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Guide Sheets for Pack 1 'Starting a journey'

The Guide Sheets are intended to provide a learner with more understanding about the Grief Card topics being discussed. As described, they are a guide only and are not intended to be prescriptive. The content does not have to be followed in any particular order. Grief is not linear. The Grief Cards help to open up creative conversations around grief. One of the greatest gifts we can give someone is that they feel truly heard.

Description of the Grief Cards

Each guide sheet relates to an individual GRIEF CARD. The following points relate to the elements that are found on the front and back of a Grief Card:

1. NOTES: These bullet points bring more learning about grief and open up ideas and concepts around the Grief Card. This is a fuller, but not exhaustive, exploration of the learning points that may be gained about each topic.
2. QUESTIONS: Additional questions are given to broaden the thought processes for a grieving person to consider where they are in their journey.
3. ACTION POINTS: Two action points are also included that may help a person to consider how they may begin to bring movement back into their lives.

	TABLE OF CARDS
Card No.	Title of Card (Click on link below and go to bookmark link)
1	Shock! Numbness
2	The tsunami of grief
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CARD1 Shock! Numbness



NOTES:

- The loss of someone close to us is a huge shock. We cannot believe it! This cannot be true.
- This is a normal response to hearing the news of loss.
- People can experience a wide range of physical symptoms.
- It takes a while for the shock to wear off. Days, weeks, months even. Gradually, it happens.
- Numbness remains. It is a way of our bodies protecting us.
- Shock can be intensified when the loss is unexpected.
- Others can confuse this with strength, “You’re coping so well”.
- Shock is telling us that something extreme has happened and that we are grieving.

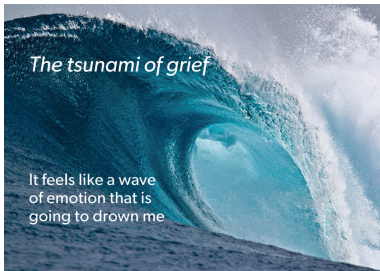
QUESTIONS:

1. What have you experienced?
2. Where have you gone that is safe?
3. What helps you when you feel the same emotions and feelings again?
4. Who can you talk to that is safe?
5. What mental processes do you adopt when you notice shock feelings?

ACTION POINTS:

- Find a safe place, safe people to talk with.
- Avoid making big decisions if you can.

CARD 2 The tsunami of grief



NOTES:

- Grief often comes unexpectedly and in waves...
- You can't always predict how it will come crashing into your life or banging on your door. But grief will come.
- Expect it. Don't ignore it. Don't try to go around grief. Better to acknowledge it.
- Get ready and enter into it as best you can, knowing that it will return at various points in your life and leave again, like the waves on the seashore.
- Don't let it stop you, but give it space. Find the ways to go through it. Let it have its work.
- There are toxins in tears that need to come out. Where do these toxins go if you bottle them up?
- You will be OK. You really will.

QUESTIONS:

1. Have you experienced a tsunami?
2. What was it like for you?
3. Are you experiencing other waves?
4. When do they come?
5. What strategies do you have?

ACTION POINTS:

- Prepare for waves of grief. Put things in place.
- Find ways to step into them.

CARD 3 It's physical

It's physical

It hurts



NOTES:

- The physical pain can be intense. It often comes when the numbness has worn off.
- It can take us by surprise and debilitate us for a while.
- We may wonder, will it ever ease? (Pain is the other side of “love’s coin”).
- Physical symptoms, sometimes called “phantom symptoms”, are common for the bereaved.
- They can also mirror the symptoms of the deceased: eg. chest pains when the partner died of a heart attack. Pain can begin where your partner had pain.
- With the stress of the death of a beloved and the intense emotions experienced it is not surprising that people can have some physical symptoms.
- Hurting is part of the healing process. Loss is painful. Taking the pain with us... it doesn't go away, but it does change.

