Bereavement – What Helps?

A panel webinar co-hosted by Open Thanatology and WELS Faculty at The Open University on December 7th 2022.

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Welcome text: Erica Borgstrom

Welcome! Today we have about an hour for our ‘Bereavement – What Works’ webinar co-hosted by the Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies at the Open University, and Open Thanatology. We are hosting the event today as part of National Grief Awareness Week and thank you for joining us. As with many topics, there may be aspects that are for you personally upsetting or bring memories to the fore – we therefore appreciate that you may dip in and out of this webinar and we have also disabled the chat between participants so that we can minimise unexpected triggers. We will be recording today’s session for those that would like to watch it another time from the Open Thanatology ORDO repository.

We have four great panellists here with us today and they will have time to answer some of your questions, which you can send via the Q&A function at the bottom of your screen. Before I handover to our first panellist, I’ll take a few moments to tell you about Open Thanatology. Open Thanatology is The Open University’s interdisciplinary research group for the study and education of death, dying, loss and grief across the life course with over 60 members. Formally renamed in 2020, the name was inspired by the ‘Open’ mission of the university and the word ‘thanos’, meaning death - thanatology is the study of things related to death. The group builds on the long-standing death and dying research group at the university and our undergraduate module on death, dying and bereavement, which hundreds of students take each year. We also offer lots of free educational resources via our OpenLearn Hub, collaborate with the BBC on documentaries and short films, and have published a book on Narratives of Covid covering loss, dying and grief which you can get as a free eBook or inexpensive paperback.

For today’s session, the panellists will each have five minutes to speak, with a few brief questions after the first two. After all four panellists have spoken, we’ll open to Q&A from the audience. Please do send in your questions via the function in Zoom at any time during the session – you do not have to wait until the latter half. You will not be able to see what others have asked and you can send questions anonymously if you prefer.

I’d now like to welcome our four speakers. We have:

• Andy Langford - Clinical Director for Cruse Bereavement Care and PhD Candidate,

• Dr Korina Giaxoglou – Senior Lecturer in Applied Linguistics and English Language

• Kerry Jones, Senior Lecturer in End of Life Care and a trained therapist.

• Dr Jane McCarthy – Honorary Associate with The OU, linked with the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and Open Thanatology

Andy Langford: (approx. 3 minutes into the recording)

Thanks. So much Erica. It's really lucky to be here, so welcome All. And so just to start my name's Andy Langford as Erica said, I'm clinical Director for CRUSE Bereavement Support, and also a Phd candidate with the Open University and so if you Don't know about CRUSE, CRUSE is the Largest grief Support organization in the Uk. And we help thousands of people. Every year.We support people, through our one-to-one over the phone online by video and in person, and we also run read the groups, a national help line, open 7 days, a week, a live chat service and useful material on the website, for people, who have need of any of information about their own or other people's. Grief, we support thousands of people every year, through social media. And we also train, many organizations to support staff volunteers and their clients and customers.

So What what I did is at the at the fortune of attending. The European Grief, conference in Copenhagen, this summer, which was attended By Researchers, Practitioners Policymakers, and very people. There were some themes from the conference that I think would be really useful to highlight to inform practice and they're based around the findings from a Researcher called the and Colleagues, from Australia, from Australia, and also some Secret Research Undertaken by the Irish Hospice Foundation.

The types of support bereave people tend to benefit from? Were split into 4 levels when research was collated from from lots of different Researchers and from practice, and if we can imagine a triangle or Pyramid. So going from the bottom to the top, the breadth of it, or the width of it sorry, representing the amount of people and the height, the Acuteness of Grief, so we start at the Bottom at Level, one and that Can be Defined, as Societal Grief Literacy and Awareness. Now this type of Service includes education about grief. To empower, people to understand more about their own grief, and other people's mourning, and thus how to Cope and support others.

We then got level one, which is general support information, usually available through Informal support, that we works such as friends, family, and other people within the community, such as faith, groups or community groups, then going up to level 2 this is defined as extra support so there are a number of tools, available that can help Us discern when people need some More support things, like Grief Measures, and different outcome measures.

This is often delivered through interventions, like peer groups. Psychotherapy, education, and one-on-one grief support, and then finally at the top, the very top of the Triangle which is level 3. Which is where bereaved people often find they have difficulty around their grief, where their grief reactions are complicated, or compromised in some way, and they may be complicated by additional stresses, and disruptions and there, might be enough more formal need for structured support usually once a while or Via Skill Facilitated Group Peer Groups.

Finding from research and practice is indicated. That different interventions are beneficial at different times, and if someone can be supported sooner at a lower level of support, they are less likely to need even more support at a higher level later in their grief journey.

