



A pet



A person



The state of the world



A relationship



An identity

THIS IS GRIEF

A gentle guide
for individuals
and families



A safe place



An imagined future



Independence



Palliative Care
Tasmania

First published by Palliative Care Tasmania in 2025
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Illustrations by Stephanie Spartels www.studiospartels.com

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Cover and internal design by Stephanie Spartels

This resource was created by Palliative Care Tasmania and
funded by the Tasmanian Department of Health.

When citing this resource, please use the following citation:

Sanders, J. (2025). *This Is Grief*. Illustrated by S. Spartels.
Palliative Care Tasmania. Funded by the Tasmanian Department
of Health. <https://www.pallcaretas.org.au>

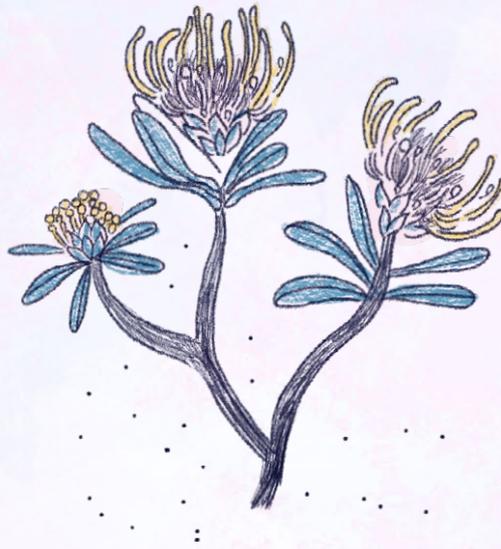
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Dedicated to the
58 people who generously shared
their stories of grief and loss with us.
Your insights and reflections shaped
the contents of this book.

GRIEF, i've learned, is really
just LOVE. it's all the love
you want to give, but cannot.
All of that unspent love gathers
in the corners of your eyes,
the lump in your throat, and
in the hollow part of your chest.
Grief is just love with
no place to go.

JAMIE ANDERSON



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the lands on which this resource was written – the unceded lands of the Palawa people in Nipaluna and the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation, where it was illustrated.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and we extend our gratitude to the Aboriginal people who generously contributed to this resource. We acknowledge that the ongoing and intergenerational grief experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is a direct result of colonisation. We also recognise and honour the incredible strength, resilience and enduring connection to Country, culture and identity.

Always was, always will be,
Aboriginal land.

**YOU CAN GRIEVE ANYTHING YOU VALUE.
YOU CAN GRIEVE ...**



A PET



A PERSON



**An
IDENTITY**



A PLACE



The loss
of your
INDEPENDENCE



The way
your life used
to **LOOK**



An imagined
FUTURE



The **STATE**
of the
WORLD



A RELATIONSHIP



GRIEF contains many emotions;
often you are feeling multiple emotions at once.
These are just some of the
emotions you can feel
during your grieving
journey ...





