

BeSAD

(Bereavement, Separation, and Divorce): The Response of Pre-service Teachers to Pupil Well-being

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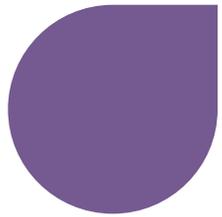
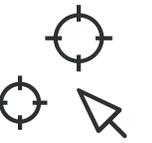


**HIBERNIA
COLLEGE**



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin





Self-care



ROI & NI Bereavement Statistics



43% of 9 years olds had experienced the death of someone important to them (e.g., parent, sibling, grandparent, close friend: Williams et al., 2009).



Lacey et al. (2016) estimate that 8,657 were bereaved of a parent in NI.

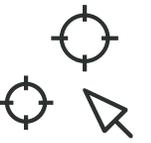
Prevalence of Separation / Divorce

There were **87,704** **separated or divorced** persons living in households with children (CSO, 2016).

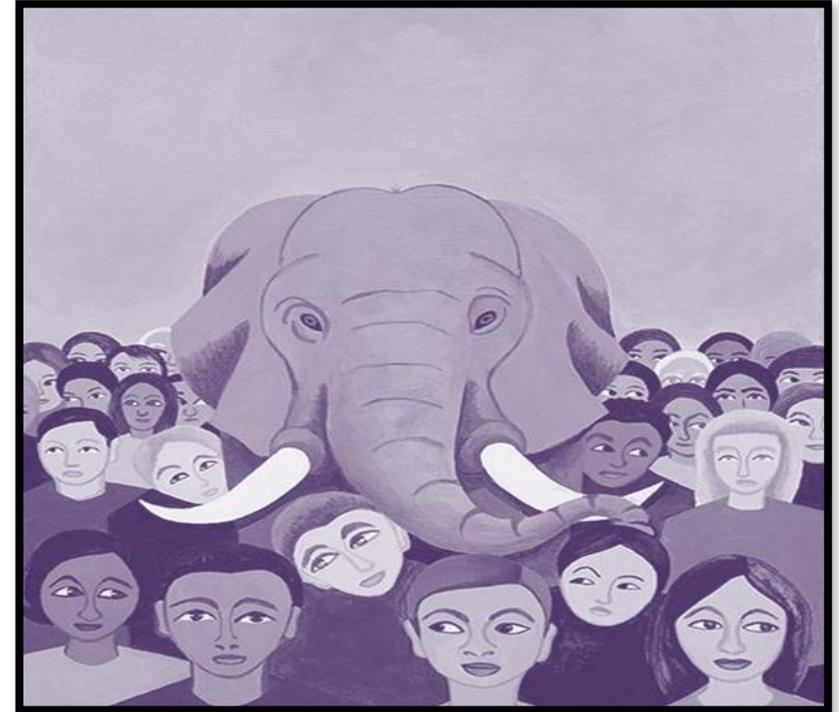


The NISRA (2015) estimate that **4,584** **children and step-children** were **affected by divorce** in 2016.

Elephant in the Room by Terry Kettering



There's an elephant in the room. It is large and squatting, so it is hard to get around it. Yet we squeeze by with, "How are you?" and "I'm fine," and a thousand other forms of trivial chatter. We talk about the weather. We talk about work. We talk about everything else, except the elephant in the room.





Activity

How would you describe 'grief'?

Death of a pet?

