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Guide Sheets for Pack 2 'On the 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.

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CARD13 Help

Help!

Life feels so hard



NOTES:

- Life can be really difficult at times.
- When we experience significant loss, it can be even more challenging.
- It's OK to ask for help when you need it. It is not a sign of weakness but rather a sign of strength to ask for help.
- There are places where you can find support.
- There are people who can come alongside.
- There are people who care.
- It is worth talking to your Doctor.

QUESTIONS:

1. Do you need help right now?
2. Do you feel able to ask anyone for help, have you reached out?
3. Have you spoken with anyone?
4. Do you have a trusted person to talk with?
5. Where do you connect with people?

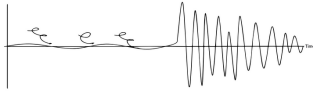
ACTION POINTS:

- The AtaLoss.org website has a search function to help find relevant organisations and charities.
- Do you need to 'Talk to a Bereavement Counsellor?' This is also available on the AtaLoss.org website.

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CARD 14 The deep swell of life...

*The deep swell of life,
then grief comes*



Suddenly on a roller coaster

NOTES:

- There is a rhythm to life, like the waves on a shore, a deep ocean swell.
- There are ups and downs. Some days we are feeling better than others. But generally life is OK and we are able to enjoy it.
- We are able to manage our lives well.
- Sometimes storms come along and affect the deep swell. But they come and go eg. the car breaks down; the freezer packs up; we miss a job opportunity.
- We are able to cope and have capacity. Life keeps moving along...
- Then grief comes. We get thrown onto a roller coaster. The wave looks very different now.
- There are extremes of emotions and feelings. Sometimes we are doing OK; other times we are so low.

QUESTIONS:

1. What did your life look like before?
2. What has been your experience?
3. What tools can you use now?
4. What are your extremes?
5. How frequently do you swing?

ACTION POINTS:

- Keep breathing. Take one small step at a time.
- Try and do good self care: eating, sleeping, getting some exercise.

CARD 15 My life

My life

It hit the floor and
was broken into a
thousand pieces



NOTES:

- Our life is like a vase. We have shape and form. We can hold things.
- If our vase is suddenly knocked out of our hands...
- It is like being dropped onto concrete. We can be so broken by our experience.
- It may now look as though everything is lost. “It felt like I hit the floor and was broken into a thousand pieces”.
- After a while we start putting things back together.
- Like a hologram I am being re-formed/re-shaped, the pieces are lifted off the floor and put back in place, somewhere. A vase shape is reappearing.
- I am being re-formed/re-made, into something new. I have lost some parts. I have gained others.

QUESTIONS:

1. What would your vase look like now?
2. What is it made of?
3. Where is it now?
4. What is inside it?
5. What are the missing pieces?

ACTION POINTS:

- What have you put back in place?
- Are you working on your new shape?

CARD 16 Who am I now?

Who am I now?



I'm not sure I know!



NOTES:

- When grief comes, our core foundations are shaken.
- We may no longer know who we are.
- We can be struggling with reality. Struggling with our own identity.
- Grief raises questions around: security, self worth and significance.
- We can question who we are as individuals: am I still a partner, am I still a parent or sibling?
- There is a realignment that takes place.
- This can make us feel very vulnerable.

QUESTIONS:

1. Where do you feel safe?
2. Is identity an issue for you?
3. What are your responsibilities?
4. What gets you out of bed in the morning?
5. Notice what works for you...

ACTION POINTS:

- Redefining who you are.
- Exploring your new identity

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CARD 17 Feeling stuck

Feeling stuck

I feel trapped,
I don't know which
way to turn



NOTES:

- People can feel stuck.
- This is not uncommon in the grief journey.
- We can get stuck at various points along the way...multiple times.
- This can feel traumatic. “Will I ever get out of this?”
- Don't panic - you are not alone in these feelings. It is in fact part of normal grieving.
- Feelings of sadness and despair are normal after the loss of a loved one.
- If these feelings last for a long time it is appropriate to seek help.