Anxiety

Overwhelm

FEAR

PANIC

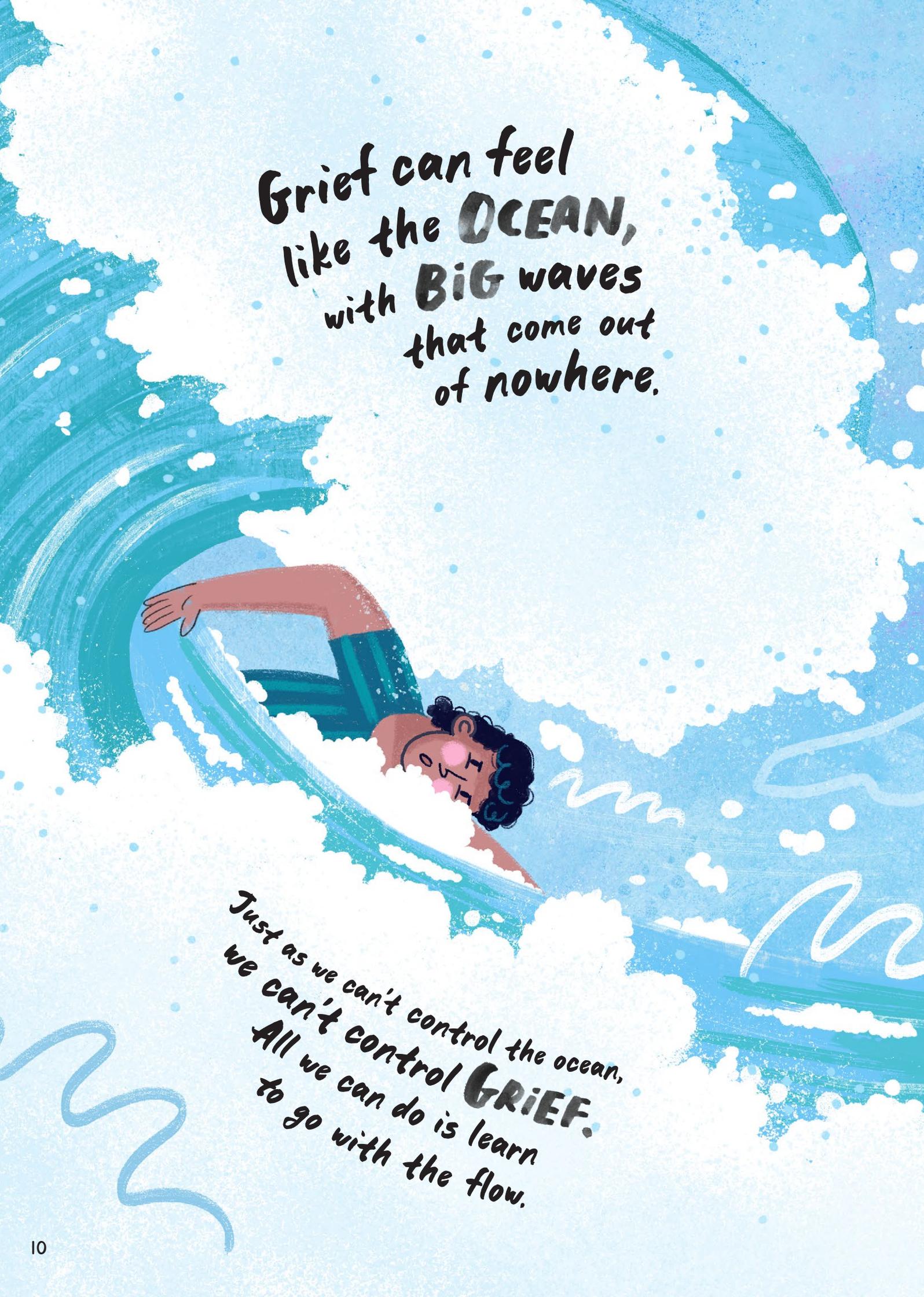
JEALOUSY

DESPAIR

RELIEF

Numbness

HOPELESSNESS

A vibrant, stylized illustration of a person surfing a large, curling wave. The surfer is positioned in the center, riding the face of the wave. The wave is depicted with thick, expressive brushstrokes in shades of blue and green, with white foam at the top. The background is a light blue sky with scattered white dots, suggesting a bright, sunny day. The overall style is artistic and expressive, with a focus on movement and color.

Grief can feel
like the **OCEAN**,
with **BiG** waves
that come out
of nowhere.

Just as we can't control the ocean,
we can't control **GRIEF**.
All we can do is learn
to go with the flow.

Grief can feel like an
**INVISIBLE
BACKPACK**
that you
carry around
each day.



SOME DAYS it might weigh you down to
the point where you find it hard to get out of bed.
Other days it's a light pressure on your shoulders.

MANY PEOPLE FEEL GRIEF IN THEIR BODIES.

Some
describe feeling
empty, or as if
there is a

BIG HOLE
IN THEIR
CHEST.





