

# A Primary Care Approach to Bereavement

## An educational resource for clinicians

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Listen to us talking about how we developed the work in our podcast here:

[Podcast Series | Support Around Death \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#)

Grief is a **universal** human experience, when someone **dies** but also as a reaction to a **life event**<sup>a</sup>

The increased **morbidity and mortality** associated with grief is widely reported<sup>b</sup>

GPs are **central to bereavement care - in a unique way**

Long term support, short but frequent interactions

*These consultations can make us feel helpless<sup>c</sup>*

We have developed an educational resource to help GPs better understand grief and deliver bereavement care. It is based around **KINDNESS**.

### What is kindness?

Kindness is an **attitude**.

It means **seeing people as individuals** and choosing to respond to them in a **human and humane** way.

Kindness can be **role modelled, critically challenged** and **taught** in different modalities.

**Kindness improves quality of care and clinician wellbeing** (Potter et al 2024, Voorhees et al. 2022).

### How does kindness help bereavement care?

*Service and system development rooted in kindness is essential for bereavement care.*

We can practice **kindness towards colleagues**.

Kindness facilitates **interpersonal interactions, team dynamics and policies**. It creates **psychologically safe working and learning environments** where we can hold **challenging conversations**<sup>e</sup>

### Kindness is self-compassion



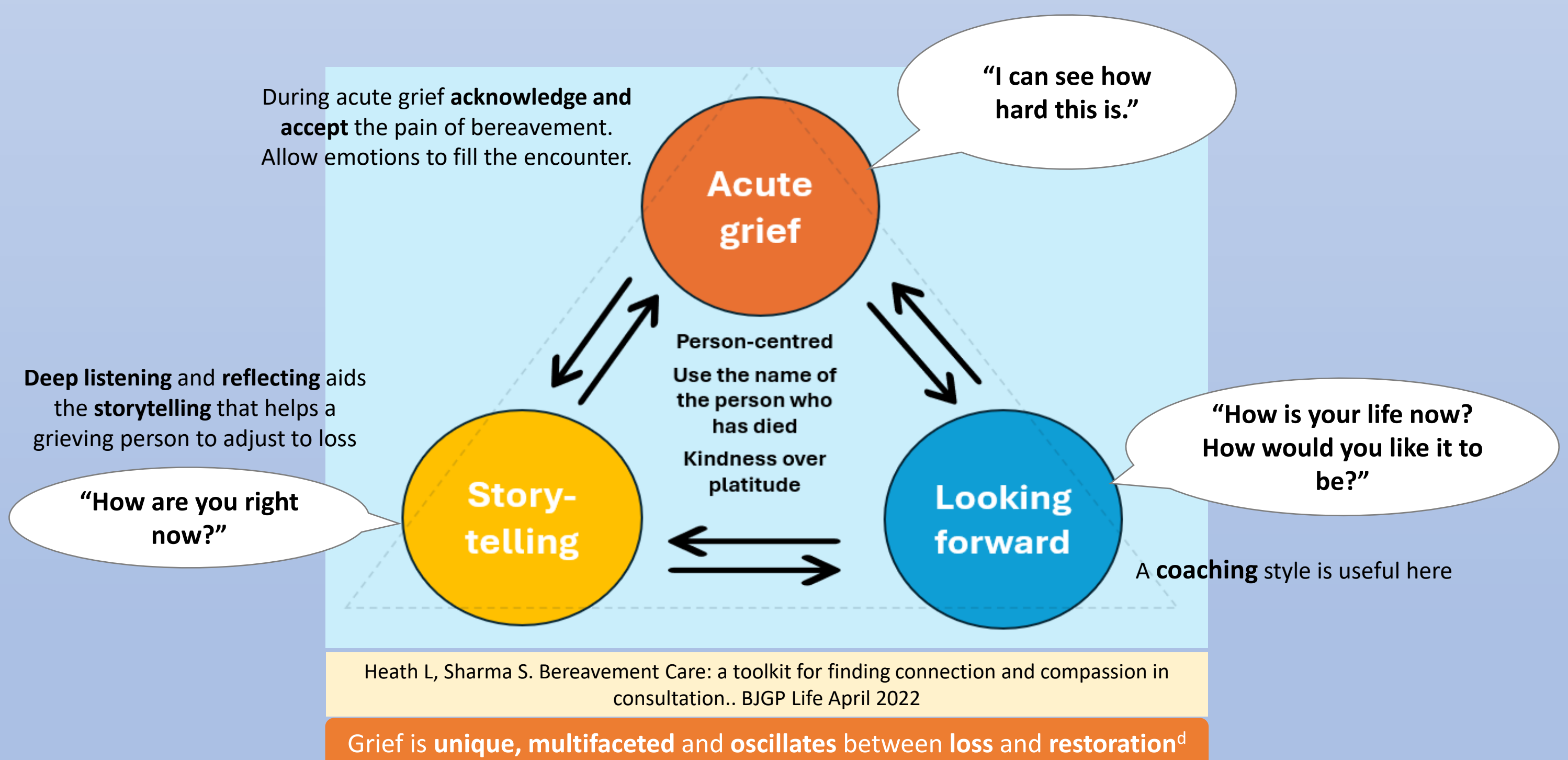
Bereavement care can be hard work! We must be **kind to ourselves**.

- Taking breaks when we need them
  - Looking after our bodies
  - Connecting with others
  - Setting boundaries

Sometimes when people are grieving, they may lose their awareness of appropriate boundaries; we can gently reinforce these.

Our resource contains a consultation model which is aimed at helping clinicians find words when they don't know what to say.

It describes three points in a grieving journey and suggests communication styles which may be useful at each.



Please get in touch via email if you would like to hear more. We can present the resource at an educational meeting at your workplace via an online platform; it takes about 40 minutes but can be tailored to your needs.

Feedback from previous audiences:

- Provides practical tips on how to support patients facing grief.
- 3-point model very usable and poignant for GP Practice

### REFERENCES

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- The Dual Process Model of Coping with Bereavement –Stroebe and Schut 1999
- Ballatt, J., Campling, P., Maloney, C. (2020). *Intelligent kindness: Rehabilitating the welfare state* (2nd ed.).