

Grief and Loss During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Grief and Loss During the COVID-19 Pandemic

We have all experienced grief and loss during the pandemic

Death of family and friends

Cancellation of special events (e.g. trips)

Cancellation of programs and activities (e.g. sports leagues, day programs)

Unable to see family and friends

Reflection

Let's take a moment to breathe and remember



"4 Seasons - tree-lined drive" by rkramer62 is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Grief Impacts the Whole Person



Emotional

Anger
Sadness
Worry
Guilt
Relief
Loneliness
Irritability



Psychological

Confusion
Questioning
Forgetfulness
Trouble concentrating
Difficulty making decisions



Physical

Aches and pains
Change in sleep
Change in appetite



Behavioural

Withdraw
Difficulty being alone
Avoiding certain activities
Seek comfort / routine



Spiritual

Question beliefs
Take comfort in spiritual practices

TEAR Model of Grief

COVID-19 Challenges

- May be harder to accept the reality if you are unable to participate in the funeral/memorial services
- Limited social support while during the grieving process
- Can be harder to find new enriching activities
- Ambiguous grief: no clarity and hard to define some losses

TEAR Model Of Grief



PSYCHOLOGYTOOLS*

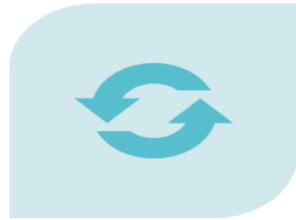
Based upon Worden's (1991) tasks of mourning:
Worden, J.W. (1991). *Grief Counseling and grief therapy: A handbook for the mental health practitioner* (2nd edition). London: Springer. Copyright © 2020 Psychology Tools Limited. All rights reserved.