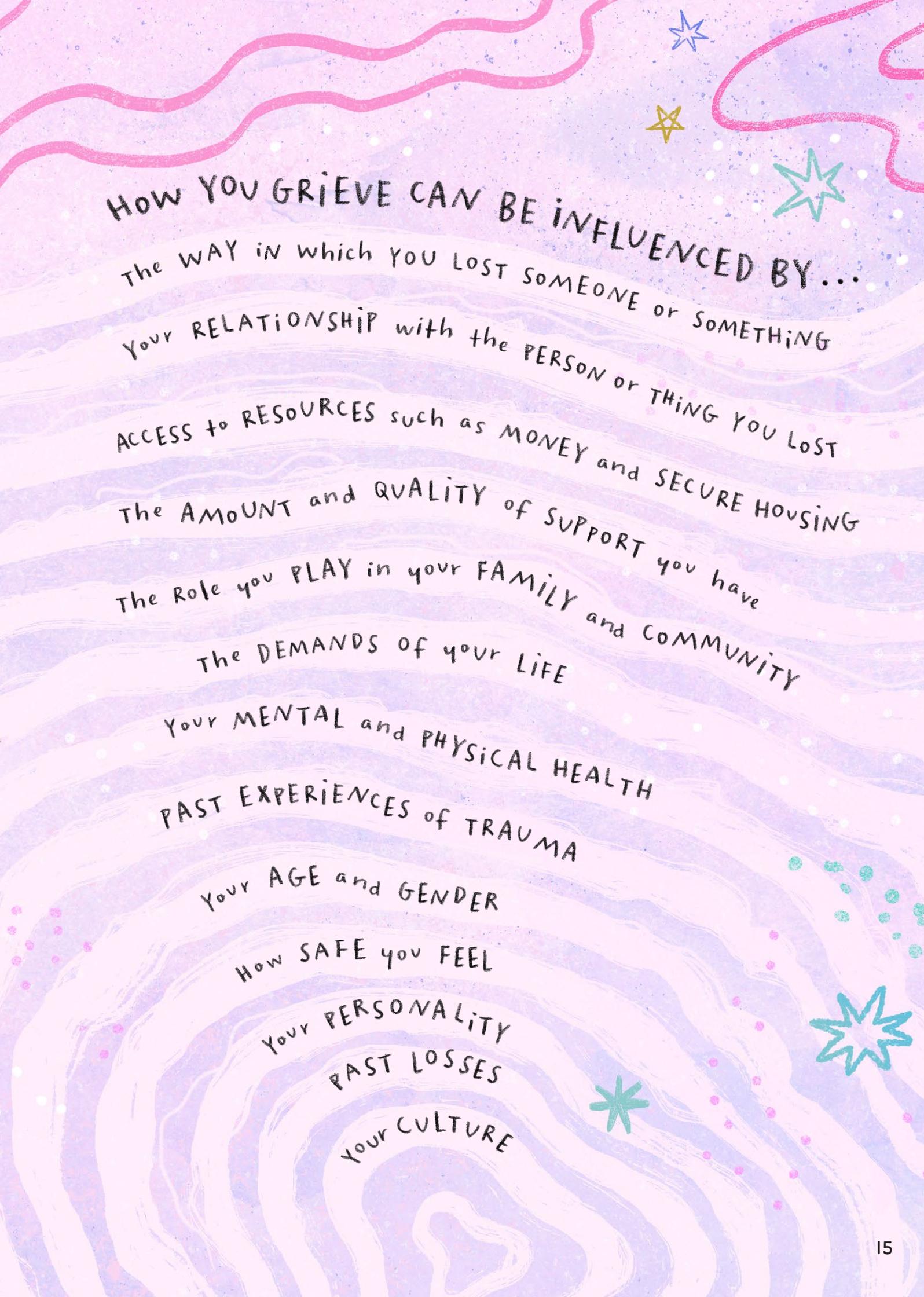
OTHERS
say they
FEEL HEAVY,
EXHAUSTED

or FOGGY.

HEADACHES or
STOMACH ACHES are
also common in GRIEF.

A large, stylized hand in shades of orange and brown is shown with a black outline. The palm side of the hand is visible, and a large, detailed fingerprint is drawn on it. The background is a vibrant, abstract composition of light purple and pink wavy lines, interspersed with various colorful stars (blue, green, yellow, pink) and small dots. The overall style is whimsical and artistic.

**YOUR GRIEF IS
UNIQUE,
JUST LIKE YOUR
FINGERPRINT**



HOW YOU GRIEVE CAN BE INFLUENCED BY...

The WAY in which you LOST SOMEONE or SOMETHING

Your RELATIONSHIP with the PERSON or THING you LOST

ACCESS to RESOURCES such as MONEY and SECURE HOUSING

The AMOUNT and QUALITY of SUPPORT you have

The ROLE you PLAY in your FAMILY and COMMUNITY

The DEMANDS of your LIFE

Your MENTAL and PHYSICAL HEALTH

PAST EXPERIENCES of TRAUMA

Your AGE and GENDER

How SAFE you FEEL

Your PERSONALITY

PAST LOSSES

Your CULTURE

GRIEF is a normal part of life; your grief does not need to fit neatly under a category label. However, labels and categories can be useful in helping us to better understand our experience.

ANTICIPATORY GRIEF

You can grieve something, or someone, that is still here. Anticipatory grief is the grief that comes before the loss. For example, the grief you feel when you are told your person has months left to live.



PRIMARY AND SECONDARY LOSSES

When we lose someone or something important to us, we don't just experience a single primary loss, we experience many losses over a lifetime. Secondary losses can look like grieving that your person cannot walk you down the aisle, or grieving the way you thought your life was going to turn out.