And that's a really really important message for us, as service providers in your one of them, studies for CRUSE, and different training and information is Needed for staff. And volunteers providing support at each, level, the stories of bereaved people, and how they can cope and also found out immense potential to help grieving people Feel like they are not alone, so whilst the concepts of Recovery, and resilience which Ensured all the way aware of continue to be debated, the value of being had as a grieving person, emerges as paramount, so in order to conclude for CRUSE, we've been on a long change Journey from Predominantly delivering face-to-face support to providing a broad Range of Services and this Journey will continue as we need to realize and embed more, learning it's important to think, about and discuss how the Findings, from the conference, can help evolve very brief services and also for us to help us. Understand where there are gaps and how they can best be filled.

Korina Giaxoglou: (from approximate minute 8)

Hello, everyone. And it's a pleasure to be on this panel. In my 5 min I will share 3 main points from my research, and all those research on social Media, morning, and trying to summarize how Social media can help with bereavement and open up opportunities for further discussion to start with social media platforms They’re not really designed for Sharing grief but they Did have to adapt to this kind of sharing as users started to move their offline practices of grief and memorialization online and in that respect social media, have indeed, Helped to bring Grief and morning, to the everyday and that's really really important given that grief is not only Inescapable like death is but it's an emotional experience that we're bound to have to cope with more than once in our lives, the second point I wanted to make is that when it comes to sharing grief, online there's not a right or wrong way as there are no universally. Accepted rules for grieving, having said that it's worth noting, that public Expressions of Grief, particularly online are open to criticism, and scrutiny, dividing people over what Counts, as an appropriate Display of Grief and what as a trivializing expression an example of that is the case of The trend that emerges around 2010. where young people started to share funeral selfies. That is images photos of themselves, smiling, often smiling the funeral of a loved one, that Trend Initially sparked outrage before gradually becoming accepted as a cultural trend for young people this Doesn't mean of course, that everyone is now sharing or should be sharing Funeral self selfies far from it, the way, each of us grieves and gets to share that agreement, publicly on or off social media varies depending on our social, cultural religious background, as well, as our Particular Emotional styles and Sharing preferences now Despite this Diversity. We do see that social media are being used in specific ways, and with specific benefits that are recurrently outlined in research, as beneficial.

So the the main benefit is the increased opportunities that social media offer to the breed for continuing to talk to loved ones after their passing and reconfigure their ties in what John Bowlby Psychoanalyst has Termed as Continuing Bonds so That's, not something, new that has been a way of copying before social media, so that social media has increased the opportunities for us to do that, and as I'm saying in my book this is this allows us, to continue that effective and ongoing process of effectively positioning ourselves, to our loss to the dead to all the mourners, and to our own selves over time, realizing that Grief of Obviously Has, No clear Ending and or Closure, and for

My Final point I would like to turn to the question that we might find ourselves when we are in the throes of morning about whether to share or not to share and if we want to share, how are we supposed to share our grief online and I think the main So the suggestion I would like to give is that the best guiding principle for that is what is the consider how the person we are mourning would have liked to be remembered and honored and that is what matters the most, and can be a useful as well as a consoling guide to our sharing i'd like to conclude, with one practical suggestion and food for thought for all of us.

Given that we do live in a in an age of social media, and we most of us have accounts, and we leave digital traces on a day-to-day. Basis, so as we, we need to think about our digital legacy, online and we need to talk about how we want to be remembered. With as many people as we can, and and check. Out for example, we can check out the terms and conditions of the platforms. We are on and where possible, for example, on Facebook designate, a digital legacy, contact because that can help ultimately Those who are left behind, because also we need to remember that the practical aspects of Bereavement are equally important. As the Emotional, ones, so either online or offline instead of avoiding or denying our own and others. Grief, we can approach it as part of our everyday life. Something that is an inescapable fact, and and it's the ultimate Yardstick of our effective positioning to Death to life to all this and our own selves, thank you very much

Question from Kerry Jones to Andy: That was really informative. one thing was struck about. Was that the levels that you were talking about and as an organization. Do you feel that right to tension? It needs to be given to education.Awareness, Raising Around Disenfranchised Grief, for Example, Suicide, Perinatal Loss, Etc

Response from Andy: Absolutely I mean, we all benefit from that, I think. And you know what we know from people who experience, disenfranchised grief. This is often certainly told to ourselves in CRUSE and to other organizations, is that the more and the more ill-informed people are, the more they have judgments, about that particular type of Grief, and that results. In more disenfranchisement, and so so it's it's really really important that that that education is really important, but I would I would come back on that and also raise another point. Is that actually it's it's beneficial for all of us to understand a little more, about how to have a decent conversation about grief, and and that can help with all of us feel less isolated, when we grieve and also can help us when we are supporting people draw closer to those who We love who we really do want to support. But don't quite know the words about how to how to do so so you know, university, I think that's that's got some great benefit from as you rightly say particularly for those that are feeling Disenfranchised as a result of the type of grieving they've experienced

Clarifying point about what is disenfranchised grief: - Kerry: it's the grief that isn't acknowledged because of the Type of Death and People find it really hard to talk About the Grief is seen as lesser somehow compared to other Griefs That's definitely where it's not acknowledged or validated, and that can lead to grievous feeling incredibly isolated. Andy: it's just to build on that that isolation, can then result in more complication in terms of the grief. It can be more acute. experience for longer periods of time, and it can be other health issues, that result from it today.