Supporting Clients

Key Tips



BE CONCRETE



**REPEAT
INFORMATION**



**ENCOURAGE
EMOTIONAL
EXPRESSION**

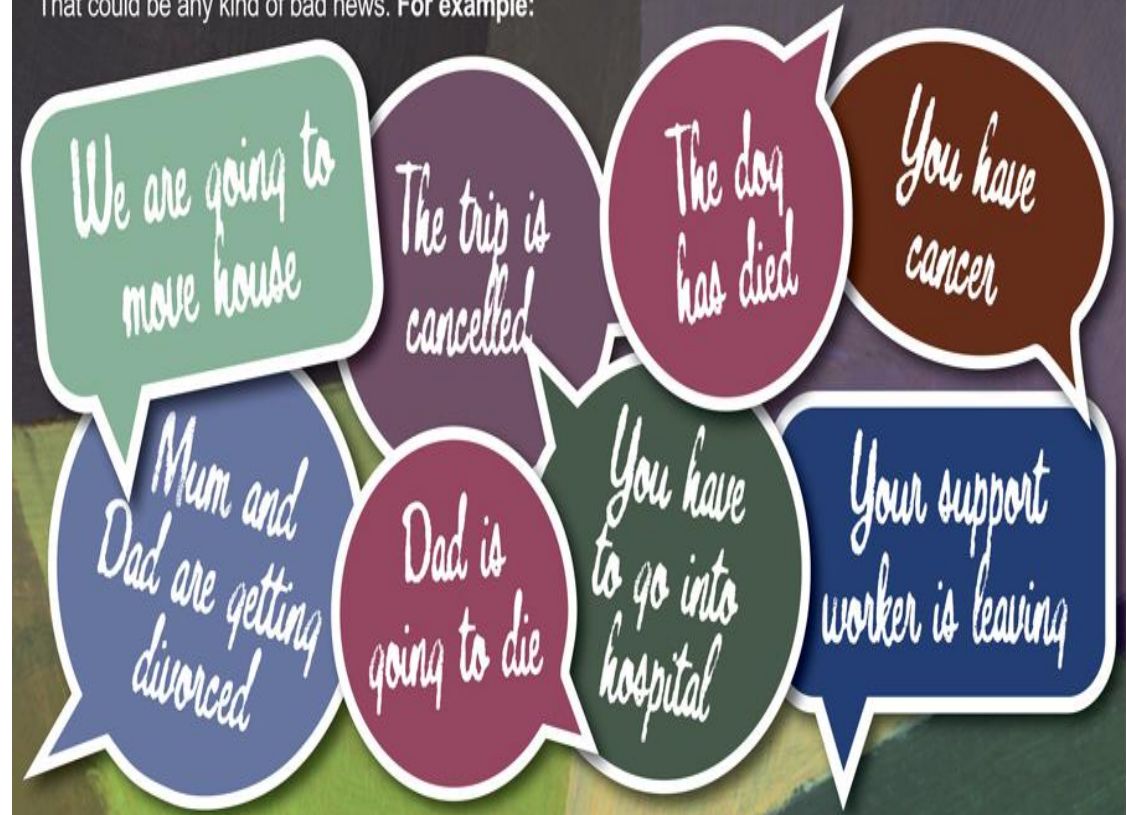


**ASK WHAT
SUPPORT WOULD
BE HELPFUL**

Breaking Bad news

- Irene Tuffrey-Wijne has created guidelines to assist in talking to people with intellectual disabilities about death, dying, illness and other losses.

This website will give you guidance about how to support someone with **intellectual disabilities** in bad news situations. You may also find it useful for breaking bad news to people who don't have intellectual disabilities. That could be any kind of bad news. For example:



Breaking Bad news

- **Understanding**

Consider how person learns and understands information

- **Support**

Consider the support needs of the person with ID and his/her circle of care


- **People**

Consider who is involved in the situation and what information they bring to the table

breakingbadnews.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/TOOL_breakingbadnews.org_.pdf

akingbadnews.org.docx 1 / 1

Name:
People involved:
Description of bad news:
Date:

 Breaking Bad News
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www.breakingbadnews.org