**Separation /
Divorce?**

**Death of a
sibling?**

**Loss of a friend
e.g., bullying**

**Death of a
relative or
friend?**

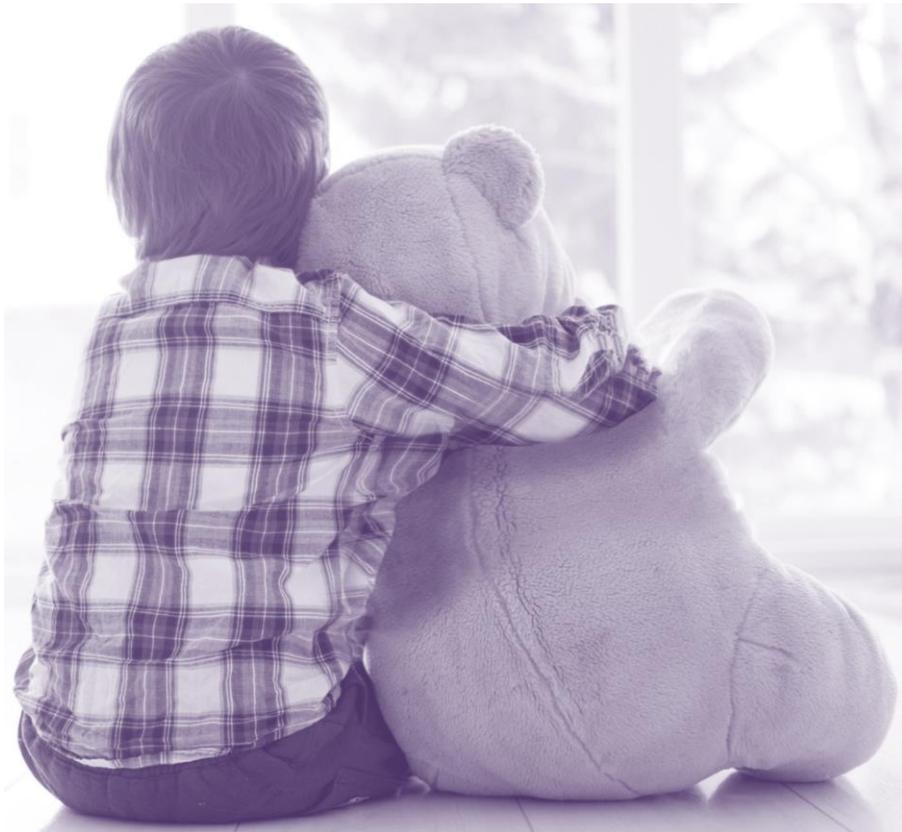
Loss of a job?

**Death of a
parent?**

**Moving to a new
home?**



The Impact of Bereavement



elevated levels of depression

(Melhem, Walker, Moritz, & Brent, 2008; Worden & Silverman, 1996);
generalised anxiety (Kranzler et al., 1990); separation anxiety
(Kaplow et al., 2012);

post-traumatic stress

(Melhem et al., 2008);

and significant adverse
consequences for psychosocial
development, especially the
onset of mood disorders in late
adolescence and young
adulthood

(Breier, Kelsoe, Kirwin, Beller, Wolkowitz, & Pickar, 1988; Tennant,
1988; Kendler, Neale, Kessler, Heath, & Eaves, 1992; Kessler, &
Magee, 1993).

The Impact of Separation / Divorce

... **more emotional problems**, negative feelings, and poorer psychological well-being than pupils from intact families (Amato, 2010).

Financial implications as a result of lower annual incomes (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994).

... **insecurity; loss of self-esteem; repressed feelings of anger and loss**, which are manifested as **aggressive or withdrawn behaviour** McCullough (2009) .

Intrinsic differences between separated and intact families (Block, Block & Gjerde, 1986; Painter & Levine, 2000)



Can have the potential to impact on a pupils' **ability to learn** (Mehana & Reynolds, 2004)

Bereavement vs Separation – common impacts, common differences

Bereavement

- Openly acknowledged
- Publicly mourned
- Socially supported
- Normality of right to grieve
- Raw ,deep sense of loss
- No answers very often
- Devastation
- Loss often unexpected
- A sense of finality

Parental Separation

- Not Openly acknowledged
- Not Publicly mourned
- Not Socially supported
- No perceived right to grieve
- Possibility of stigma
- On going conflict, complexity
- Legal process that is costly and complicated
- No immediate end point



Mentimeter

- Have you met student-teachers or teachers who were confronted with BeSAD on SP?



Sample (N=354)

41% had encountered pupils who
have experienced separation /
divorce

51% had encountered pupils who
have experienced bereavement

Are we our own 'experts' on grief?

Personal intuition was reported as the main way in which respondents support pupils experiencing bereavement and this was closely linked to their own personal experience of death.

When asked how they would support pupils, 77% (NI = 101; RoI = 271) reported that they would rely on personal intuition.