Question for Korina from Jane: …learning about and it particularly fascinates, me because there's quite often this phrase is used that grief gets policed that the social Expectations that there are around how we're supposed to grieve become a real constraint. And and and really quite constrained people as as to how they think they should be grieving, or or what feedback, they get so I in a in many ways what you seem to be describing isn't an Emerging Policing of Grief and I just wondered, if you could say a bit More about the social dynamics around that you know, in terms of either unconscious, that Within Families people may have quite different ideas about what to do in in something like that but also more broadly, more you know, whether there's, generational differences or differences according to sort of Heritage or gender. Yeah.

Korina response: Thank you, Jane. Yeah, I mean, this could be the topic of another panel. In fact. But I can very briefly say, I think make 2 points about that one is that definitely there is a Griff, police that has found social media to be a new outlet. For Policing Grief and and coming up with etiquette. For how one is supposed to express their emotion. in specific the specific conditions, and We've seen that in the media, special at the start, when people just started sharing their grade for online I think it's less prevalent now when it has become a much more accepted practice but What's interesting Is that there are norms. There is consensus about what is acceptable and what not within specific group. So when when you've got a memorial group of friends mourning a friend, there is specific ways that people are expected to mourn there and oversharing and drawing attention to oneself as a mourner, is often what is judged, to be not very appropriate in these Contexts, whereas. I I guess there might be all the context where that could be accepted. So that that's one thing, and the other of course, is the timing. Again, going back to what also. And he was talking about when one is sharing grief, if they're not a member of the of the close, family, so that is it's it's free upon to Kind of start Sharing an Oversharing before the Family had has had a Chance, to actually Show set, the tone for how they would, like the moment to happen. Now, when There's complicated grief, that's a whole different story. And I think we I mean that that's, I said, probably another topic for for a panel, because there are indeed a lot of complications, and almost a great, a competition, maybe. And who is grieving the most, and who is displaying that the most. So there are very complex dynamics in families, friends, But it's I think it's also interesting to see how when things work well, how such spaces can be beneficial for people to mourn alone, but together and I think I will leave it at this thank you

Facilitator Erica (approx. 18 minutes)

Wonderful. Thank you so much. We're now going to move to our next 2 panelists so I'd like to welcome Kerry Who's going to be talking about Men's Experience based on some recent research, She's Conducted along with other Colleagues.

Kerry Jones (approx. 18 minutes)

Thank you. Okay, so I have been talking about the men's experience of grease and loss in the context research that I've undertaken. Why specifically, on men and grief in the last 20 years I've been Conducting research, and working in Grief and Bereavement and specifically Around Perinatal Deaths for example, still Birth a new Natal Death and one thing that notice, the Focus is very much on Women, understandably and sometimes children and what are the things I found was the group, the Grief of men is much less taught about if much less research is much less written about and what I did find by way of Experience. Tend to be captured in the form of blogs, or for those men who decided to write a diary about their experience, of loss, which were very confused, and far between so to address this in the number Wave, by doing research, and publishing but more recently I wanted to find out about more about from the Ways in Which Men seeks Support following paranoid with that and one of the Things That's come up recently has been the advent of football team specifically for Bereaved out and I Wanted to Kind of find out a bit more about what with the Impact so myself and my Colleagues Dr. Martin Robb Dr. Sam Murphy. We conducted research with a number of men across the Uk and the Football Teams that they're they're known As Sands United which is still but a Naming Death, party which is a Uk organization, that Aims, to Support, Bereaved Parents, and Families, as Well as offer, training, following a perinatal death, but that's the but essentially the football teams were developed by a breed dad who had actually was trying to reach out to other Brave, men, and so developed this, football team, because the Wasn't a great deal Support that was an offer to the Men that we interviewed, or in terms of what they felt that they needed These football teams are just really grown exponentially across the Uk, those being quite a bit of press coverage and interviews and Interviews on Radio is involved, X professional footballers, are Charging Matches for example and also Youtubers, Celebrities, some of the Findings I can't go to everything here, but What really kind of came out of the interviews was that these football teams up and down the country really offered that kind of sense of community it was a place where men could go to because they couldn't. Ordinarily, speak to maybe friends or family. They could talk to other men within those reportings, and even if they didn't stay a lot, it was that real sense of kind of belonging that they knew that other people there, for very kind of similar reasons even though the might have been very kind of different Experiences, and one of the things.