Knowledge chunks to be added

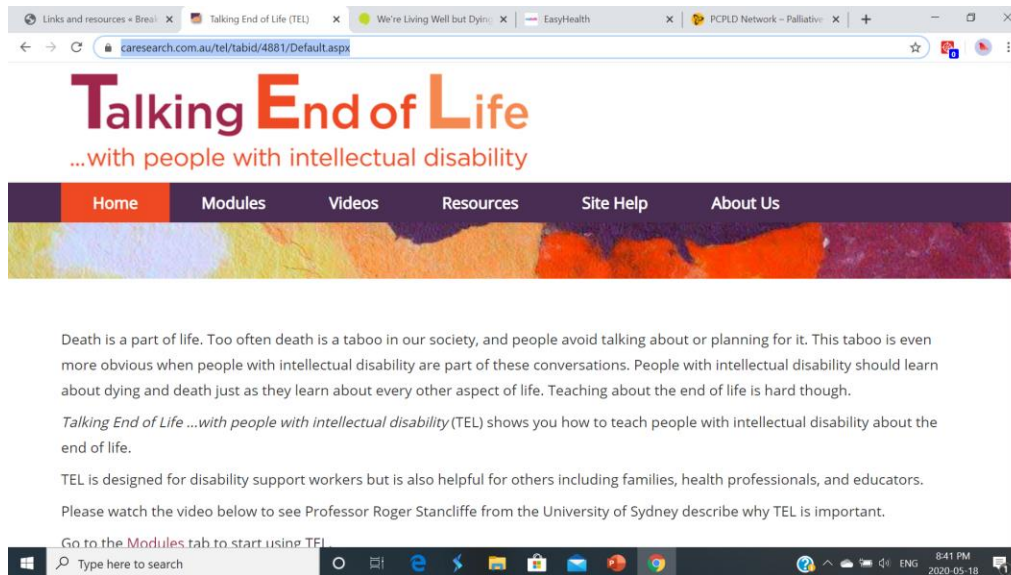
Current framework of knowledge

Background knowledge

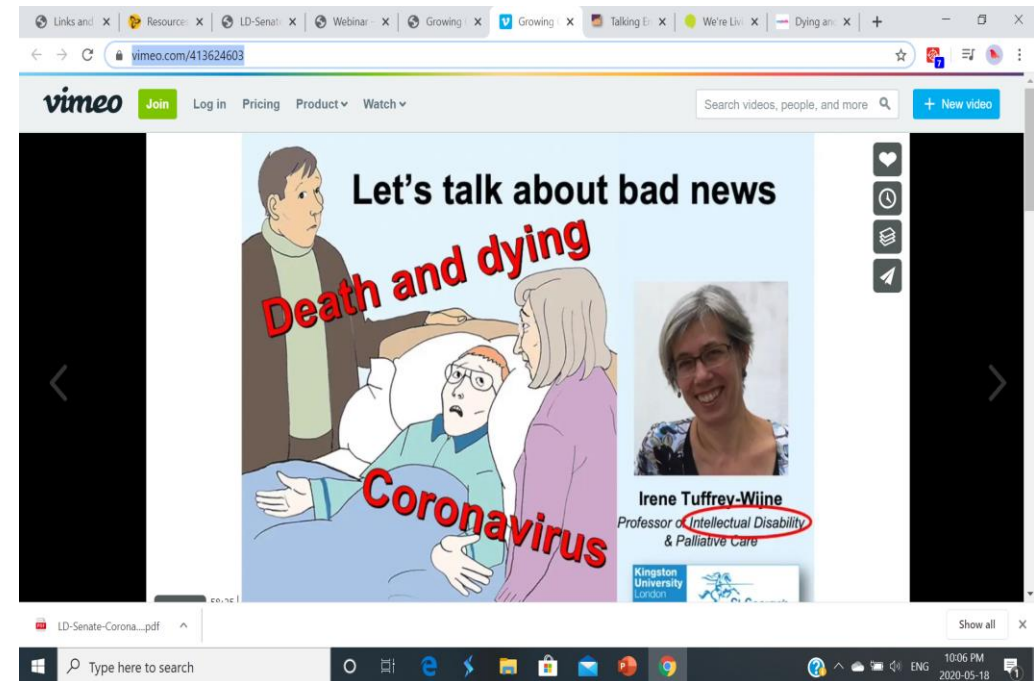
What is happening right now

What will happen in the future

Talking about end of life



<https://www.caresearch.com.au/tel/tabid/4881/Default.aspx>



<https://vimeo.com/413624603>

Books Beyond Words

Beyond Words
empowering people through pictures

When someone dies from coronavirus: a guide for family and carers

By Irene Tuffrey-Wijne and Sheila Hollins



Practical Supports

Ways you can offer support

- Check in regarding feelings
- Help put together a memory album
- Accompany to gravesite if requested
- Be mindful of difficult days (e.g. holidays, birthdays)
- Help person create a TLC kit for him/herself
- Reminisce about the person who died



Staff Experiences

Research on staff experiences

- Hedayioglu, J., Marsden, S., Sackree, A., & Oliver, D. (2021). Paid carers' understanding and experiences of meaningful involvement in bereavement for people with intellectual disability when a significant other is dying. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 1–7.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.12929>
- Interviewed residential staff in homes where a resident had recently died. The following themes were identified:
 - Hard to have conversations about death and dying
 - Involving residents in the bereavement process
 - Relationships between staff and residents
 - Staff support needs

Other studies note similar themes:

- Hard to talk about death
 - Staff in need of support
 - Staff committed to supporting people with intellectual disabilities
- Gray, J. & Abendroth, M (2015). Perspectives of US Direct Care Workers on the Grief Process of Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: Implications for Practice. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities* 2016, 29, 468–480.
 - Gray, J. & Kim, J. (2017). Direct care workers' experiences of grief and needs for support. *J Appl Res Intellect Disabil.* 2017;30:995–1006.
 - Lord, A., Field, S. & Smith, I. (2017). The experiences of staff who support people with intellectual disability on issues about death, dying and bereavement: A metasynthesis. *J Appl Res Intellect Disabil.* 2017;30:1007–1021.