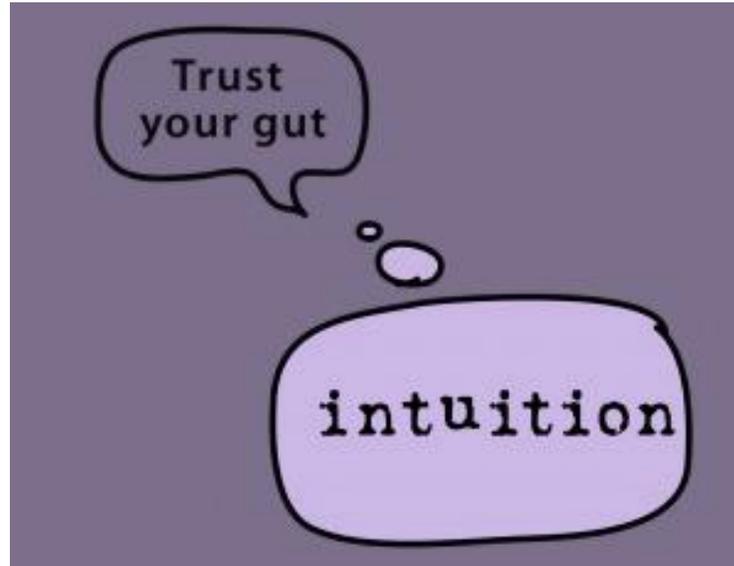
Role of the School

"I had nothing to rely on except my own
experience to help the child in question."
(respondent 34)



Activity 1

- Consider personal intuition. What are the advantages and disadvantages of relying on this?



Fear

"I've had students in session who have children themselves . . . There was a . . . reluctance to deal with this [students saying] I don't want my child to be made sad and so on . . . there's a protectionism there I think . . . that's only one incidence but I suspect that there are others who might feel the same." (participant 2, RoI).



Activity 2

- Consider your experience around dealing with BeSAD issues. Have you encountered student-teachers / teachers who are reluctant to discuss issues relating to BeSAD?
- If so, how can we break down these barriers?
- What knowledge do student-teachers need to have to prepare them for what they meet on SP?



Activity 3: Vignette

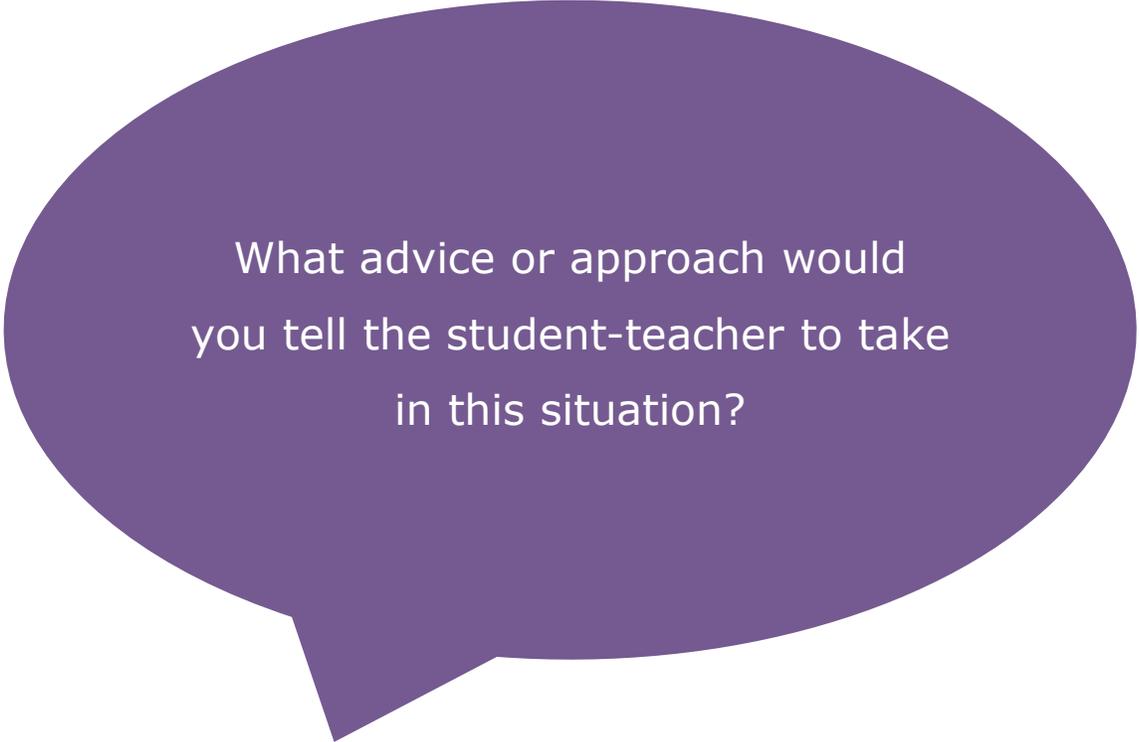
Jane was beginning her first day of a six-week block of substitute teaching in second class. On the morning that she is due to begin the principal arrives at the classroom door to tell her that:

A boy in the class has been acting out as a result of a difficult divorce that his parents are going through.

What advice or approach would you tell the student-teacher to take in this situation?



Activity 3: Mentimeter



What advice or approach would you tell the student-teacher to take in this situation?

Practical

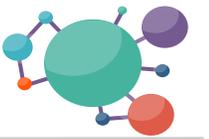
- Journal
- Memory box
- Feelings jar
- Scrap book
- Poetry
- Music – song
- Painting
- Planting
- Physical activity
- Drama
- Bibliotherapy



Activity: Bibliotherapy

Discuss the book handed out to you.
(1) Is this suitable to use in a class?
(2) How could this be integrated into the curriculum?





Do you know any theories about grief?





shock



denial



anger

*the 7 stages of
grief/loss meme,
featuring...*

**HOMER J.
SIMPSON**



fear



depression



bargaining



acceptance



Grief Theory



Freud



Lindemann



Kübler-Ross



Worden

Freud (1917) 'Mourning and Melancholia'

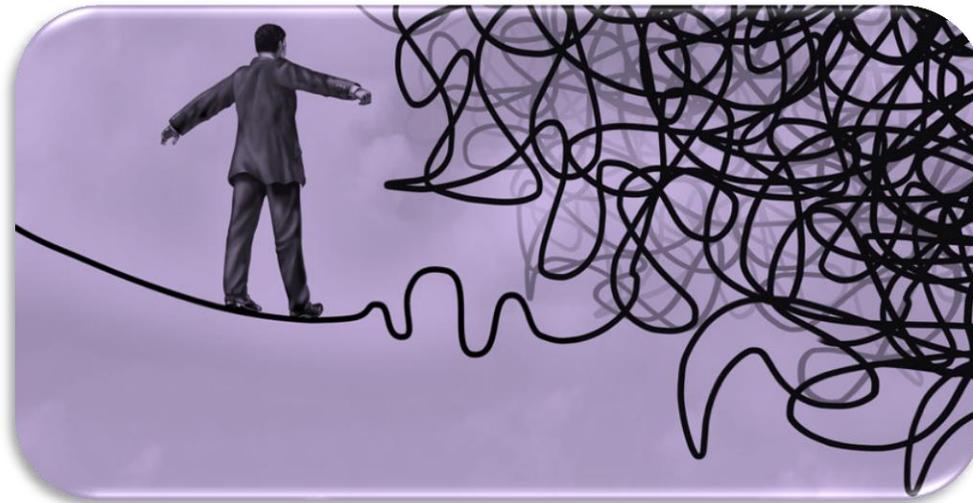
One of the first to set out a theory.

There had to be total detachment from the deceased.

If not done within three to four months was seen as pathological – i.e. could be institutionalised.

Freud did highlight grief and mourning as a vital psychological function.

Stimulated interest in this whole area.