That the football teams did was offer support and not just in terms of emotional supporting known somebody's there, but also the Usual kind of Banters was very much a social thing as well, but you knowly, offered a place for death and memorialized and can them. Right there babies as well so For example, they might have a minute, at the beginning of a match, and raise you know, funds for stands as well, and the the Poignant Thing as well is that these football Matches and Belonging to a Team a sense of Continuing Bond So each Match was played was an opportunity to remember Their Baby, but also to kind of carry that sense of a bond with their with their child, because the raped wear a shirt with the baby's name, as a Logo sort of next to the chess of the heart if you lie and have a unique number associated with the Baby on their back, and with these teams, there was a Sense of being able to have that space and that location just to be who they are? Which would be just doubts have experienced the death of the baby, and also to have that location of knowing. There is somewhere. To go what's, not what's, that group, board to a Match or even if they're not playing in a Match, that this porting, you know, other Dads on the side, and what was really interesting as well, was that sense of Belonging to give back so some Deaths might have been Had experienced a loss quite some time ago, a number of years ago and started in a position to be able to support other dads so they would look out for Whatsapp groups and if somebody was having a tough day they would respond so there was a lot going on to this couple things I want to talk about a sense Of community, a lot of the Data Was Saying. Well, it's a it's a team. You know, I really didn't want to belong to. But now I'm here. I don't want to leave it because it is a good place to be I've alluded to the Whatsapp group. But there's, the Facebook Group, which has Kind of bound to the Jokes there's a training Nights, Charity Match days and with a Whatsapp Group, that Kind of Very Managed in Terms, of this Kind of Football Team So It's, that Space and that Location where Somebody Need to Device, it was Struggling you know the Team responds literally within 2 to 5 min. So it's a real Fantastic Support resource, and one of the underlying Messages that I I got from Conducting this Research with my Colleagues, with that they Didn't care, about Winning the Football Matches it was about getting out. There it was about raising awareness. It was being about being clapped on.

By you know other deaths, and it was that sense of as one Dad said, you know, wanted to do his angel, proud. And there was things that they couldn't do for the children. They felt, in that kind of tangible sense, that you can't change in that pay. But it's definitely something they could do, by you know, engaging in in football matches and raising, the Awareness There's also support to Celebrate a Baby's Birthday, so whatever a Baby's Birthday or Anniversary is Coming up again, they could have that Minute and and that Baby is remembered. There's a you know, like I said, having that bad day, and somebody being there and even if you're having a bad day, and you just know, something, is there sometimes that's enough, and like I, said they're really quick in responding in supporting others and they can be there to just, advise, or listen, but one of the key things, about these football teams is people outside the team don't talk about the baby. So this provides them with an opportunity for the baby to be remembered, and for the dance to be honored for who they are with which a father's baby who has died and it's a way to honor a child through the tragedy Matches and again I come back to that Football Kit which they all Talk About with huge huge pride, which is the child's name, and the number for example, the birthday on the back

Jane McCarthy (approx. minute 25/26):

Thank you, and it's a real pleasure to be here, just to explain. I'm a Family sociologist I've done work are focused on issues about child Ab, treatment, particularly for about 20 years. And I've been involved in the bereavement sector in various ways, but as a sociologist. I had do have a particular kind of perspective in terms of inequalities, and social patterns, around grieving and much of current Approaches to Understanding, what we call bereavement and Grief are based on professional ideas, about what may be healthy or unhealthy grieving, and much of the current research is based on that way of thinking and then people. Start to worry, whether their grief is normal and how others may view their grief and judge it. That's sometimes described in terms of Grief, being policed, but as A Sociologist I'm interested in how people experience the deaths of people, who matter to them in the context of their everyday Lives, and relationships, While the Existing, Ways, of thinking are of course Valuable and found useful by Many, people. I think that they are also perhaps unnecessarily limited tending to have a medicalized focus on What's regarded as the Inner grief journey of the individual and this means that many of the ways in which bereavement and grief are talked about and how help may be Offered are based on models that have grown out of the Perspectives of particular professional cultures, and rooted in largely, white communities of Practice, Serving, largely white Middle-class people and some of that is being increasingly recognized so the Uk Bereavement. Commission has been very concerned in its recent report to draw attention to the ways in which people, from a minoritized background are not well served by existing bereavement Organizations, and those organizations. Themselves are increasingly recognizing this too, so my overall suggestion is, that there would be much to be gained by broadening out from this narrow base to embrace and learn from diversity i'm advocating with benefits of recognizing the diversity in how people think about death And bereavement, how people experience it, and how recognizing this may help in breaking out of particular expectations, and models of what something called grief looks like and even the language, that we use expresses the current models the terms Bereavement, and Grief both tend to Assume we're talking About an individual experience. And those words don't in fact, translate into many other languages. So what I'm suggesting is that the narrowness of current models and ways of thinking is really unhelpful. And there are 2. Key reasons why I think this is important the first being a matter of basic values, like care, and social justice. And the second being a matter of how much is missing from White Western ways of grieving, but is a value in terms of potential wisdom, social emotional and collective resources. So the values of Care and Social Justice may suggest a focus on anti-racism, well, tackling What's Missing, of Value, may suggest a need to become much more conscious of the Whiteness of Current, Approaches. But this is very hard to see, because current models are very much based in particular. Ways of thinking and being in the world. There are very largely so taken for granted that they're practically invisible. Then his class suggests. That what's happened is that Western models of grief have been exported to the rest of the world.

