

Grief Recovery ... Donors ... Recipients ...  
health care staff ... We are in it  
together!

**Rick C. Benson** B.A., B.Ed., M.A. (Pastoral Studies)

Grief Recovery Specialist

Director of Spiritual Care

St. Joseph's Hospital

Saint John , NB







# Proactive and Preventative

**Life in a storm – grief –  
compassion fatigue**



**Life in peace – actively  
seeking/working toward**



What is our personal journey?  
How does this relate to our work?

**It's behind me...**

**Isn't it..?**



**DUDE...YOU SURE THAT WAS A CIGARETTE?**





# Grief Recovery

Grief is a natural response to an emotional loss ...

“Conflicting feelings caused by the end of or a change in a familiar pattern of behaviour.”

A patient's and or family loss?

Your loss?

My loss?

Choose and describe why one of these forms of art describes loss for you :

Song

Movie

Poetry

Image

Music

Quote

Art

Theatre



Grief is the feeling of reaching out for someone who always been there, only to find when you need them again, they are no longer there.



We have a broken heart.



And ... we want to mend it!

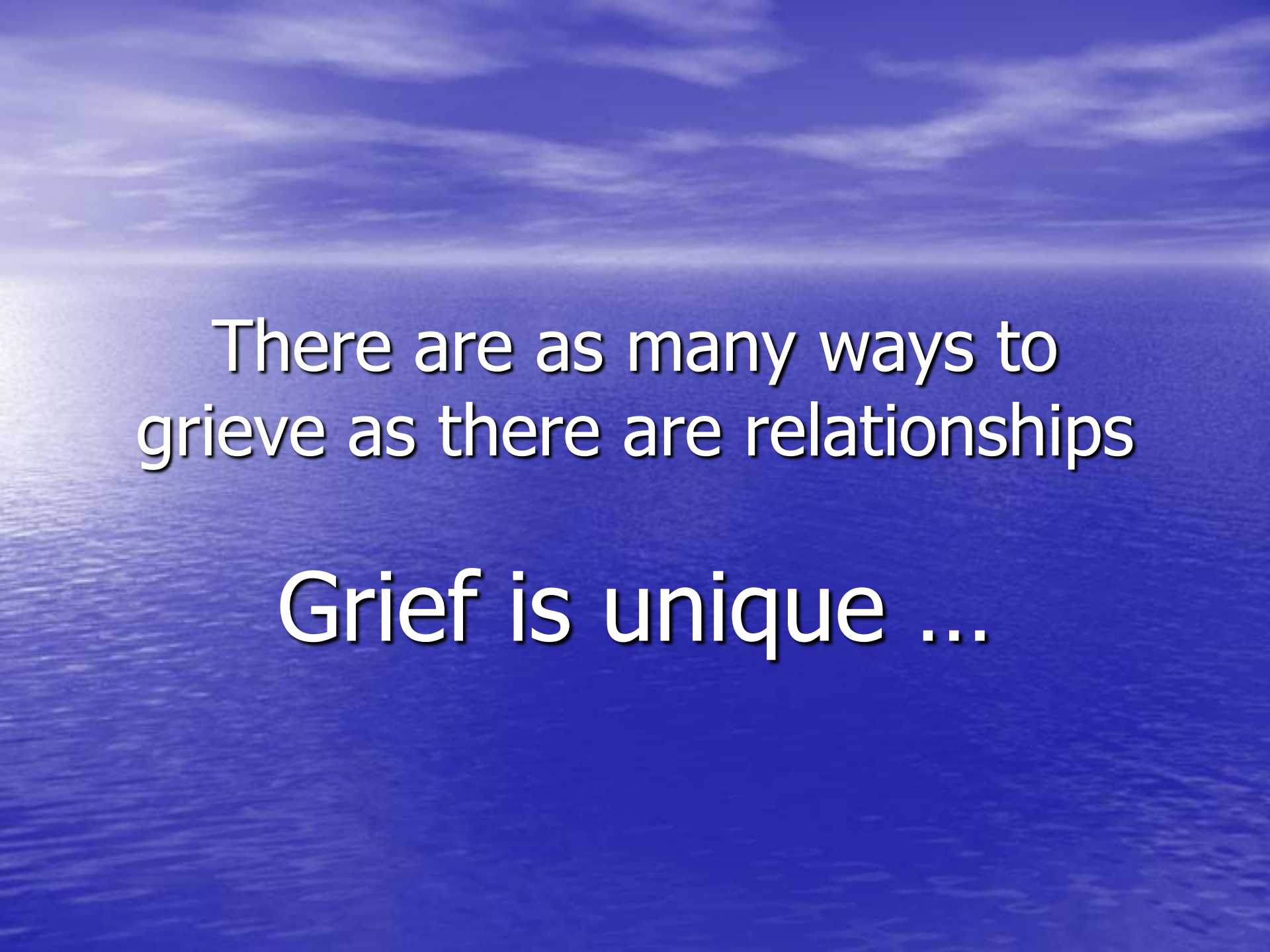




# There are over 40 losses that are considered Grief

- Death
- Health loss ... physical, emotional, cognitive, mental.
- Divorce/separation/break-up
- Retirement
- Moving
- Pets