GRIEF WORK

Erich Lindemann

grief tasks

1

**emancipation
from bondage
to the
deceased**

2

**readjustment to a
new environment
in which the
deceased is
missing**

3

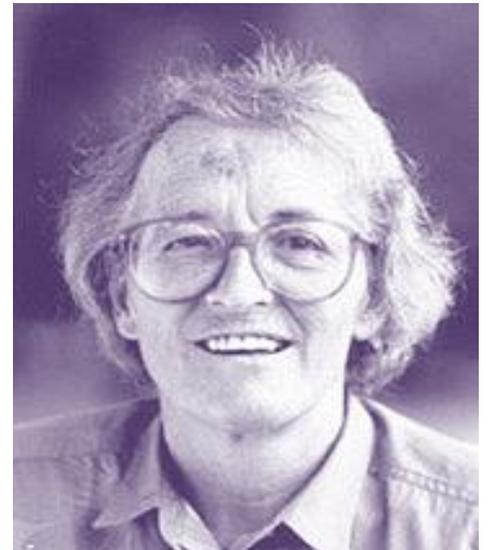
**formation
of new
relationships**

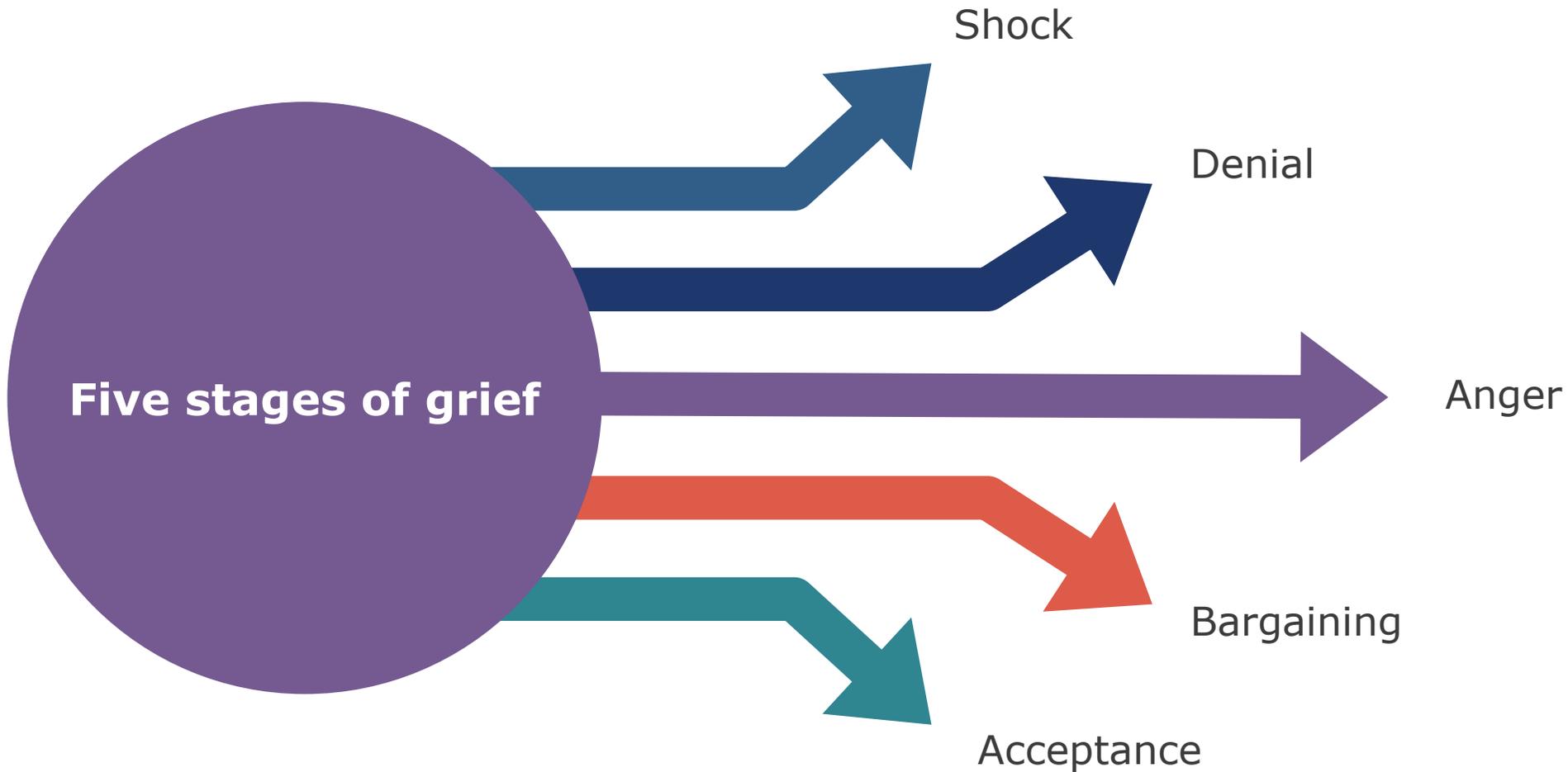
Elizabeth Kubler-Ross Stages of Grief (1969)

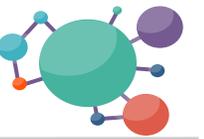
Many people today still refer to the stages of grief.