When we undertook research, into family deaths in Senegal, in West Africa, it was really eye opening for us, the why English Researchers involved to realize how challenging it was to listen to Senegalese people talking about what death means, to them and how they respond to a family Death and these Are rooted in fundamentally, diverse ways of being in the world of understanding what life is all about as well as what death means what does it mean to be a human being living in the world, alongside other human beings and non-human beings the African concept of ubuntu for example Conveys, a very different philosophy and way of life, that we could learn so much from, but in terms of anti-racist there's also a very great deal of work to be done to understand how deeply this whiteness along with institutional racism in many many areas of contemporary Life, lead people from minoritized, ethnic backgrounds to feel that experience, bereavement services are not going to be of help, to them as well, as needing to educate ourselves, particularly as white people, about racism, and how systematic it is we also need to start from something, Paul Rosenblatt suggests, is a position of humility and a real desire to listen and to create spaces. Where it's possible to go beyond the Current Silences. As a woman of dual heritage said to me the other day, we don't talk about stuff like this, thank you.

Andy question for Kerry: Clearly, the group Experience had been part of the team as a profound effect. On the dads. What Sort of discoveries did you have around the Effect on the Wider family of that being involved in the team

Kerry response: we didn't actually interview the Families more widely, we had Kind of Limited Resource and funds, and you know, the kind of point I made earlier when when I Conducted research before i've done I've Conducted it with men as well, as Women and Women Tend to Kind of be More Involved. And I want to specifically to focus on men's perspectives, because sometimes in when you're interviewing in a couple those kind of perspective can sometimes get lost. But one thing that they did say was that in some of the football teams, they did have socials, like barbecues, which involved the Wider, Family.So the impact was already seeing that family was becoming involved. They were also attended. The matches, so it had a wider healing effect, and I think in talking even that Side, that the kind of research, moving on when I was spending colleagues with fact kind of similar experiences, it's the fact that you know when somebody's partner knows They're engaging in those activities. They know that they're getting the support that they need and that they want run, pushing them towards the kind of reformers support so it kind of had kind of wider issues that would which are beneficial

Korina question for Jane: Yes, thank you, and thank you, Jane, I was. really pleased to hear about your approach, to the the need for looking at the Diversity to approaches to grief, and it it it resonates with my own experience and work on many elements in in Greece, where death and mourning are an integral, Part of life, rather than as something that you just, you know, just happens, and we want to kind of put it aside, so what I would like to ask is you know there's this ideals of of death has been taboo and that that is a pervasive, Cliche almost is there a similar thing that applies you think to grief and morning, or what would be your sociological? That's quite controversial. It gets debated quite a lot. Tony Walter particularly, has written quite a lot. About how much more public grief has become. He's written about the death, of Princess Diana for example, and the reaction to that and and actually your own research, about social media it might be said to be being okay, providing A much more public space, for but for acknowledging grief but what tends to come across at the same time. Excuse me very strongly, and is that in terms of people's personal experiences dangerous. I have with people around them. People still report very strongly that people they feel that people don't know what to say to them. And and yeah, keep that distance, basically, yeah.

Facilitator: Thank you. We now have about 20 min. We're going to move into the general Q & A. I have here is just a really quick one for Kerry, which is about a point of clarification that someone has. And it's about. If these football teams are available just for loss and late pregnancy, or they also for miscarriage, and also earlier, in pregnancy.

Kerry: Yeah, they are, they are available for miscarriage as.

Facilitator: Okay. That's useful. Alright. So then in the next question. I have is and this is open to all panel members or you can pick and choose. How you want to respond. So not every panel number necessarily respond to every question. As we go forward. But this first question is around whether the assumption of bereavement being linked only to a single clear-cut event of death, is still actually really appropriate or is there something about maybe able relating To An ongoing loss such as chronic Illness or Dementia.