COMPLEX GRIEF

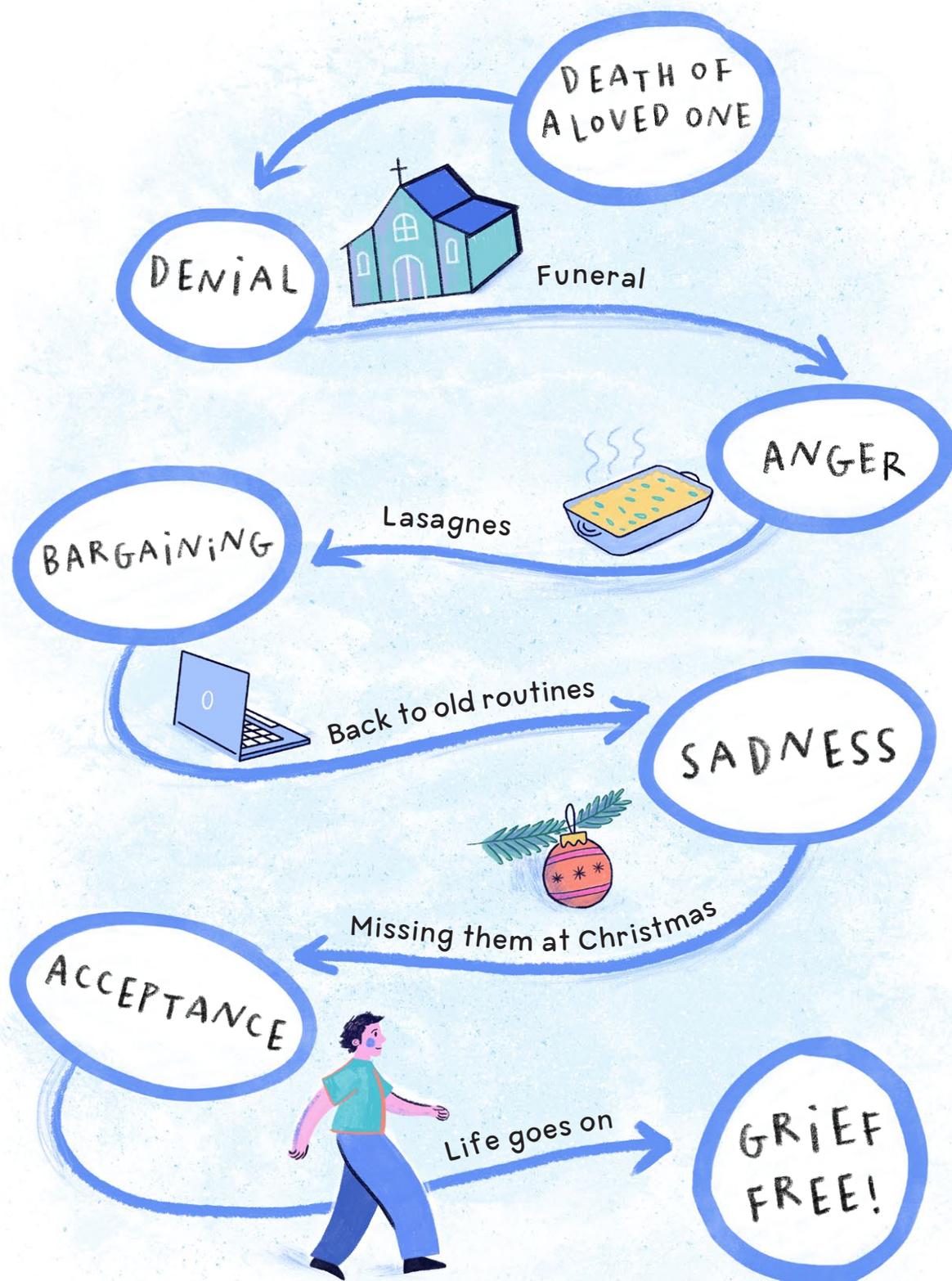
Most people will be able to move through their grief with the support of the people around them. Many of the losses we experience can be navigated without professional support. However, there are things that can lead to more challenging or complex grief, such as unexpected or traumatic losses, a history of physical or mental health issues, or experiencing lots of losses close together. Challenging or complicated grief can make it difficult to connect with others, manage our feelings, or take care of our bodies. This can happen months or even years after someone we love has died, and it can make everyday life feel really hard. If you feel like you can't do the things you need and want to do, it can be a good idea to seek additional forms of support. Head to page 39 to find support.