Provided a set of steps/stages for grief.

Theories today have expanded, built on the stages new theoretical understanding of grief and loss have emerged.





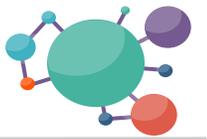


Tasks of grieving (Worden, 1991,1996)

- To accept the reality of the loss
- To work through the pain of grief
- To adjust to an environment in which the deceased is missing
- To emotionally relocate the deceased and move on with life



Newer Theoretical models



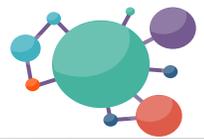
Dual process model (Stroebe and Schut)



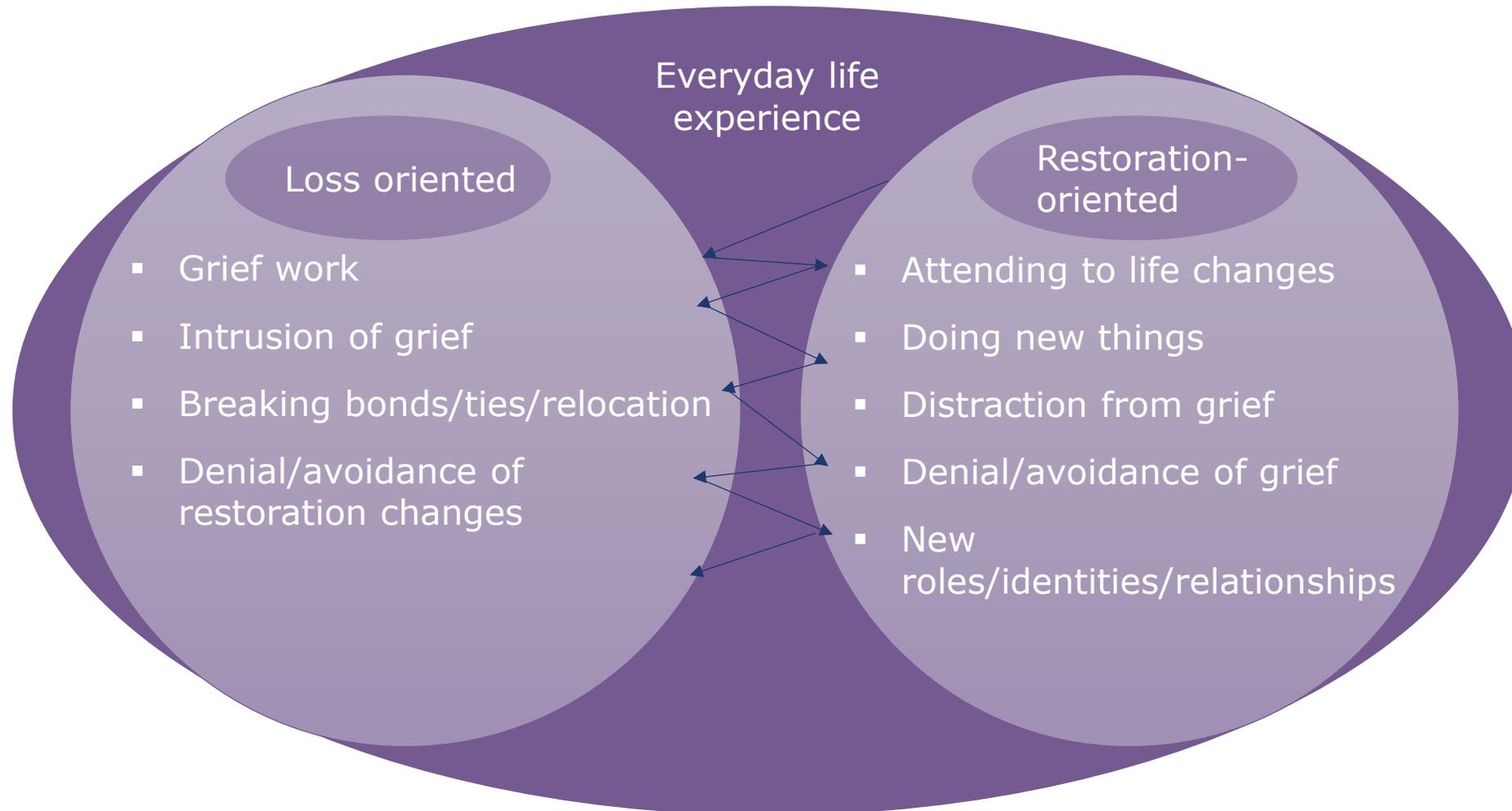
Continuing bonds (Silverman and Klass)