Andy: There so so I guess it's a really interesting question, actually and it and it it probably to some extent for me speaks to what Jane was described in terms of our our very sort of western idea of what we mean by by grief, but i'll I'll I'll Jake probably do far more just about the Night, but but what I would say is actually we we have an increased understanding of how how we grieve in relation to an individual or the memory of an individual the relationship we've got with them is affected by so many things, but actually it's it's interlinked in so many ways I Mean, using an example that we have recently is the Death of Queen Elizabeth, the second and CRUSE supported many people in London and also in different parts of the Uk Around, their grieving him that was brought up through the Death, of the monarch now what we found in the mass vast majority of Situations is actually whilst some people felt very sad for the death of the Queen. Some people said they didn't as well, by the way, but but one of the things that was most prevalent was that actually the the the Public, airing of Grief to the Queen, then Triggered Grief about about other People that died and that was that was the most Predominant Theme, that We, found that actually yes, there might have been some sentence for Queen Elizabeth, that the second time, but also. Then people were reminded about their great, ante about the Nam, about them more, about the About, the daughter, often it was so focused on and so, at the loss of the female but but that was very prevalent so what it showed Us. Is actually that link around around triggering where one experience, or not even necessarily a personal bereavement, can then have a an impact, and trigger, something that's very personal for us, in the past.

Jane: Yeah, I just thought I could add something about done how this highlights really, these this issue about language, because this turned grief as I said, it doesn't translate straightforwardly into other languages, and in what other languages, tend to have more, is a more, general term to describe Sorrow or Pain, so we it did. Yeah, grief does tend to be rather specific in the way we use it in this country.

Facilitator: Yeah, I think I'd add to that too. Sometimes in the academic literature, and the clinical people also talk about anticipatory, grief, so Grief, that people have before an event happens and just again, that language of sort of presuming that happen there's, certain events that market, and then we're going around. It. So, thank you. Another question. We have is from someone who's a social prescriber. And they say they often encounter individuals, who adopt an approach sort of along the lines, that they don't need to grieve or explore. Receive, response, support for the grief and that they just will get on with things and this person is curious to know, if this is a common obstacle in the field, and whether or not there are other grassroots or community approaches.That might help overcome such positions. So who would like to respond to that first?

Korina: Yeah, in English language.Yeah, I was just trying to process that with with with somebody's expected to to kind of get on with it. And I think that stems strong the idea where grief ends at a certain time point, and therefore we we move on and I sort of look to Andy, when you know we talk about grassroots, organization because you know Uk, why, that's, kind of what the setup for is to Transport people who Are trying to negotiate their grief in the face of other people who are not permitting them to greet for whatever reason, we're trying to shut them down, which happens, because it could be that the individual is uncomfortable with being around a grieving individual and that happens a lot I'm sure Andy blood test, but yeah, the definitely, Grassroots, organizations, and the other thing, I would add as well is that there's different organizations for different types of Deaths, as well, which I Think is really Key to Highlighting here, so if There's, Ponate, to Death, you Photographsan. If there's suicide, you know youngsters are this papyrus, they's a whole whole range of organizations that are there to support as well as the kind of more formal and sort of private Individuals and Organizations, as well but I'm not I'm

Speaker: Yeah, I'm curious Korina, do, you also experience, sort of responses in social media, where you know, someone might express grief online, and others kind of indicate. Maybe they should be getting on with it, you know, that kind of counter approach rather than being supportive. I was, Yeah, I was also trying to process, that question because it's a it's a very interesting one on social media. You actually see, very conventionalized approaches to share in grief.So the people who would prefer to go want to get on with it.They would just not share, they would, okay, and not any, and even maybe not react to others, sharing grief, but J. And generally, speaking, the the people who would would share, their grief, would get reactions. That were mirroring, the the need, or the the kind of message that the share would share. So there wouldn't be so much as a an admonition to to get on. But I can definitely see why someone wouldn't share online, their grief exactly. Because they might not want the type of support and the kind of reaction, that that would trigger, so even even getting that what some see as a you know, the conventional way of saying oh, you know the person you love will always be with you you know that that might actually cause more pain so that they Some people might feel much better. Kind of just getting on with their lives for at least a period of time, until you know grief maybe disrupts, their life and that when they sick support so as a as a as I said it there are many different ways for each person, to to grieve and it's What's difficult, for those of us who might be supporting others in grief is to kind of get that sense of where that all the person is and and support them where they are not where we would like them to be And also that sort of public private thing. As well, what people might say, or appear to be doing versus what might actually be going on for them internally, Jane did you want to add anything to this conversation at this point

Jane: Thank you. Yes, I just feel that this is a an example really of how much we might benefit from being more aware of the customs of people from minoritized ethnic heritage and it was very very visible in our research, in Senegal but there's, no question of people, being Left alone, after a death it it's a it's sane as a collective event, it's not seen as an individual, personal event. It's collective and yeah, there may well be people in the audience who know a lot more about these sort of expectations that than I do. Personally, as a white, person, but that that the whole expectation that you will gather you will absolutely gather together, and you will and not just for a day or so you'll you'll that will carry on over a period of time, and there, may well be subsequent occasions when people expect to Go to particular occasions. So yeah, I I wonder whether it's a particularly English, trait.

