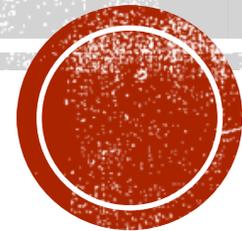


COVID AND GRIEF



MARY-ANN SONTAG BOWMAN PH.D. LCSW

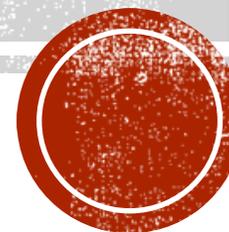
UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

PANDEMIC LIFE

“I was berating myself for not getting enough completed each day and week, wondering why I couldn’t get that last towel bar hung up. Those few papers filed. I told myself I was being lazy, that I wasn’t trying hard enough, that I wasn’t focusing.”



CHANGE = LOSS



PANDEMIC LIFE: WHAT HAVE WE LOST?

- Time
- Sense of Ease/Safety
- Bereavement Rituals
- Our elders
- Mental health
- Income/Job
- Hope
- Motivation
- Holidays
- Relationships
- Non-verbal communication
- Routine
- Social Life
- Childhood
- Patience
- Compassion
- Opportunities
- Presence



PANDEMIC LIFE: WHAT HAVE WE LOST?

Human Connection





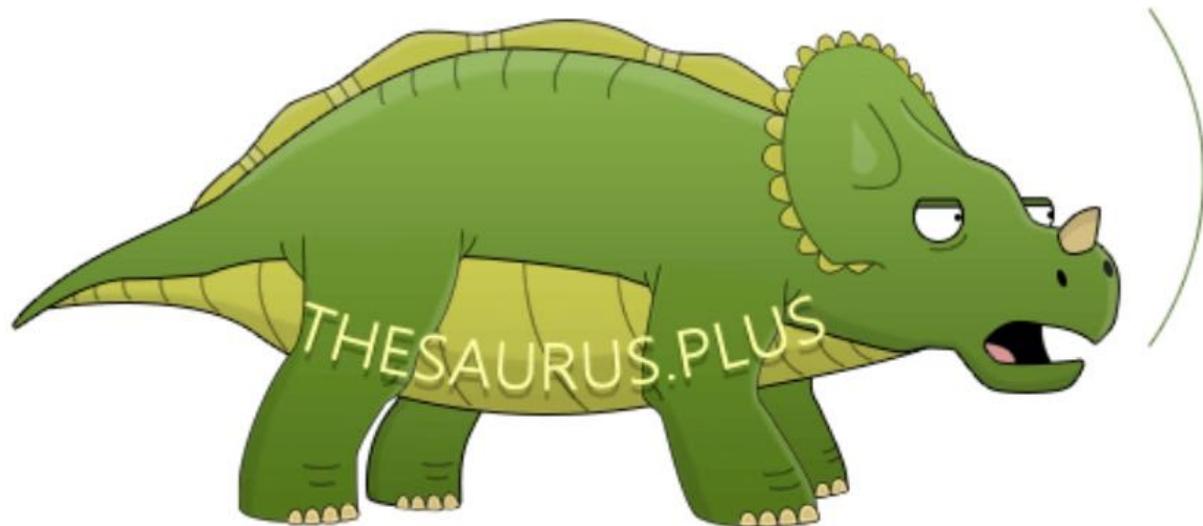
PANDEMIC LOSSES

Disenfranchised



synonyms for last straw:

limit, provocation, end, enough,
match in the powder barrel, affront, indignity,
overload, final stroke, last lick