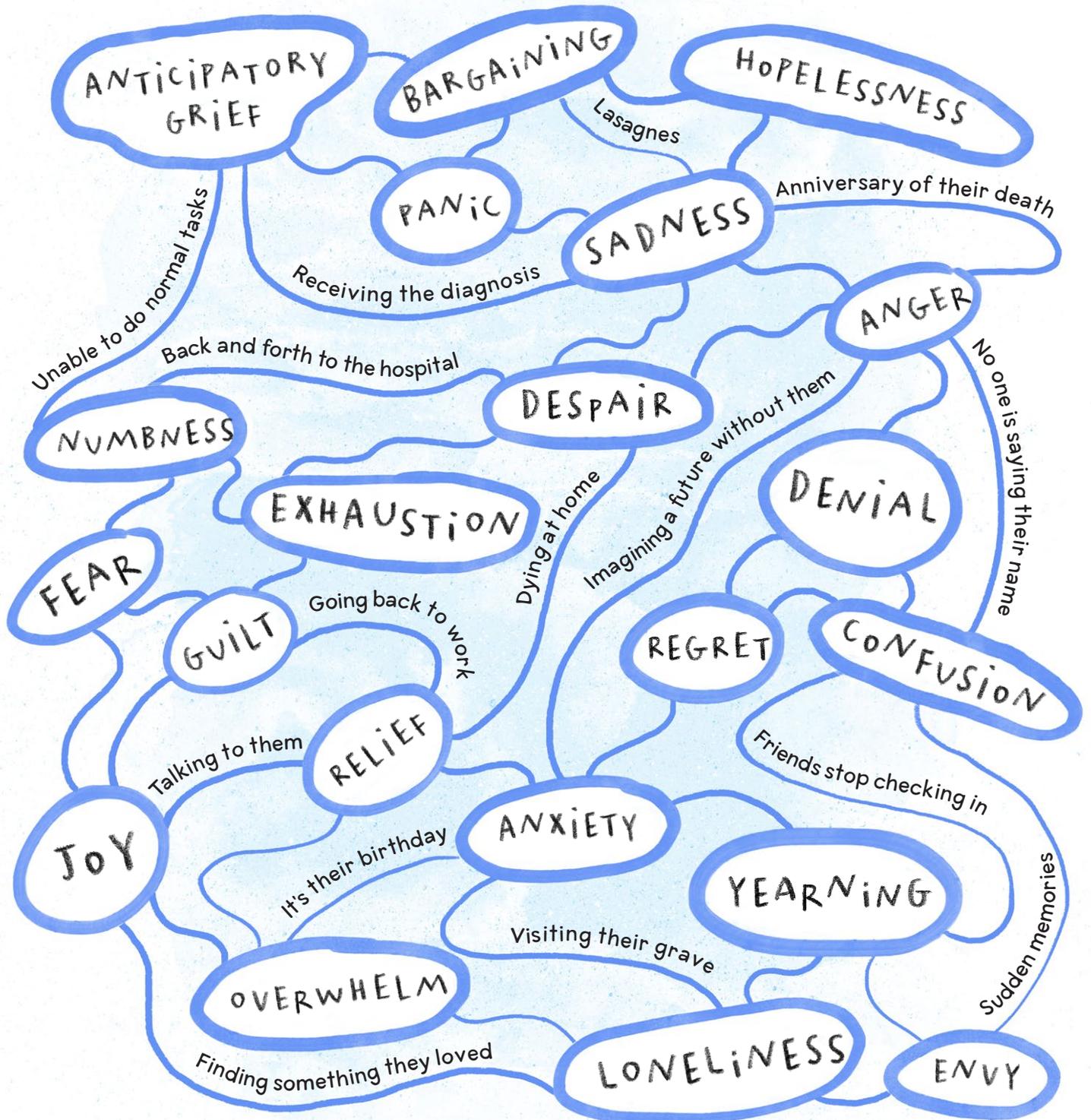
DISENFRANCHISED GRIEF

Disenfranchised grief is the experience of feeling that you do not have the right to grieve in the way you need to. For example, you feel that you shouldn't be so upset because you weren't the closest person to them, or you shouldn't take bereavement leave because they were 'just a pet'.

WHAT MOST PEOPLE THINK THE GRIEVING JOURNEY LOOKS LIKE...



WHAT SOMEONE'S GRIEVING JOURNEY ACTUALLY LOOKS LIKE...



There is no TIME FRAME for grieving; everyone will grieve at their OWN PACE, and everyone's path looks a little DIFFERENT.



IF YOU FEEL STUCK IN YOUR GRIEF AND WOULD LIKE SUPPORT HEAD TO PAGE 39



A hand with a light skin tone is shown from the side, holding a large, stylized flower with multiple layers of petals. The background is a warm, textured peach color, decorated with various hand-drawn elements: small blue and orange flowers, green leaves, and clusters of small circles. The overall style is soft and illustrative.