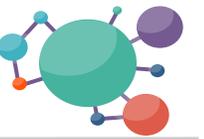


Narrative work (Neimeyer)
Meaning Making



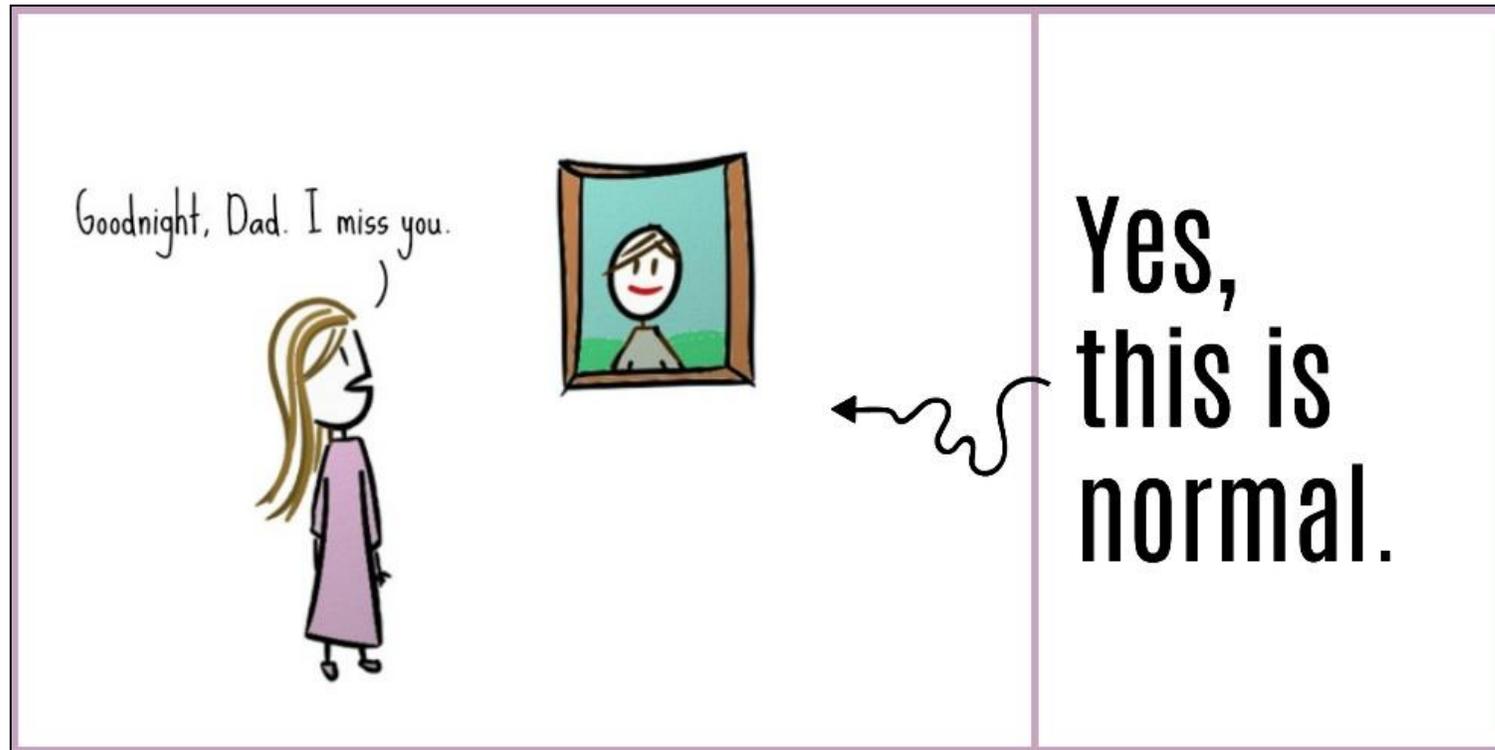
Dual process model of coping with significant loss Strobe and Schut (1994, 1998)