- Financial ( increase or decrease)
- Children leaving home





There are as many ways to  
grieve as there are relationships

Grief is unique ...

I may mistakenly tell you  
... “I know how you feel.”

because I have experienced a similar loss.

I do not know how you feel ...

Only you know how you feel ... and it is  
probably not very good!



# Myths and Clichés ... and other unhelpful cultural supports.

- Time will heal everything.
- Be strong.
- Give her some time alone.
- You will find another partner.
- It was God's will.

# Myths and Clichés ... there are so many more ...

- You have to keep busy.
- There are stages of grief.
- Keep a stiff upper lip.
- Boys don't cry.
- Suck it up ... *Princess* !
- Well, so in so has it so much worse! ... minimize and isolate

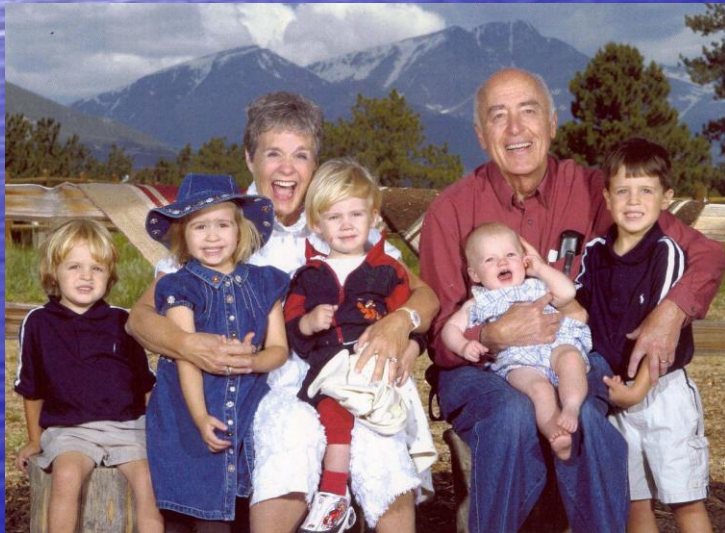




Turn to your neighbour to  
share.

What clichés or myths or  
unhelpful words have you heard  
... or may have used yourself ?

# Wisdom of the ages? Yes & No





Grief is a matter of the heart ... not the intellect.



# Reading and thinking ....

Will only take you so far

Grief is a matter of the heart

We need to move 14 inches

... from your head to your heart !



Grievers need to take small steps to complete their emotional relationships.

- We have three ways of relating in our grieving.

