

Grieving with Love & Compassion

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Let's Talk About Grief & Death

Grieving the death of loved ones is not only painful, but can also feel lonely and confusing. And it's often difficult for friends and family to see people they love suffering in grief, which is why community grief support—counseling and support groups—is essential to the well-being of communities.

Grieving is unique because it is both a public and private experience that has powerful, transformative potential for personal growth. ACT with its prosocial focus is the perfect place for talking about strengths-based and innovative approaches to our mortality.

Rather than turning away from death and grief because of sadness and fear, let's talk about ways to turn toward grief with love and compassion. If we're willing, we have much to learn from grief.

Researching Grief

What effects will ACT have on grief experiences after a community grief workshop?

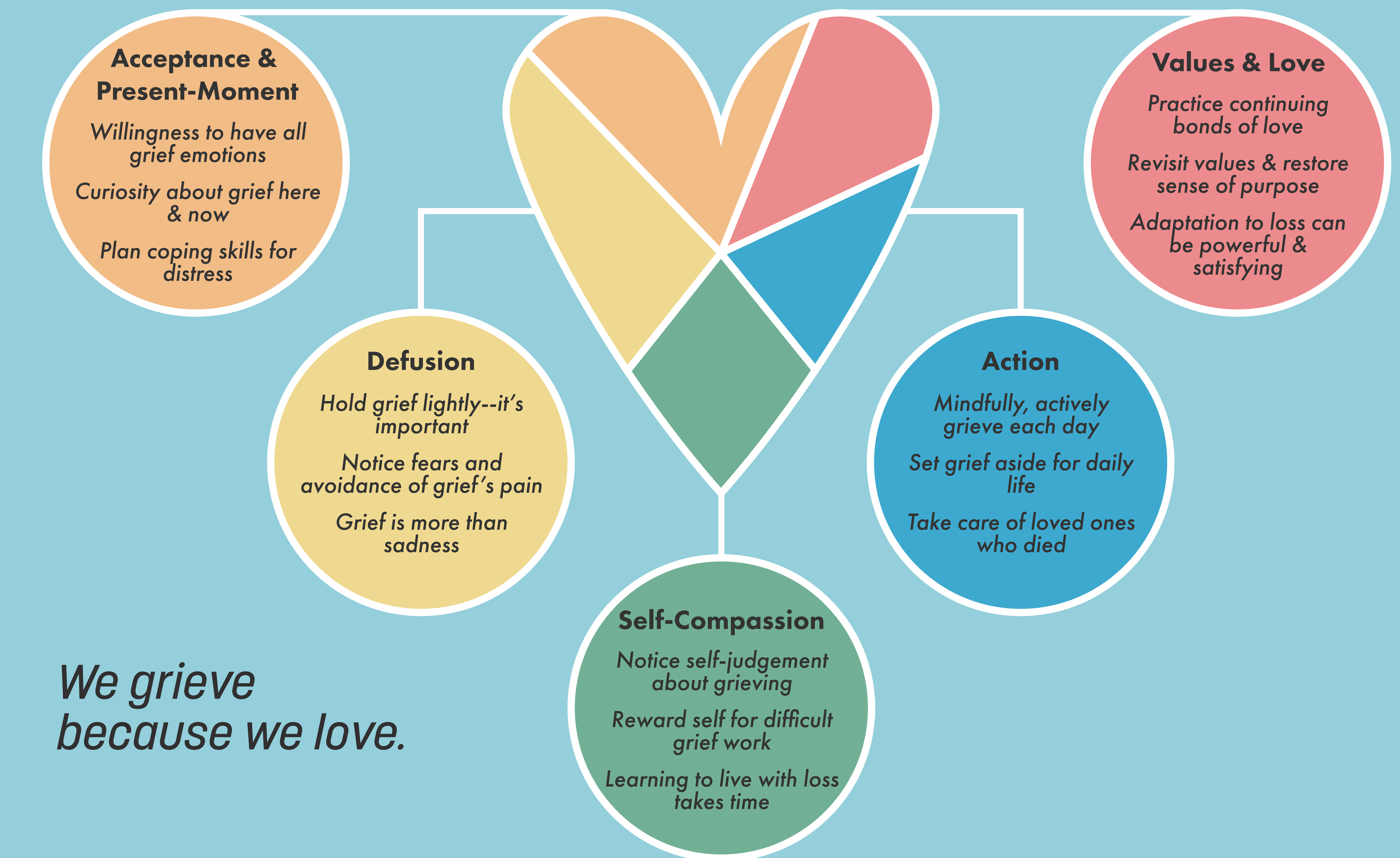
How is psychological flexibility related to grieving?

What support do grieving people want from the community?

Participants • 22 community members seeking grief support attended 2-hour grief workshop, 20 women and 2 men, age range 20-75 years

Methods • Pre & post-workshop Acceptance and Action Questionnaire (AAQ-II)
• Grief workshop intervention
• Open-ended questions for random sample of participants

Results • Paired t-test showed no statistically significant differences.
• Pre-test mean = 18.64 Post-test mean = 18.29
• t-test: SD = 1.216 p-value = 0.292
CI = (-0.345 1.059) d = 0.176



*We grieve
because we love.*

FIGURE 1. Contemporary grief concepts illustrated by ACT hexaflex processes.

Grief Workshop Intervention

Two-hour workshop at hospice using combination of ACT and modified Complicated Grief Therapy strategies:

- Sharing stories of death and grieving
- Psychoeducation about contemporary grief: debunking grief stages myth, connecting love to grief with attachment theory
- ACT experiential exercises: clipboard, holding grief lightly cone
- Discussion about compassion: how do we offer ourselves compassion and what compassion have we received from others
- Guided meditation to end workshop

Research Limitations

- Small sample (N=22) affected statistical and practical significance
- Sample pairing affected by design errors in questionnaire anonymity
- Need measures for grief emotions, coping, and grief-related avoidance
- AAQ-II might be an ineffective grief measure
- Lack of ACT & grief studies affected research design & implementation

What's Next

- Learning more about using ACT in grief support groups
- Focusing on qualitative research to learn from individuals
- Investigating psychological flexibility and grief relationship
- Keep the grief conversation going in my community!