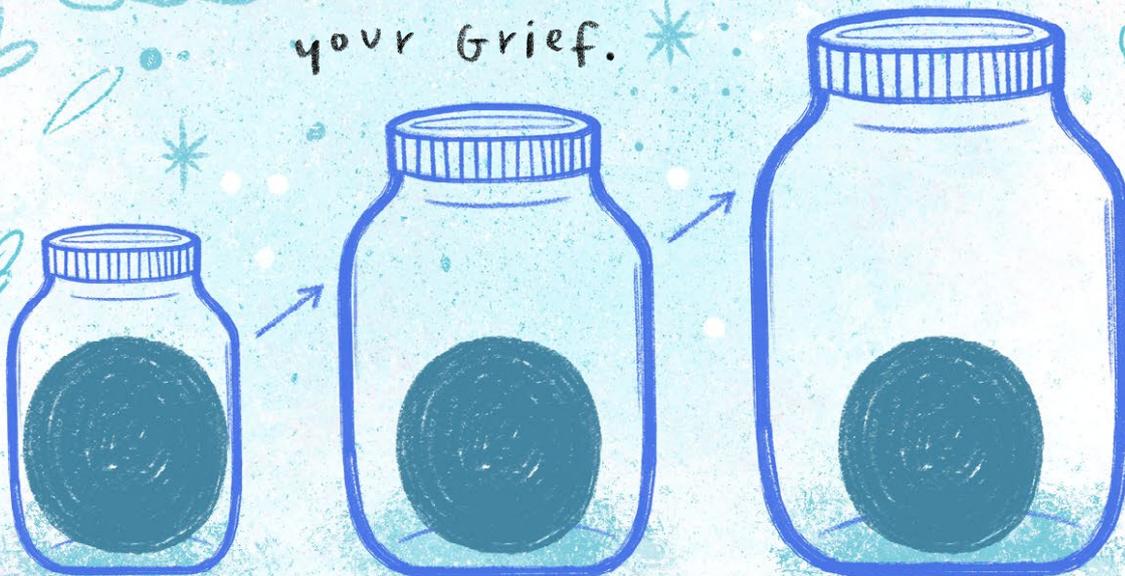
**TAKE A MOMENT
TO BREATHE.**

**YOU CAN REST
HERE.**

Dr. Lois Tonkin, a grief counsellor,
has a theory that grief
DOESN'T shrink over time,



instead, you
GROW AROUND
your Grief.





Sometimes the jar may shrink, and that ball of grief can feel BIG again. This might happen on an ANNIVERSARY, when you hear a certain SONG or smell a certain SMELL.

it's NORMAL for grief to CHANGE over time. However, if you find that your grief remains BIG and HEAVY for a LONG PERIOD of time, it can be helpful to speak to your GP or seek GRIEF SUPPORT. Head to page 39 to find support near you.

GRIEVERS TOLD US THESE ARE SOME OF THE THINGS THAT HELPED THEM...



Being on **COUNTRY**



Listening to **MUSIC**

Talking about my **LOSS** with people who understand



Participating in **ARTS** and **CULTURE**



Being in the presence of people who truly **LISTEN**



Seeing a professional therapist

Continuing to **SPEAK** to the person I've lost



A person in a blue long-sleeved shirt and blue pants with a yellow stripe down the side is watering a plant. They are holding a blue watering can high above their head, and a stream of water is pouring out. The background is dark blue with white stars and yellow dots.

Getting
INVOLVED
in my local
community

Three people are sitting in a circle on the floor. One person is wearing a blue shirt and purple pants, another is wearing a blue shirt with a yellow heart on it, and the third is wearing a green shirt and black pants. They appear to be in conversation.

Yarning circles, safe places
to come and **SHARE**

A person with dark curly hair is hugging another person from behind. The person being hugged is wearing a blue shirt with a pink heart on it. The background is dark blue with white stars and yellow dots.

Time and
space to
stop and
BREATHE

**WARM
HUGS**

A person with blue hair in a ponytail is walking. They are wearing a green long-sleeved shirt and purple pants with a yellow stripe down the side. The background is dark blue with white stars and yellow dots.

WALKING
and moving
my body

Two orange hearts with black outlines are walking. Each heart has two arms and two legs. They are walking towards the right. The background is dark blue with white stars and yellow dots.

Spending time with
GOOD FRIENDS

YOUR CIRCLE OF SUPPORT

Professional support from a qualified practitioner can be an incredibly helpful tool to support your grieving journey. However, it's important to remember that support from a professional is just one piece of your support.

Everyone's support needs look a little different. This is an example of what a circle of support could look like:



It's rare for us to have every piece of our circle of support in place. The circle is here to give you something to work towards and to help you reflect on what you need.

Some of these support areas or activities might feel out of

reach for you, and that's okay. Everyone's grief is different, go at your own pace.

As you grow around your grief, you will keep learning about the kinds of support you need; your circle of support may change as you do.