- Physical

- Emotional

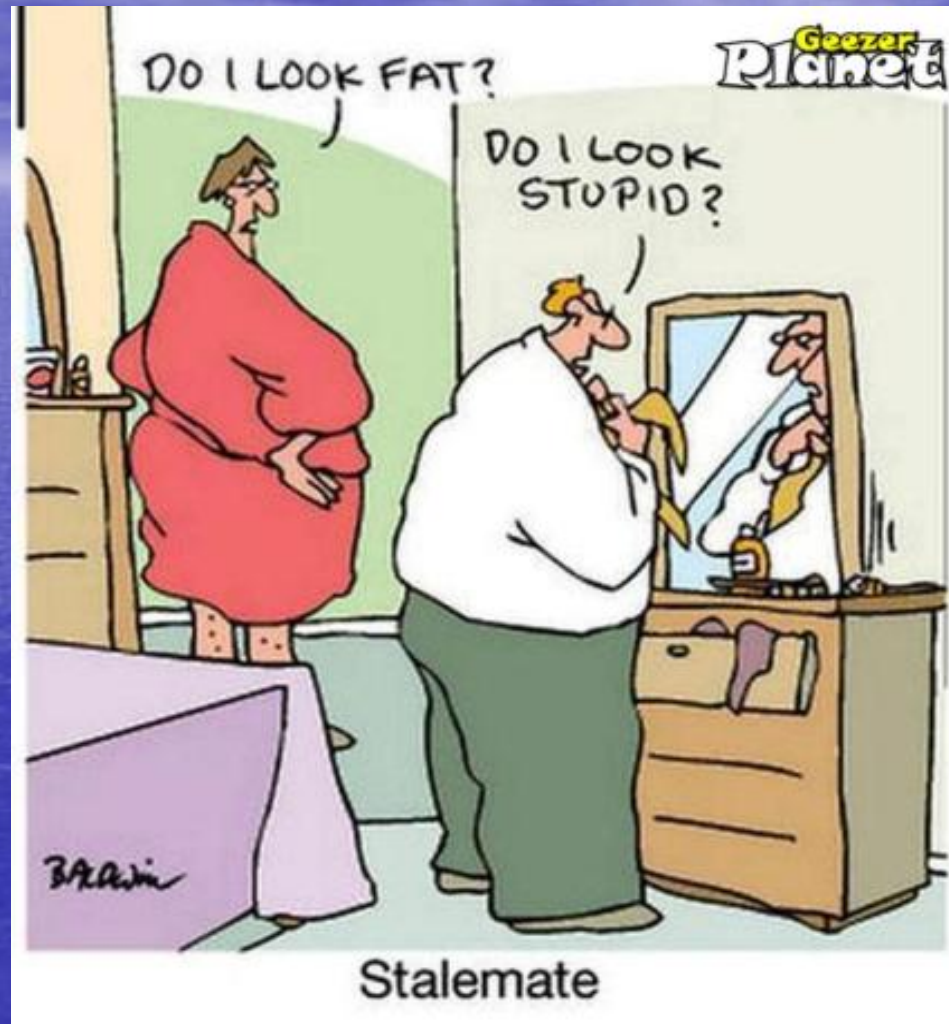
- Spiritual

We tend to isolate ourselves ...





# Others sometimes isolate us ...



- Deflect with a joke ... a comment about something related ... a question that changes the topic ...

We often consciously or unconsciously rely on short term energy relievers.





# Short Term Energy Relievers



Turn to your neighbour and share some short term energy relievers that you know of.

- Most of these are not wrong or bad in themselves.
- Are we conscious of them?
- Dangers:
  - They work
  - They are only short term – emptiness continues
  - Avoid the recovery.



# Look after yourself ... only you know what is best for you!

- Avoid isolation.
- Talk to someone who you can trust and will listen ... a listening heart ... two ears no mouth.
- Take steps ... small ones to complete your relationships with those who your are grieving.