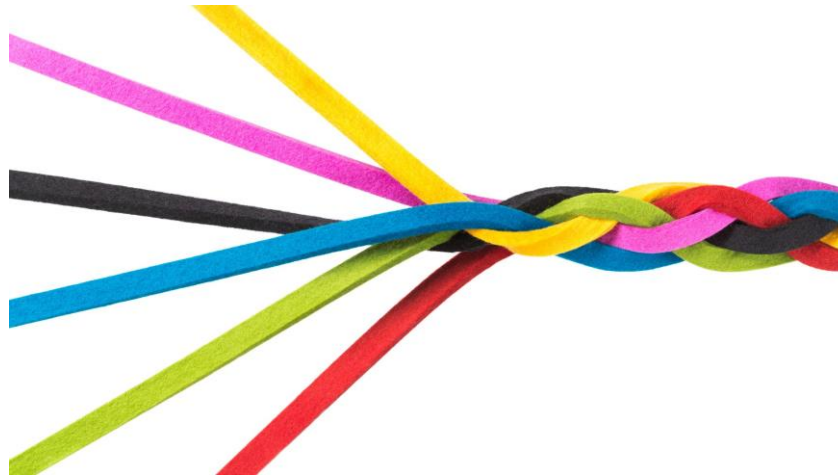
Taking Care of Each Other

What do you need to be well at work?

Please post ideas in the chat

How can your staff team support each other?

Please post ideas in the chat



On-Line Bereavement Group

Group Format

- 7 weekly sessions
- 1.5 hour / session
- Pre-group meeting with each client and support person if possible
- Each participant mailed a grief workbook and informational booklet prior to group start
- Post-group email out a questionnaire and mail certificates and resource list

On-Line Bereavement Group

What helped

- Providing tech support to participants
- Creating a group agreement
- Being flexible
- Having a co-facilitator
- Variety of activities that can be shared on-line
- Being comfortable with technology (both participants and facilitators)



On-Line Bereavement Group

Some topics covered

- Defining death, loss and grief
- How did we say goodbye to our loved one
- Emotional literacy: naming and scaling feelings
- TEAR model of grief
- Learning about healthy coping skills
 - Deep breathing; listening to music; exercise; crying; using a stress ball
- Peer support and sharing stories about our loved ones

In weeks 4, 5, and 6 each group member will have a chance to share their memories of the person in their life who died.

I will share my memories on _____.

You can use this worksheet to prepare.

The person's name _____.

Describe the person's personality (e.g. kind, funny, shy)

Talk about the person's family relationships (e.g. married to)

Talk about where the person lived (e.g. different cities or countries)



On-Line Resources

General Resources on Grief and Loss

- https://www.virtualhospice.ca/en_US/Main+Site+Navigation/Home.aspx

This site has learning modules and toolkits for children and adults

- <https://whatsyourgrief.com/>
- <https://bereavedfamilies.net>

Resources and mutual support throughout the province

- <https://modernloss.com/>
- <https://endoflife.weill.cornell.edu/grief-resources>

On-Line Resources

For Adults with Intellectual Disabilities

- Talking End of Life – Australian Resource
<https://www.caresearch.com.au/tel/tabid/4881/Default.aspx>
- Books Beyond Words – COVID-19 Resources
<https://booksbeyondwords.co.uk/coping-with-coronavirus/#MH-resources>
- Supporting People with Grief and Loss
<https://shop.scopeaust.org.au/shop/supporting-people-grief-loss/>
- L'Arche
<http://www.aging-and-disability.org/en/grieving>

On-Line Resources

For Adults with Intellectual Disabilities

- Down Syndrome Society of Scotland Booklets
<https://www.dsscotland.org.uk/resources/publications/for-parents-of-adults/>
- Dying Matters UK
<https://www.dyingmatters.org/>
- Palliative Care for People with Learning Disabilities UK
<https://www.pcpld.org/home/webinars-and-podcasts/>

On-Line resources

For staff

- Supporting Staff with Grief: A Guide for Leaders
- https://www.chpca.ca/wpcontent/uploads/2019/12/bereavement_care_for_staff_leaders_guide_revisednov2015.pdf