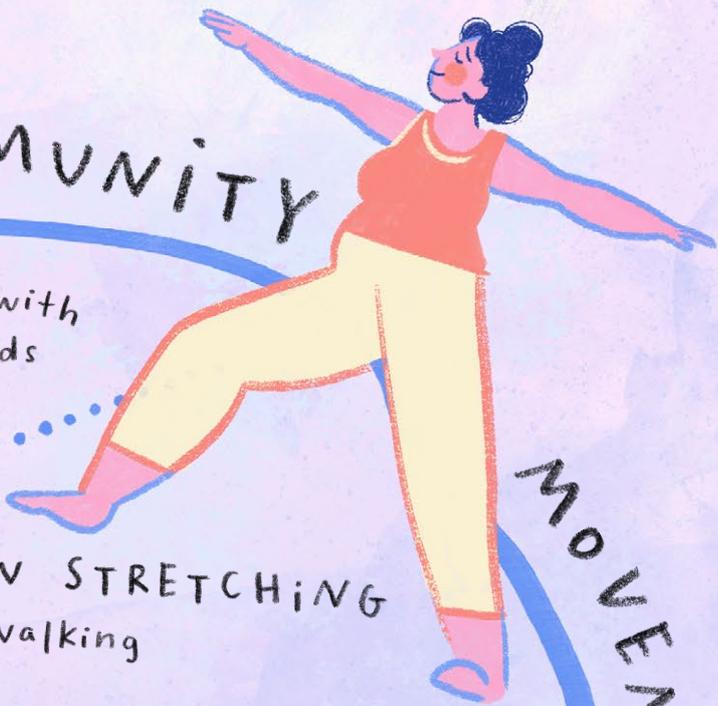


COMMUNITY



Spending time with people who understand

Walks with friends



SLOW STRETCHING
walking

MOVEMENT



Seeing my GP regularly

Speaking to a mental health professional



PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT



DOWNLOAD THIS FREE RESOURCE TO MAKE YOUR OWN CIRCLE OF SUPPORT.



**CREATIVITY AND RITUAL ARE POWERFUL
WAYS TO EXPRESS AND HONOUR GRIEF.
YOU MIGHT LIKE TO ...**



Express your grief
through **CREATIVITY**



Practise your **FAITH**
and express your
CULTURE



Light a
CANDLE

Create a **RITUAL**
that brings your
community together



Visit their **FAVOURITE** spot;
you might also like to
talk to them out loud
or in your mind



WRITE or
JOURNAL



Create a
MEMORY
BOX



SUPPORTING A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON THROUGH GRIEF

- * When going through grief, children and young people need to be able to consistently access safe spaces and safe people.
- * They should be included and given the choice to attend gatherings and funerals. They can benefit from being given a small role such as making a drawing for their loved one, or placing flowers on the casket.
- * It's important to give them information about what is happening, such as 'what death means', or 'what happens at a funeral'. It's best to share this information in small pieces over time as young people can become overwhelmed.
- * Be ready to have lots of small conversations about the loss and their feelings rather than one 'big conversation'.
- * Ask them what they need and provide them with choice and agency wherever possible. For example, 'what do you need at school to feel comfortable?' or 'what would you like to do for your dad?'

Children will jump in and out of grief more quickly than adults. They might be sad one moment and seeking a distraction the next.



When a child jumps into a PUDDLE of grief, the best thing you can do is RESIST the urge to pull them out, and instead, JUMP IN the grief puddle with them.



When in the grief puddle, don't try to fix their feelings – allow them to feel them. Try to be calm and curious, and ask questions when it feels right.

It might not seem like it, but sitting in a grief puddle with a child helps them to be more resilient through grief.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES ON SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH GRIEF HEAD TO





GOING THROUGH GRIEF AS A FAMILY

Grief support for children and young people starts with supporting yourself. This might feel nearly impossible given the demands of family and work in addition to the weight of your own grief. The reality is, we were never meant to go through grief alone. We need each other, and

must lean on our support systems during tough times.

Support looks a little different for everyone. If you go back to pages 26-27 you can use the prompts to reflect on what holistic support could look like for you. To find professional support, head to page 39.

Children and young people need to know that you can hold both your grief and theirs.

If they are worried about you, they might push their emotions away because they don't want to be a burden to you or their siblings.

Let them know that you are supported by other adults, and that it's not their job to support you.

Reassuring them that you are supported does not mean you have to hide your emotions from them – it is also important to share your grief with them, as it gives them permission to share their own.



**CONNECTION
OVER
PERFECTION**

ACKNOWLEDGING A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER'S LOSS

It's normal to feel unsure about how to acknowledge the grief of a friend or family member. Most of us were not taught how to have these kinds of conversations.

Many of the community members we spoke to told us they were deeply hurt by friends and family members who said nothing about their loss, or who actively moved away from them.

This usually happens because people don't know what to say, fear saying the wrong thing, or wrongly assume the griever needs 'space'.

HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU COULD SAY:

- * How are you doing today?' (avoid 'how are you going?' as it can be overwhelming)
- * Is it okay if I keep checking in on you each week?
- * I've been thinking of you.
- * I don't have the right words, but I'm here for you.
- * I'm so sorry for your loss.

HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU SHOULD AVOID SAYING:

- * Anything that begins with 'at least'.
- * They are in a better place now.
- * Just stay strong.
- * It was meant to be.
- * Just give it time.

Unfortunately, there are no perfect words. What matters most is you move towards grievers, not away.