Facilitator: Thanks. That leads really nice to another question that we have here and a and this person is acknowledging that although the Policing so that sort of Strict Monitoring of grief, is perhaps not overly helpful but that for some people, having a guide, on how to more and can be helpful and they point to the fact. There are numerous examples of different cultures of practices, not necessarily religious and suggested Time, Scales for Morning, sort of across the World, you know and they're asking is there any evidence of the Benefit of such a these Practices, do do any of you have any evidence or Comments.

Korina: I think in in many cultures morning cultures, as I call them We wouldn't say that they're all. There's a put in of morning. But we would say there are rituals of Morning and these rituals constrain Determine kind of give shape to something to a very messy. Experience, and that I mean, although we wouldn't talk about. You know whether that has benefits. Because you know how can you know it's very difficult to talk about benefits when it comes to loss loss, whatever you do when you've experienced a loss. The losses. There is not going to go away. The pain is not going to go away.But what each culture has that type of constraints and emotional regimes, the type of language that is available, the the kind of the type of support that One, can expect from a community or not you know, tho, those are all parts of of morning Practices, and that's why we said you know Morning. Is a social practice. I think, yeah, so so in terms of the and it.Does I think the the memorial, the memorials, that Exist and the rituals do help because they do give people something to do so that in instead of doing something irrelevant, you know you do something as a tribute to the way that that person would have liked to be remembered And honored. So yes, that I think they do. Help and every culture has their own ways of doing that

Jane: Yeah, I could say something else about this, too, that when when we did the research in Senegal, and we we've actually originally talked in in terms of what can we learn from the challenges that it created to us you know that because it did it really took Us, back in many waysBut what? We've what we've done is is discuss it in terms of limitations, and benefits. So I think any culture, any Set of expectations are gonna have benefits to them. But also drawbacks in Senegal what was particularly striking was the religious Framing for a death, and very strong expectations of how you accepted the death. Because it was God's will. As predominantly Muslim country, and for many people, that was incredibly helpful, because it meant that you didn't kind of rail against it it was your yeah, it was God's, well.That was the basis on which you accepted it. it did mean that one or 2, people that we interviewed actually found that really hard and people could be judged, it because it meant that if you weren't accepting it, then you weren't being a good, muslim, and we even had one interview a Who said 2 years on. He hadn't accepted the death of his mother and and he had to kind of keep quiet about that. So I think it's I think it's quite important to think, in terms of costs, and benefits, you know rather than this is this. Is helpful and this is unhelpful yeah.

Facilitator: I'm gonna move on to another question that we have. And this is from a third year student. Nurse, who's due to qualify, shortly and work with an ae, department, so accident and emergency, and they question is what advice. Could you give to me when supporting families of a death by suicide, or similar disenfranchised cause of death? So this might be something Kerry or Andy, want to come in on first.

Kerry: Yeah, this, this is a tricky. One, I mean, first of all,It would be a good idea to actually go to organizations that do support. Individuals being bereaved, and they have a number of resources, about some of the things that you can say some of the things, not to say, as a starting point, and society give yourself some that level Awareness because and then they need Department, That's gonna be you know I'm really really Tricky, and it's a Busy, Environment, you're Trying to find. You know that location space for a family to have that just just to that initial digestion of sort of what's gone on because somebody's Attempted and and they succeeded as well, and it's, about not making those judgments, or Make sure you wouldn't butIt is, it's kind of been a bit reserved and just giving them that space. And it is just being able to hold that space

Andy: Yeah, I mean that's that's that's fantastic and advice. I just just to build on that. It's it's very normal to experience a sense of disbelief and shock upon Experience, if you're even through suicide and I know love is not, is not as we know, there's not sequential stages, but that those experiences are quite they're not abnormal. And they're they're quite understandable, and the it's not unusual also to for people to get angry and to get angry at services, too. We know that because people tend to get angry when they're traumatized. Often, but one of the things that we would advise is to put some form of self care around yourself, because we can care best for people. When we care for ourselves, and in an accident emergency department. Is very easy to go from one case to another and and that transition between the 2 can mean that between many of our can mean that there's mounting stress for the people, who do that your burnout is quite common and so you know what i'd advise is is just to make sure that that you care for yourself. And you've got all the people who care for you, around you. When you're when you're working that situation, because it can, it can be. It can be such a privilege and such an honor, but also, it can be extremely challenging. And you want to be able to meet that and sustain yourself over time

Facilitator: That's great. Thank you and we are coming closer to the end of our session, and you are being an absolutely fantastic audience and so engaged in submitting far more questions than we will be able to answer this time, but we Will. Hope, to send out some answers after the session as well through the event, bright list so if you do have more questions, you can keep adding them and we'll answer as many as we can and but before we wrap up I have a question here, for everyone on the Panel asking do you have a favorite Book. on the subject of grief, that you'd either recommend to professionals who are supporting those who are grieving, or that you would recommend to those who are grieving and I will not pick on someone and you have to say who'd like to go first because I know that that's a tricky one, sometimes for people to really think about, and if it's not a book, it might be another resource that you'd like to point to some

Kerry: Yeah, I I can think of Kenneth Doka Disenfranchised Grief. Cause I'll see that's what I've talked about but the other text, which I think, is a really good tool, if you're using it for training, as well as Michael Rosenberg it it brings out all the emotions.

