



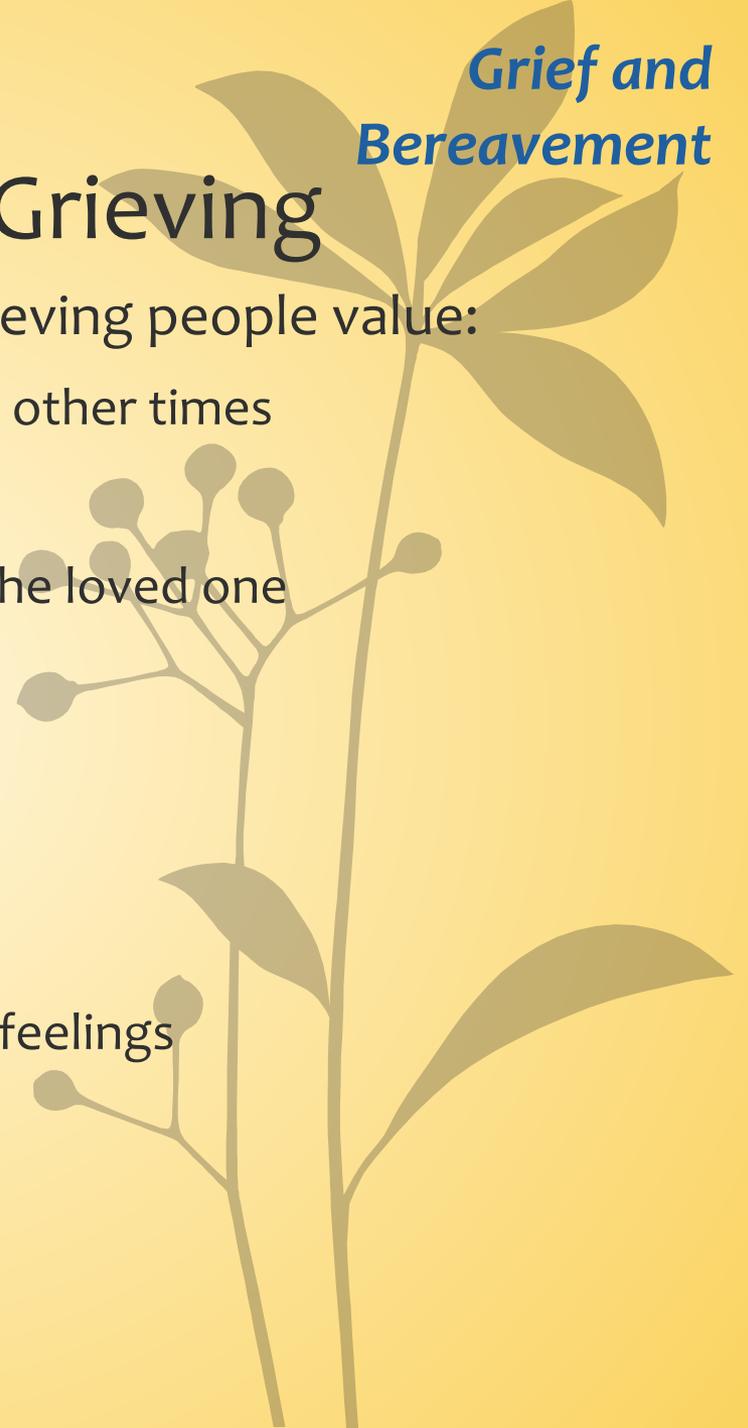
***Module 8:
Grief and
Bereavement***

What is It?

- Grief is:
 - A natural response to any type of loss
 - Seen in terms of “work” or “tasks” that must be accomplished in order to cope with loss
 - Experienced in anticipation of a loss. The dying person and his/her family will experience this, and will often try to deal with unfinished business (the “work” of grief) during hospice care
 - A state of mind that includes acceptance of the loss, emotional pain and suffering, adjustment, and ultimately “letting go”
- Mourning is:
 - The process that helps people cope with grief
 - Expressed through rituals that reflect cultural and social norms
 - The time when a person undertakes the “tasks” of grief
- Bereavement is:
 - The state of suffering a loss

Needs of People Who are Grieving

- Everyone grieves differently, but most grieving people value:
 - Being alone at times, yet having company at other times
 - The opportunity to express feelings
 - The opportunity to tell and retell stories of the loved one
 - Information about what is normal
 - The gift of (your) presence
 - Permission to be self-absorbed
 - Permission to laugh at times
 - Permission to experience a roller coaster of feelings
 - Help with basic needs



Myths about Grief

Grief and Bereavement

it gets easier with practice

silence is golden

it's not so bad when you see it coming

it's best to "let it all out"

it's best to forget

shield the children

time heals

out of sight...

explain later

sympathy prolongs grief

don't live in the past

keeping busy is the best remedy

three months should do it



Steps in the Grieving Process

- Shock
- Emotional release
- Preoccupation with the deceased
- Physical distress
- Hostile reactions
- Guilt
- Depression
- Withdrawal
- Re-entering relationships
- Resolution and readjustment



Helping People Manage the Stages of Grief

- Be there. Be empathetic and genuine. It's OK to show your emotions
- Help those who are grieving to:
 - Express sorrow
 - Understand their own reactions
 - Accept the pain of bereavement
 - Talk about new ways to interact with people
 - Set short-term, realistic goals
- Help with routine tasks
- Recognize when to be silent
- Relax. Keep your sense of humour and perspective



Promoting Health and Wellbeing for Those Who are Grieving

*Grief and
Bereavement*

- Four types of health to consider:
 - Physical
 - Emotional
 - Intellectual
 - Spiritual



Complicated Grief

- This is grief which is complicated by other issues. Signs may be subtle or obvious:
 - Not eating or sleeping
 - Overreacting to small annoyances
 - Drinking excessively
 - Making extreme or suicidal statements
- Professional support?
 - People who are experiencing complicated grief need professional counselling and support. You must assess the following factors in deciding whether to contact your supervisor and request professional support:
 - Social
 - Psychological
 - Situational
 - Physical
 - Spiritual



Helping Children Cope with Grief

- Your role is to support the adult family members in helping their children cope – even if you disagree with their approach
- Always check with parents before recommending materials or resources to children
- Answer children's questions honestly. Help the children to express their emotions, and be patient if they raise the subject of death repeatedly



Helping Older People Cope with Grief

- Recognize that grief is not easier on older people:
 - Cumulative losses over a lifetime can lead to “bereavement overload”
 - These people may already be struggling with other losses: income, health, independence, status
 - This may be the end of the person’s last close relationship and source of physical affection
 - Older people’s reluctance to express their feelings does not indicate that those feelings are less intense
- What you can do:
 - Ask the person to explore his/her “history of loss”, and how he/she came to terms with those losses
 - Acknowledge their pain and distress
 - Avoid going too far, and encouraging self-pity. Genuine grief work lifts despair and brings relief

Next Steps?

- Click on the link below to take you to the Module 8: Grief and Bereavement quiz section
 - [Module 8 Quiz](#)