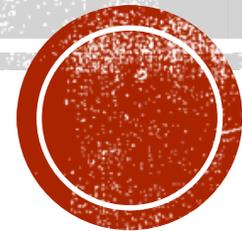


PANDEMIC LOSSES

Cumulative

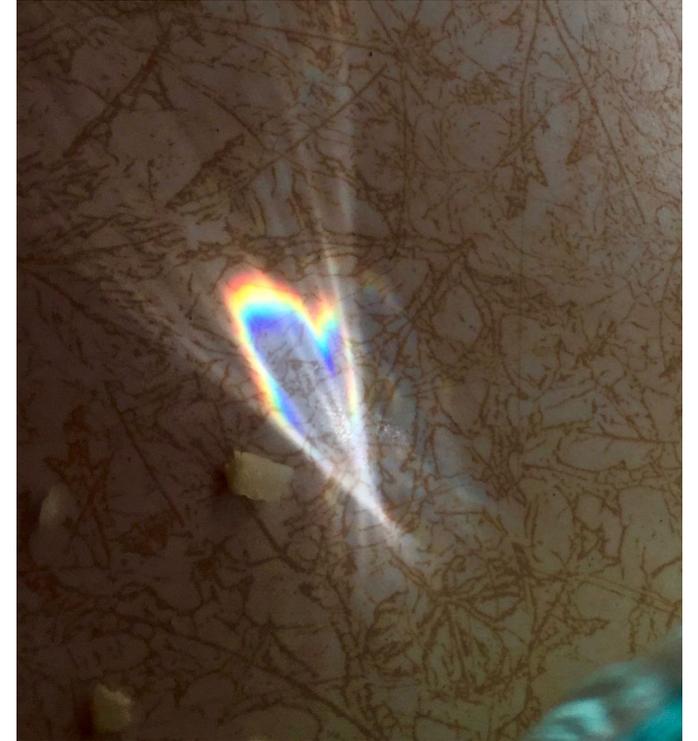


CHANGE = LOSS = GRIEF



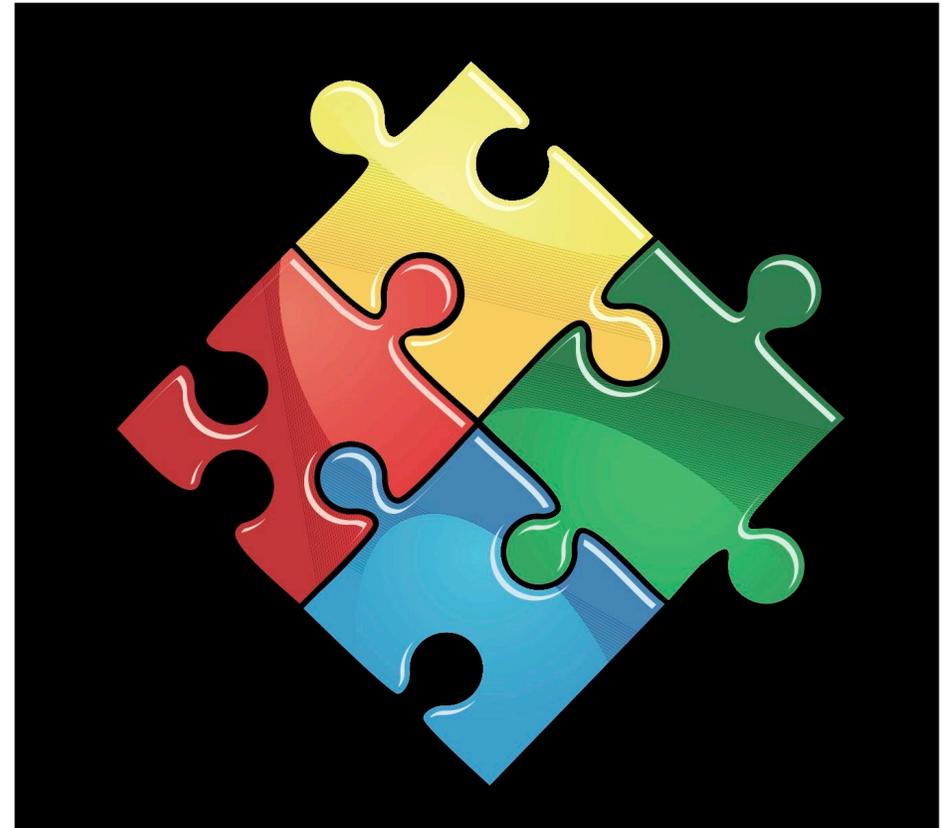
GRIEF . . .

- ...is universal and profoundly personal.
- ...is not a problem to be solved.
- ...doesn't involve stages.
- ...doesn't have a time limit or an end.
- ...is 100% normal.



EXPERIENCES & EXPRESSIONS OF GRIEF

- Emotional
- Social
- Cognitive
- Spiritual
- Physical



WHAT IS GRIEFWORTHY? WHAT IS NOT? WHO DECIDES?





PANDEMIC LOSSES

Loss of
Human
Connection

means

Socially
Distant
Support



COPING RESOURCES ARE FINITE



Image from
members.upnaway.com



HOW TO COPE

- Recognize loss burden
- Understand normal grief
- Self-awareness
- Suspend judgment
- Avoid “at least...”
- Acknowledge coping resources are finite
- Dial back
- Layer additional resources – not demands
- So much Grace



HOW TO HELP

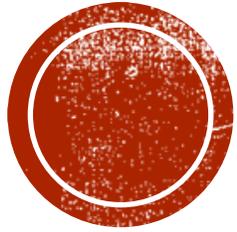
- Recognize loss burden
- Understand normal grief
- Listen
- Suspend judgment
- Educate and normalize
- Avoid platitudes
- Acknowledge coping resources are finite
- Encourage and support dialing back
- Layer additional resources – not demands
- So much Grace



**“IN THE MIDDLE OF DIFFICULTY LIES
OPPORTUNITY”**

▪ **Albert Einstein**





WWW.HELPWITHGRIEF.ORG

MARY-ANN SONTAG BOWMAN PH.D. LCSW

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

mary-ann.bowman@umontana.edu