Andy: There are many, and I I've I've just been reading Kathryn Mannix’s book with the end in Mind which is amazing really collection of of her Stories, of People, She's Met who are approaching Death for those a Breathe through Death often it's approaching Death, She's a Relative Care Specialist then and It's Just really Humbling to read and see those very personal stories, but also normalizing the Death, Experience and Demystifying it, which can be incredibly confident for so many people.

Korina: I, I mean, I wouldn't I mean my book is more academic, so it doesn't have practical advice. But for digital death, Elaine Kaskets, all the ghosts in the machine, is a is a great book that has you know is it's written by a psychologist but in a. Public Engagement Way, and it it it's the the stories, that she shares there from her interviewees and her insights are amazing but also I would I always go back to poetry, and literature, as my main guides, to Supporting others, myself, and also Academic rights, so Julian Bonds, levels of life. Is one is a book that has state with me. But anything. You know that comes it. It it really depends on you know what you're looking for.

Jane: I can't remember the titles, but the Academic writer that I find most helpful. Is Dennis Klass because he really really informs my thinking and helps me think. Outside the Box personally, but the book that I found it wasn't the whole book, after the death of my husband, this is a book, by Virginia, Ryan side, so It's quite old now but the opening Page of that Book, I just found it Stupendous because what she does is she Talks about Grief, as Chaos, the absolute Chaos, and there and there is no Pattern to it, and then of course She She Carries on writing a book where She's trying to describe a Pattern, to it, but that opening Paragraph I just really really spoke to me yeah.

Facilitator: And I'm gonna suggest one that is actually young adult fiction. It's called Looking for Alaska, by John Green, and within that a a young person die suddenly and there's a Lot of things on there and around how their friends, react to that and the Importance of sort of emotionality and Relationships, particularly for Young People and like Korina, sometimes looking at Literature, and engaging with that can open up many worlds and thinking things differently.

Facilitator: And We're almost at the end of our session. So I'm gonna ask each of the Panelists, if you had to give one tip on how to support someone with Bereavement, what would that one Tip be and I'm going to go in the order, I see you on my

Kerry: Listen.

Andy: I just wrote the word. Listen down to And what time? Again, timing where where you're at, and what you're looking for

Korina: I had listened, One, and even though I'm looking I'm Doing Social, Media, I'd say, even if you can post online make sure you also make contact in Person, without that either you know call them. Or be there. Facilitator: Yeah, so social media contact isn't necessarily replacing other forms of contact.

Jane: Yeah, I had listened down as well, but but I suppose maybe to add to that perhaps ask you know what what would be helpful or what's. The previous experience is just fine ways of trying to open a Conversation and show you not afraid of a conversation. and I'm being absolutely prepared to talk about the person who's died I think as well, yeah.

Facilitator: Thank you, and mine was too good to be reaching out, but also not to be afraid to reach out at different time. Periods. So sometimes it's right immediately after the death that person might have a lot of contact. And then things go silent or professional services might come in a bit, later, but for some people, it can be like gaps between hearing from people send up not to be afraid to reach out at different times and speak about things. If it's appropriate for that person. Well, we are coming to the end of our session. Now I know there's lots of questions we haven't managed to answer and like, I said, We'll try to respond to as many as we can in communications after this event but what i'd like to say is thank you so much for taking your time to join us today and ask such Engaged

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Questions, and Engage with the 4 Different Panelists, Talks, a huge thank you to our 4 panelists, and to the Faculty's Communication team for Supporting, the Session, Doing Fab, work with the tech behind the Scenes, if you Do have Further questions for the Panelists, that you Haven't put in the Q, a. Or something comes to you after the session, you can't be able to contact them. A lot of their email addresses are available on staff profiles or if you're unable to find that you can contact me erica.borgstrom@open.ac.uk and I will Funnel it. To the person soon after the session, you'll receive an email from us with a very short evaluation survey and links to different resources on the topics that people have been covering today we'd really appreciate your Feedback to help Us, develop further events like this lastly, I just Wanna say, thank you. So much again, for attending for me, Erica Borgstrom, the Lead of Open Thanatology, and Again on Behalf of the Panel, Members and our Faculty for Coming today, and We've hope you, have a good Day, yet thank you so much