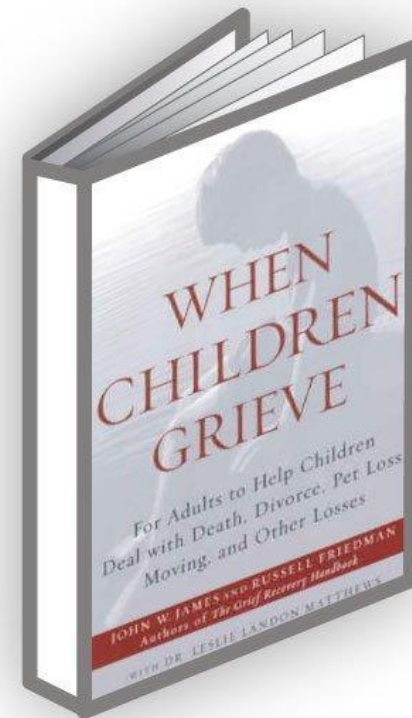
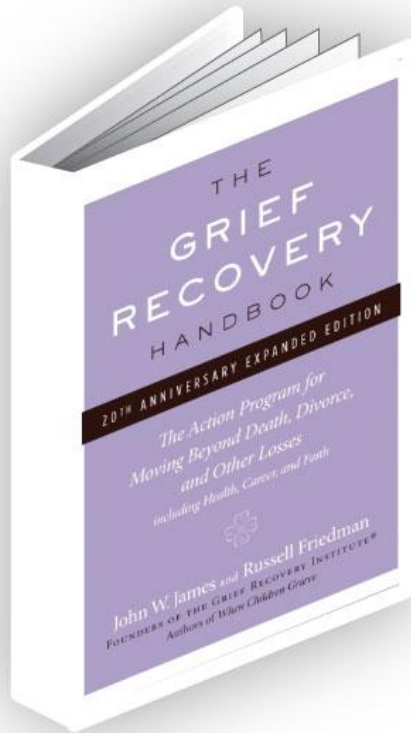
# Grief Recovery ... In our small steps it is best to do it with others.

- We do not need an intellectual exercise.
- Working in a group of different griever is most helpful.
- Working through small steps with another works well.
- Doing it alone can help, but is not as effective ... remember we griever tend to isolate ourselves!



# Grief Recovery Method

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



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





# Grief Recovery Outreach Program: Qualitative study of Process and Change, April, 2004

- Lynn M Klimo, M.D. PGY IV, Elain Henderson, M.Div., Joseph Varley, M.D., John Engel, Ph.D., Laura Pethel, M.Ed.
- Summa Heath System, St. Thomas Hospital  
Akron, Ohio

# Results

- 312 letters sent to previous participants
- 93 responses
- Random selection of 20
- Interviewed 8
  - 100 % reported overall positive effect
  - 100 % would use this method in other parts of their lives
  - Reading out loud of assignments was a significant factor
  - None found anything unhelpful



# Thirty anonymous evaluations – arms length tabulation.

St. Joseph's Hospital – Grief Recovery Program

- Prior to completing the program:
  - 43% said on a scale of 1 – 10 that their degree of grief was 8 or 9 (high end)
  - 37% reported 10
- Upon completion
  - 63% reported on a scale of 1 – 10 that their degree of grief was 2 or 3 (low end)
  - 7 % reported 1

# Additional Findings ... on a scale of 1 – 10 Low to High

- The Program met my expectations:
  - 34% 8 or 9
  - 63% 10
- Reading/homework useful
  - 34% 8 or 9
  - 66% 10
- Group dynamics helpful
  - 27% 8 or 9
  - 70% 10
- Certified facilitator – skills & background
  - 27% 8 or 9
  - 73% 10



Small steps toward recovery  
... actively done in a trusting,  
confidential setting.  
... in an active narrative exercise.

Personal grief history  
Relationship grief history  
Completion of communication

Your Mom has always been right ...  
Look after yourself ... don't forget  
to eat and get enough sleep.

Listen to your mother!





Mrs. Smith had always suspected her son, Mike, was having an intimate relationship with his roommate, Jennifer.

One night, Mike invites his mother over for dinner. All thru the night, Mrs. Smith watched Mike and Jennifer interact, and was pretty sure there was more than met the eye.

Mike saw his mother watching them and assured her that they were just roommates.

A few nights later, Jennifer went to Mike with a problem.

"Ever since your mother was here for dinner, I have been unable to find the gravy ladle. Do you think she took it?"

Mike replied, "I doubt it, but I'll e-mail her and ask her anyway."

Mike sat down at the computer and composed the following e-mail:

Dearest Mother,

I'm not saying you did take the gravy ladle, and  
I'm not saying you did not take the gravy ladle.

But the fact remains, since you were here for dinner, we have been unable to find the ladle.

Love always,

Mike



Two days later, Mike received the following reply from his mother:

Dearest Michael,  
I'm not saying you do sleep with Jennifer,  
and I'm not saying you do not sleep with  
Jennifer. **But** the fact remains, had  
Jennifer been sleeping in her own bed,  
she would have found the ladle by now.  
Love,  
Mother

They may not remember what you said ...  
but they will always remember how you  
made them feel





# Take time to renew yourself !