QUESTIONS:

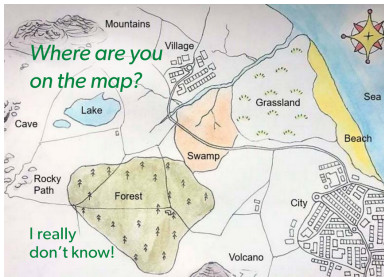
1. Are you feeling stuck?
2. Do you have someone you trust to talk to?
3. When was the last time you laughed?
4. What motivates you?
5. Can you see any hope?

ACTION POINTS:

- Seek help.
- Talk with your GP.

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CARD 18 Where are you on the map?



NOTES:

- As we enter our grief landscape we start walking down a new road, a new journey, one that we have never travelled on before.
- The journey is unique to the person that we have loved.
- It is a well-worn path but there are no signposts to show us the way.
- Often we are searching, searching to find them, or us!
- Ultimately we have to do it ourselves, we need to do the work or grief.
- We may find people to help us on the way.
- We can find places of rest.

QUESTIONS:

1. Where are you on the map?
2. What are you near?
3. What does it look like?
4. What can you see?
5. Can you find someone to guide/help you who has walked a similar road?

ACTION POINTS:

- Find a map, get a 'grid', something to help.
- It's ok to feel lost and alone, there are places to get help

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CARD 19 My safe place



NOTES:

- It is good to have a safe place to go and/or a safe person to talk with.
- People often don't process their emotions well: they avoid them, deny them, shove them in a box, bottle them up, or bury them.
- Many avoid talking about the pain, as they don't have a safe place to express or communicate their feelings. They have learnt that it is not safe to talk about their emotions in public.
- People can choose anaesthesia: drugs, alcohol, sex, retail, overworking - anything to kill the pain. This works for a short while but does not remove the pain.
- Some men retreat into their "Man Cave".
- Women too have their space, their "She Shed".
- Caves have their place as somewhere safe to retreat to where we know we are safe.
- *Shock* can collapse the ability to share our emotional world.

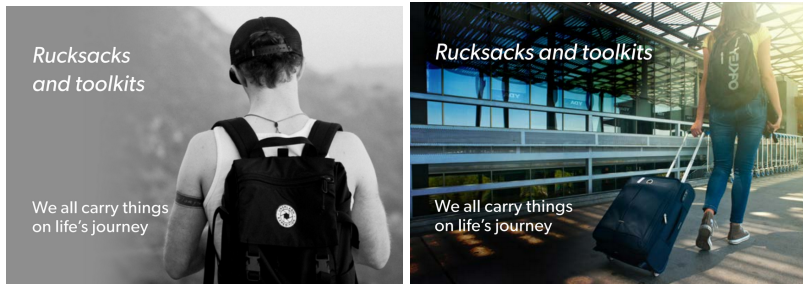
QUESTIONS:

1. What does our cave/shed look like?
2. Are you choosing anaesthesia to help?
3. Is there someone you can talk to openly and honestly in a safe environment?
4. Are you experiencing outbursts of anger?
5. What was your family of origin's way of expressing emotions?
6. Are you just trying to sleep it off?

ACTION POINTS:

- Find a safe place
- Find a safe person to talk with.

CARD 20 Rucksacks and Toolkits



NOTES:

- We all carry rucksacks and tool kits.
- The rucksacks are the burdens that we carry. Things of our family of origin, elements of our life story.
- The toolkits are the things we use to solve problems, ways of understanding and approaches that we have found to work.
- Maybe we have previous experience of bereavement, some helpful some not.
- Although other family members, friends or co-workers have died, we find there is nothing in our tool kit to help us in this grief experience.
- It can seem as though everyone else has a manual but no one has given me one!
- It's helpful to gain some understanding or learning about what a grief landscape can look like.
- It is also good to get some validation of your experience.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is in your toolkit?
2. What things have you found helpful?
3. Were you able to get support?
4. Identify what works for you?
5. Can you get more tools to help?

ACTION POINTS:

- Do an audit of your toolkit.
- Can you recognise a lack? Looking at the other Grief Cards for more tools/learning.