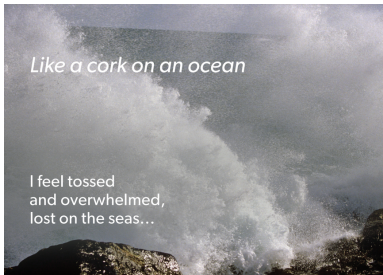
QUESTIONS:

1. What has been your experience?
2. Have you had particular symptoms?
3. How have you looked after yourself?
4. Do you have someone to talk to?
5. When is it less painful?

ACTION POINTS:

- It is courageous to embrace the pain.
- Ongoing symptoms need to be checked by a medical professional.

CARD 4 Like a cork on an ocean



NOTES:

- It can feel as though you're thrown into an ocean.
- We break the surface and find everything is in chaos.
- We keep being overwhelmed by waves.
- It can feel like a dark and turbulent place.
- We are just surviving, fighting for our lives.
- We can forget that storms do pass.
- These feelings and emotions won't last forever, things will ease.
- We will get to a “new normal”.

QUESTIONS:

1. What does your ocean look like?
2. What feelings are you experiencing?
3. Can you let your feelings out?
4. Have you “broken surface”?
5. How deep are you?

ACTION POINTS:

- Just take the moment for what it is.
- Try journaling/writing how you feel, keep a log.

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CARD 5 The ball of grief



NOTES:

- It can feel like a very dark place, a deep pit, a hole, black spaghetti, a black cloud.
- We can feel frightened to face grief, face our pain.
- We can learn to hold the ball of grief, press into it, walk through it.
- By exploring the depths of it we can begin to untangle it.
- This process can feel chaotic at times - this is normal.
- Grief is different for everyone. It is not linear. Often people feel overwhelmed.
- Grief can become familiar - "It feels like a comfort as well; we don't want to neglect or forget them."

QUESTIONS:

1. What does your ball look like?
2. Can you begin "hold it?"
3. Who would you explore it with?
4. How big is it?
5. Have you sought help?

ACTION POINTS:

- How might you explore it?
- Where would be a good place to look at the ball?

CARD 6 The layers of grief



NOTES:

- Grief is a bit like an onion - it has lots of layers.
- We have lots of memories, feelings and emotions. They actually go back a long way.
- It is normal to cry when grieving. It is not a sign of weakness, it is a sign that we have deeply loved.
- Men have tear ducts too!
- It has been scientifically proven that there are toxins in tears. If we bottle them up, where do the toxins go?
- It is liberating when you cry. This can feel impossible sometimes. That's OK too.
- Healing can come, often with tears ... that's the thing with onions.

QUESTIONS:

1. Have you cried?
2. Where is a safe place for you to cry?
3. Do you cry alone or with others?
4. What makes you cry?
5. Can you cry?

ACTION POINTS:

- Try letting go next time you feel emotional or well up.
- Consider peeling the onion gently.

CARD 7 Anger

Anger



Outraged!

NOTES:

- Anger is a very common and normal response to loss.
- Questions come: Who? What? Why? Where? When? How? Why me? Why us?
- Often there are no answers. Things happen in life.
- Anger is not bad in itself, but it can spill over into various areas of our lives.
- If it is not expressed safely, it can damage others or ourselves or affect relationships. It is important how it gets channelled and expressed. Some repress it - this may cause depression.
- Some direct it, inappropriately, at others simply to get it out: doctors, funeral directors, the person most-loved or trusted.
- It does have a useful purpose, giving us the energy to take action out in the world to change something.

QUESTIONS:

1. Have you felt angry at any point?
2. How have you expressed this anger, if at all?
3. What would you say to them now?
4. Do you have a strategy in place to use this anger energy?
5. How was anger expressed in your family of origin?

ACTION POINTS:

- Find a safe place to release the anger energy - “let off steam”.
- Find a way to use the energy in a different way.

