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HOW DO I SIT
WITH
SOMEONE WHO
IS GRIEVING IN
A WAY WHICH
IS HELPFUL?

HOW ARE WE TAUGHT TO MANAGE GRIEF?

- Don't mention anything related to their loss
- Offer platitudes such as, "Everything happens for a reason"
- Tell them not to burden others with their pain/loss
- Act like nothing happened
- Share with them your own sufferings

DOUBLE LONELINESS OF GRIEF

- Not only the loss of the loved one, but also the loss of those who withdraw

STATEMENTS I NEVER USE WITH THOSE GRIEVING

- “I am sorry for your loss”
- “I can’t imagine how you are feeling”
- “I understand how you feel”
- “I know exactly what this is like”

“I AM SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS”

- Nearly everyone gets what you mean, but...
- Overused and a little ‘thoughtless’
- Some may respond, “Why it’s not your fault”
- Other may respond like my previous manager did....

INTRODUCTION TO THE TRAINING

- My first impressions & struggles with the training
- What changed?
- The image I start with- the 'Pit'
- If I have an agenda, it's this:
 - *To approach someone in such a way as they feel heard, valued, respected, in a non-judgemental and non-anxious manner in which I respond using empathic responses, so as to increase the likelihood I will be invited into their world.*

WILLINGNESS TO ENTER THEIR WORLD

- Starts with my willingness to enter into their world
- Comfortability in my own 'Pit' and my own stuff
- Henri Nouwen,
 - *“Unless we are aware, to some degree, of what and who we are, how much of the other are we really going to see, hear, feel, or understand? Moreover, not only do we need to be cognisant of our own inner landscape, we need to be reasonably comfortable with it as we seek to create a safe space with others”.*

BARRIERS TO ENTERING ANOTHER'S WORLD

- Triggers
- Using elements of our regular conversations:
- Wanting to be uplifting, light, entertaining
- Asking questions- being curious
- Sharing experiences
- Offering advice/solutions/fixes
- Platitudes & silver linings

THE KEYS TO ENTERING ANOTHER'S WORLD: *THE PASTORAL CONVERSATION*

- Respect: Work with what the person offers: they lead and I follow.
- Listen with intention and attention.
- Containment: my sympathy, my curiosity, my questions, my advice, my stories, my triggers, etc.
- Empathic responses, i.e. “What would it be like for me?”
- Convey understanding or striving too.

ELEMENTS I USE IN A PASTORAL CONVERSATION

- Use phrases like “It sounds”/”It seems”
- Avoid parroting: feelings/losses
- Pick one feeling or loss at a time
- Relax, it’s not about the perfect response

WHAT WAS HARDEST FOR ME?

- To stop asking questions in the 'Pit'
- What about showing interest and learning more?
- Why did I ask questions in the 'pit'? Uncertain, uncomfortable & the dreaded silence.
- Problem with questions in the 'pit'?

WHAT IS HARDEST FOR MY VOLUNTEERS?

- The desire to fix/solve/offer solutions- example
- Platitudes & Silver linings
- Is the Pastoral Conversation enough?

NON-ANXIOUS PRESENCE

- What is it? Just a buzz word?
- How do I achieve it= Clarity of purpose
- How anxiety can be unconscious and sabotage the goal of connection

SUMMARY

- Manage triggers by spending time examining past losses/wounds
- Work on triggers that emerge in the now
- Contain what you ordinarily say
- Listen and empathise
- Be crystal clear on what you can do and trust its enough