Continuing Bonds (Klass, Silverman & Nickman, 1996)

- Healthy resolution of grief enables one to maintain a continuing bond with the deceased.
- The deceased can provide resources for enriched functioning in the present.
- Continuing bonds are not denial





Neimeyer (2001)

- Neimeyer (2001) refers to the story of a person's life as a book.
- After a bereavement, the chapters yet to be written are ripped out of the book, and he likens this to the significance of the loss, with the physical presence of the loved one now gone.
- The aim of those supporting the bereaved is to allow the griever to build new meanings into life after death: 'a new narrative'

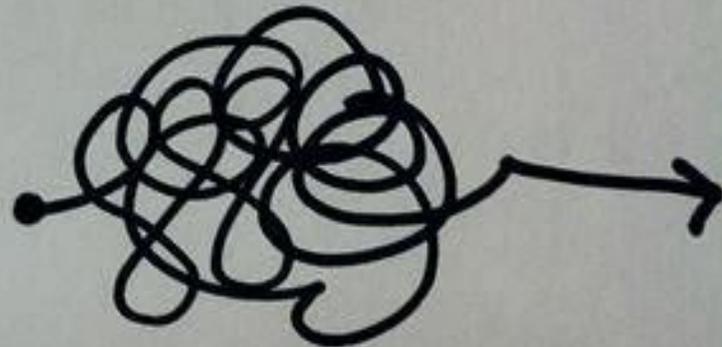




HOW WE
WANT
GRIEF TO
WORK



HOW GRIEF
ACTUALLY
WORKS



Empathy



Recommendations

"... it would be useful if evidence-informed approaches to support the development of coping skills and empathy were used to inform lesson plan development and resources."

Empathy Video



Activity 5: Empathy

- Do our ITE programmes include enough content to train teachers to deal with BeSAD issues using empathy?
- What improvements would you like to see in ITE programmes in relation to BeSAD issues and empathy?
- Where would BeSAD issues and empathy fit in to an already overloaded ITE programme?

The Research



Why BeSAD?

Previous research has explored the experiences of **qualified teachers** so as to ascertain how they approach BeSAD issues in their classroom.

No research that has examined the number of incidents in which **pre-service teachers** have encountered pupils experiencing BeSAD issues, while on placement, and how they acknowledge or approach this issue.



Methodology

Phase One

Pre-service teachers (N=354) from Hibernia College, Stranmillis University College Belfast, St Mary's University Belfast, Queen's University Belfast and Trinity College Dublin

Phase Two

Interviews conducted with experts (N=6) from NI and RoI



Key Recommendations for ITE

Appropriate and consistent instruction at ITE is needed to ensure all teachers have evidence-informed knowledge about the impact of BeSAD

Further consider how to facilitate the growth and development of teachers as individuals and professionals

Communication and partnership with parents and the community



Key Recommendations for Policymakers

Directions from the respective Departments of Education in NI and RoI and support in the form of policy templates is required to provide both the top-down and bottom-up approach.

Whole school approaches and policies are needed to support teachers in the classroom.

Review of ITE & CPD training



Review of curricula

Support services linked to schools

“I have had the experience of a child's parent being diagnosed with a serious illness and was not sure how to deal with this exactly” (respondent 247).



Community support



Quotes

"It is out there in the voluntary and statutory sector and it is the idea that you are not in the classroom on your own, there are lots of networks that you can tap into"

"My observation is that in the Catholic Maintained sector they cope better with bereavement in some ways because they have more community structure "

" I think that...people recovering from bereavement is a community response"

Activity 8

- Can you consider the role that the community plays to support children and families in your area. What role do they currently play in initial training, how can we use their expertise more effectively?
- An interesting comment came regarding the role that the church plays in supporting children and families in schools. Should we be using the church more to support initial training, what is your experience of the role that the church plays in schools around BeSAD issues?

Questions?

Thank you