CARD 8 Turned upside down

*Turned upside
down*



Life's completely changed

NOTES:

- It can literally feel like being turned upside down; we feel disorientated in our world.
- This is common; don't be alarmed.
- The view is very different out of the window now.
- We don't know what to do with situations, problems, or questions.
- Keep breathing. Going for a walk and finding a green space to be, can help.
- Connecting with others who are bereaved helps to normalise where you are.
- Search out places to get help.

QUESTIONS:

1. How are you feeling?
2. When can you take a moment to reflect?
3. Who could you talk to?
4. What does your world look like?
5. Where are the anchors in your life?

ACTION POINTS:

- List what you have to do helps. Prioritise your responsibilities.
- Make a list of what you still have.

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CARD 9 Guilt



NOTES:

- Guilt can be a troublesome emotion.
- The “what if’s” are common - “What if we had known earlier,”... “What if we had used a different treatment?”... “What if I had been there more often?”
- It means: “I need to question if something I did caused it.”
- Often guilt is misplaced. You did what you could with the information you had at the time.
- This drive to learn from this experience *feels like*, “I must have done something wrong!” It is the price we pay for loving and being connected with others.
- The useful purpose of guilt is: “Learning what else I could do that might prevent it happening again.” If I were in the same position again, I would act differently next time.
- You may need to forgive others, the person who died or maybe even yourself.

QUESTIONS:

1. Have you had guilty thoughts?
2. What went wrong?
3. What would you do differently next time?
4. What can you do now to help yourself?
5. Could you talk with someone about your feelings?

ACTION POINTS:

- Be kind to yourself.
- We can reframe guilt in a useful way.

CARD 10 Self care



NOTES:

- It's important that we do self-care when we're grieving.
- Eating! Loss of appetite is common. Are you eating regularly? Try and have a meal at the same time even if you don't eat much.
- Sleeping! Sleep is often affected. Try to create a good sleeping environment physically and emotionally. Build a routine. Protect your sleep time by staying off technology and blue screens at night. A lot of people struggle with this.
- Exercise!
- Grieving takes a lot of energy. Fatigue or low energy is often mentioned by the bereaved. This can last for long periods.
- It is good to maintain your daily rhythms if you can. It is also good to do more exercise.
- Neglect ourselves and we neglect those around us, and our future.

QUESTIONS:

1. Are you eating?
2. Are you sleeping?
3. Are you getting any exercise?
4. How good am I at being self-aware?
5. How am I feeling spiritually?

ACTION POINTS:

- Being aware of our emotions. Being truly self-aware.
- Rest and recharge when you need to.

CARD 11 Catastrophically altered



NOTES:

- There has been a catastrophe, a tragedy.
- Chaos has come.
- It is so disturbingly final.
- We can feel as though emptiness has pervaded every area of our lives; nothing is left untouched.
- The sense of isolation is intense.
- Everything has been stripped away.
- The bereaved can feel so vulnerable.

QUESTIONS:

1. How would you describe your experience?
2. What does your landscape look like?
3. What picture comes to mind?
4. Are you able to move?
5. Is there anyone with you?

ACTION POINTS:

- Connect with someone
- Look for support

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CARD 12 The waterfall of bereavement

*The waterfall
of bereavement*

Overwhelmed
and tipped over...



NOTES:

- Life was going along as normal.
- Suddenly, a significant loss happened, everything has changed.
- It now feels as though we have gone over a threshold, like a waterfall, The Niagara Falls, in a barrel.
- Everything is turbulent.
- We can feel overwhelmed.
- It feels different for everyone.
- There can be very strong emotions or feelings. There may be no feelings at all.

QUESTIONS:

1. What was it like for you?
2. Where are you on the waterfall?
3. Have you surfaced again?
4. Can you see the river/shore/banks/land?
5. What particularly strong emotions have you noticed?

ACTION POINTS:

- We need to travel gently with ourselves.
- Can you find a place to rest?

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For more resources visit: LossandLife.org

If you need wider support visit: AtaLoss.org