RARELY can a response
make things better.
What makes things better
is connection.

BRENÉ BROWN

SUPPORTING SOMEONE THROUGH GRIEF

Don't try to fix it – focus less on solutions, and more on being present and listening.



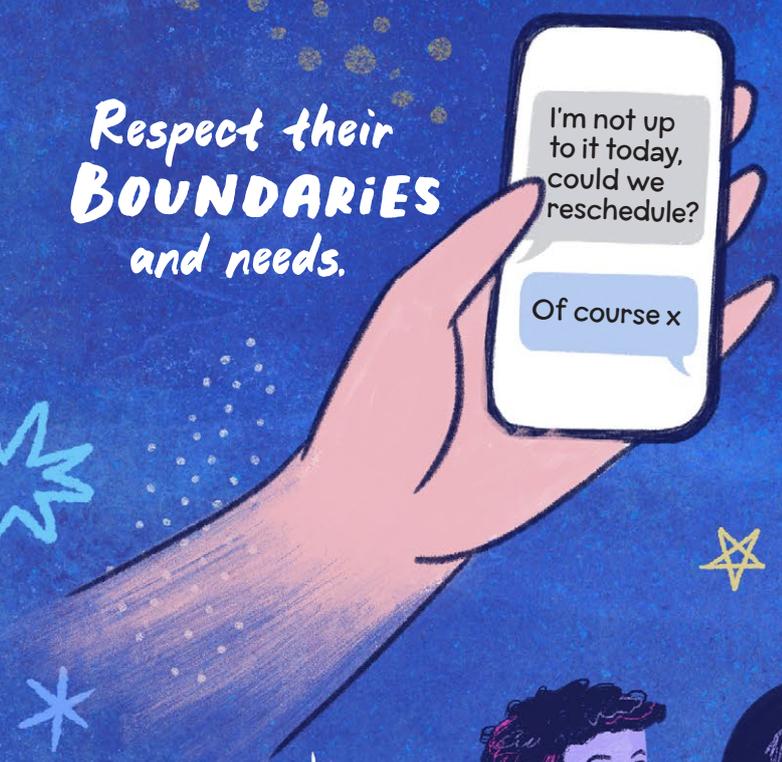
INSTEAD of saying 'let me know if you need anything', offer a menu of support options for them to choose from.



Be mindful of **KEY DATES** like birthdays and anniversaries.



Respect their
BOUNDARIES
and needs.



I'm not up
to it today,
could we
reschedule?

Of course x

Keep **SHOWING UP**, and just
be there – that could look
like going for a walk,
CLEANING, or
watching a **FILM**
together.



Ask if you can use their person's
NAME. Some grievors want to
hear their person's name; for
others it is uncomfortable
or culturally unsafe.





We have come to the end of this BOOK,
but this doesn't have to be the end
of your LEARNING. There are so many
incredible PEOPLE, PLACES and RESOURCES
to SUPPORT you in continuing to
learn about GRIEF.

SCAN THE QR CODE OR FOLLOW
THE LINK TO KEEP EXPLORING.



[https://pallcaretas.org.au/qr/
additional-grief-resources](https://pallcaretas.org.au/qr/additional-grief-resources)

NATIONAL SUPPORT LINES

GRIEFLINE (8am-8pm)

Grief support for anyone who needs it.

Ages 15+

Phone: 1300 845 745

BEYOND BLUE (24/7)

Ages 5+

Free mental health support, anytime.

Phone: 1300 22 4636

Web chat available.

QLIFE (3pm-Midnight)

All ages LGBTIQ+ peer support.

Phone: 1800 184 527

Web chat available.

KIDS HELPLINE (24/7)

Ages 5 to 25

Support any time, for any reason.

Phone: 1800 55 1800

Web chat: www.kidshelpline.com.au

13YARN (24/7)

If you or someone you know are feeling worried or no good, you can call 13yarn and talk with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Crisis Supporter.

Phone: 13 92 76

Web chat available.

RED NOSE (24/7)

Red Nose offers support for those affected by the death of a baby or child including through miscarriage, medical termination, stillbirth and newborn death.

Phone: 1300 308 307

Web chat available.

FIND LOCAL SUPPORTS NEAR YOU



<https://pallcaretas.org.au/qr/national-grief-support-directory>

This resource was developed by Palliative Care Tasmania and funded by The Tasmanian Department of Health.

Palliative Care Tasmania would like to acknowledge the 58 Tasmanians who generously shared their stories and whose insights shaped this resource.

*No matter what kind of loss
you've experienced or where you are
in your grief, this book is for you.*

Grief can be confusing and overwhelming.
At times, it can feel impossible to know
how you'll get through. This book doesn't
have all the answers — but it's a
gentle place to start.

We hope it helps you to find your
path through grief, in your own way
and in your own time.



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Tasmanian
Government