checkbox"/> Miserable  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anxious      | <input type="checkbox"/> Negative   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bored        | <input type="checkbox"/> Optimistic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cautious     | <input type="checkbox"/> Paranoid   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confident    | <input type="checkbox"/> Perplexed  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curious      | <input type="checkbox"/> Regretful  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Determined   | <input type="checkbox"/> Relieved   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disappointed | <input type="checkbox"/> Sad        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disbelieving | <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfied  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exasperated  | <input type="checkbox"/> Shocked    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excited      | <input type="checkbox"/> Tearful    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exhausted    | <input type="checkbox"/> Tense      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fearful      | <input type="checkbox"/> Testy      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frustrated   | <input type="checkbox"/> Ticked     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guilty       | <input type="checkbox"/> Tired      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Happy        | <input type="checkbox"/> Troubled   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hurt         | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indifferent  | <input type="checkbox"/> Worried    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jealous      |                                     |

## Normal Grief Reactions

There are many different ways people experience grief. The intensity and duration of the reactions vary from person to person. These are some of the reactions you may experience.

Please check off all of the responses that you have been or are experiencing.

### Feelings

- Helplessness
- Sadness
- Anger
- Guilt
- Anxiety/fear
- Loneliness
- Irritability
- Fatigue
- Relief
- Shock
- Yearning
- Numbness
- Indifference
- Resentment
- Apathy
- Pessimism

### Physical Symptoms

- Tightness in chest; palpitations
- Muscle weakness
- Dry mouth
- Lack of energy
- Constipation or diarrhea
- Breathlessness
- Nausea
- Headaches
- Sexual disturbances
- Irregular heartbeat
- Weight loss or gain
- Dizziness or shivering
- Restlessness

### Spiritual

- Blaming God or life
- Lack of meaning in life/spiritual emptiness
- Wanting to die or join the deceased

### Thoughts

- Disbelief
- Confusion
- Preoccupied about the loss
- Hallucinations
- Doubt own sanity
- Sense of unreality
- Inability to concentrate
- Lowered self-esteem
- Slowed thinking
- Absent minded, forgetful
- Reliving the death, divorce, etc
- Awareness of own mortality
- Idealize the loss
- Worry
- Unrealistic
- Constant thinking about the deceased/feeling their presence/seeing them

### Behaviors

- Sleep difficulties
- Waking early
- Over or under eating
- Withdrawal from others
- Dreaming about the loss
- Nightmares
- Overactive
- Avoiding reminders of what was lost
- Treasuring objects of what was lost
- Inability to make decisions
- Crying
- Lack of interest in activities or socializing

**Note:** It is important to know that all of the reactions listed are common and natural. You are not alone.

## Alberta Journeying Through Grief™ Participant Evaluation - Week 8

We welcome your feedback about the **Alberta Journeying Through Grief™** program and are interested in your experience with the program. Thank you for your time in completing these questions.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### About the Program

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
1. Please check the box that reflects your overall satisfaction in taking Alberta Journeying Through Grief™	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
2. Please check the best answer about the Alberta Journeying Through Grief™ program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a. Program content was relevant to my needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Program was easy to understand and follow.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Program provided opportunities to learn and practice skills to manage my grief.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Program provided a good mix between listening and group activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Alberta Journeying Through Grief™ journal is a useful reference in practicing grief management skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. I am confident I can use the skills learned in my daily life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. What was most helpful about this program?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What was least helpful about this program?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Continued on p. 72 ►

## Personal Changes

	← None									Severe →
<b>5.</b> On a scale of 1-10, please rate the intensity of your grief <b>prior to your first</b> Grief group class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

<b>6.</b> On a scale of 1-10, please rate the intensity of your grief <b>after your last</b> Grief group class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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	← None									Most →
<b>7.</b> On a scale of 1-10, please rate your confidence in your ability to cope with your grief <b>prior to your first</b> Grief group class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

<b>8.</b> On a scale of 1-10, please rate your confidence in your ability to cope with your grief <b>after your last</b> Grief group class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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**9.** Which three Grief management techniques do you intend to use regularly?

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## About You

**10.** Do you identify as?

- Man
  Woman
  Transgender man
  Transgender woman
  Non-Binary
  Prefer not to answer
   
 Prefer to describe: \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Age:**  18-24  25-44  45-64  65+

Thank you for completing this survey!





**Alberta**  
**Journeying**  
**Through**  **Grief**™