

**DISENFRACTHISED GRIEF:
FROM HIDDEN SORROW TO
ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND SUPPORT**

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OUR PATH FOR TODAY

- Explore disenfranchised grief.
- What's the problem? (Why it matters.)
- How we might be contributing to the problem.
- What we can do differently.

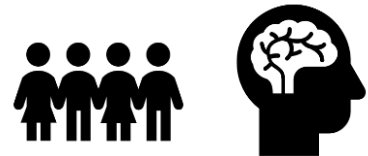
**What if grieving is
human, natural, normal, and healthy
...but the process is stifled?**

DISENFRANCHISED GRIEF (DOKA)

- Grief that persons experience when they incur a loss that is not or cannot be openly acknowledged, publicly mourned, or socially supported.

DISENFRAANCHISED GRIEF...1

- Relationship not recognized
- Loss not recognized
- Griever not recognized



DISENFRANCHISED GRIEF...2

- Circumstances of the death/loss not recognized
- Ways individuals grieve not recognized
 - Grief reactions and expressions not recognized
 - Mourning not recognized
 - Outcomes/timelines not recognized
 - Meaning/sense making not recognized

DISENFRANCHISING... (ATTIG)

Disenfranchising messages actively discount, dismiss, disapprove, discourage, invalidate, and delegitimize the experiences and efforts of grieving. And disenfranchising behaviors interfere with the exercise of the right to grieve by withholding permission, disallowing, constraining, hindering, and even prohibiting it.

**What happens when we feel
unseen and unheard?**

(Why this matters)

NOT SEEN, NOT HEARD...

- Innate human needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness.
- Need to know we matter.
- We are meaning and sense-making beings.
- We do not function well when these needs are not met.

- AM I SAFE? DO I BELONG?

How might we be contributing to disenfranchised grief?

HOW WE MIGHT BE CONTRIBUTING

- Not acknowledging the loss(es)
- Deciding what losses “matter”
- Codification of Grieving Rules/Norms
 - Chronos time expectations vs Kairos time realities
 - Finite (vs chronic or ongoing)
 - Letting go versus holding on
- Illness label
- Our own discomfort with loss, death, circumstances
- Meaning: Blue skies, rainbows, unicorns



The best thing is to try to put what happened behind you and get back to normal as soon as possible. Try to go on as if nothing has changed.

It's not a big deal. You're strong. You'll get over this and thrive.

Don't keep talking about it. You need to be more focused on what you still have.

Look on the bright side.
Its a promotion with new opportunities
for your family too!



YOUR CLIENT COMES TO YOU WITH A LOSS STORY EVEN THOUGH *THEY MIGHT NOT KNOW IT.*

- Spouse has died, Divorce
- Merger/ Lay off
- Project Completion
- Accident/Critical Incident
- Diagnosis of illness/chronic condition (e.g. M.S.)
- Refugee, Immigration
- Previous incarceration
- Addiction and recovery
- Not working out as I had hoped/planned

**What are the
losses?**

EXPLORATION 1: WITH YOUR NEIGHBOR...

- Who is your “typical” client?
- What are their losses?
- Handout available as a guide

We grieve because we have lost something or someone that matters.

It is the griever who defines *loss(es)*.

It is the griever who defines *matters*.

HELPFUL OPTIONS...

- Empathy always good
 - Acknowledging the losses and the full range of emotions – in any experience!
- Helping our clients hold paradox or ambiguity
 - E.g. both holding on and letting go
 - Help them learn to hold on differently
 - Fluidity of time
- **Normalizing** their experience
- Recognizing grieving/change/transition is **pain and possibility** – honouring both.

EMPATHY GUESSES...

- *I'm wondering if you're feeling a range of emotions, even sadness or loss at this time of supposed positive progression?*
- *Could it be that everything that looked like a "normal" day for you has gone out the window and you're longing for the predictability and ease of how things used to be?*
- *What if while you're looking forward, it is also okay to look back with some sadness and acknowledge the many changes (or losses)?*

GOING FORWARD

Lean into the uncomfortable
and acknowledge loss.

There are no beginnings
without endings.

Remember the griever
decides significance and
mattering, not us.

Avoid silver linings
(language),
yet look for the
transformative potential.

Holding Space &
Companioning
(vs fixing)
Empathy & Process & Timing

EXPLORATION 2: WITH YOUR NEIGHBOUR

- What if anything we have covered today resonates with you?
- What might you want to consider doing differently?

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What if grief is not a problem to solve,
rather it is a pathway to
individual & organizational health and growth?

What if grieving is about discerning hopeful paths
through pain to saying “Yes” to life?

Thank you for your time and attention.

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