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CARD 21 The thing about time



NOTES:

- People often say, “It’s early days,” “Just give it time,” “Time will heal.”
- This is not true. Time in itself just passes by, it’s what you do with the time that counts.
- For the grieving person time and energy are closely linked. Frequently, both are lacking, or in short supply.
- Sometimes the loss can feel so far away, distant even.
- Sometimes it feels like yesterday.
- The hourglass represents us.
- We need to manage our time well.

QUESTIONS:

1. What does your hourglass look like?
2. Is it half full or half empty?
3. How are you engaging in your Intentional grieving process?
4. How much energy do you have?
5. Are you living moment by moment?

ACTION POINTS:

- Find ways to prioritise well
- Recognise your limits, manage your expectations

CARD 22 *The New You in the New Normal*



NOTES:

- You are now living in a “New Normal.”
- Things will not be the same as they used to be.
- There is a need to define the new you, in the “New Normal.”
- You will need to do good ‘self care’. Look after yourself.
- Give yourself space and time.
- You may feel detached from everything around you, as though you're living in a separate world.
- You can once again be less stricken with grief. It will be possible to engage with life again, in ways that bring you energy.

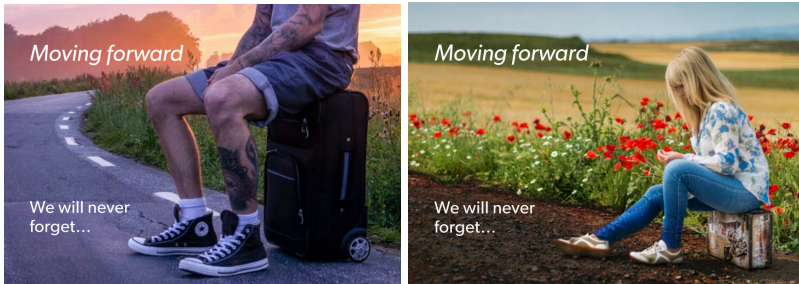
QUESTIONS:

1. What does your ‘new normal’ look like?
2. How are you going to do this?
3. How do you Recharge/Regenerate/Renew?
4. What works for you?
5. What did you used to enjoy doing? Can you try those again?

ACTION POINTS:

- Define some goals.
- Try something new.

CARD 23 Moving forward



NOTES:

- It is not about 'moving on', leaving grief behind..., leaving them behind...
- 'Moving on' also implies movement in any direction, you could be walking in a circle, and end up being stuck.
- It's about **moving forward**, one small step at a time, maybe not even that much. Just taking the next breath. Just keep breathing.
- Moving forward implies direction, somewhere you're aiming for. Find a direction of travel.
- We can get further down the road of grief. It may seem like walking into the unknown.
- It may be hard to believe but hope will return. There is purpose in our lives again, maybe even hope for the future...
- We could even get to a place of acceptance.

QUESTIONS:

1. Do you feel you're moving?
2. Are you just trying to get through from day to day?
3. Do you have any direction, do you know where you're heading?
4. What things are you putting in place to help your journey?
5. Are you in a place of acceptance about some things?
6. Is there any hope in your life? .

ACTION POINTS:

- Start moving down the road gently, explore new avenues.
- Find ways to remember them.

CARD 24 Reaching the light of day



NOTES:

- It can feel such a dark place, this grief.
- All consuming. Overwhelming.
- Will we ever see the sunshine again, a chink of light even?
- Jerry Sittser's mother, wife and daughter were all killed in a car accident, he give the following statement: "The quickest way for anyone to reach the sun and the light of day is not to run west, chasing after the setting sun, but to head east, plunging into the darkness until one comes to the sunrise."
- Many have found this to be a helpful strategy for approaching a grief journey.
- Not to run away from it through Avoidance, Denial or Anesthesia (drugs, alcohol, sex, over work, retail, eating).
- We have choices to make. What we choose will influence the rest of our lives.

QUESTIONS:

1. Where are you reaching?
2. What direction are you heading in?
3. Can you see the sunrise yet?
4. How are you going to move on from this place?
5. What things could you entertain doing in the future?

ACTION POINTS:

- Make a conscious decision/choice.
- Tell someone.

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For more resources visit: LossandLife.org

If you need wider support visit: AtaLoss.org