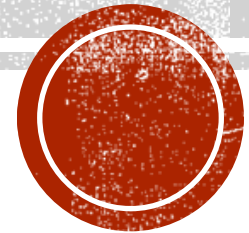




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WHEN GRIEF COMES TO SCHOOL

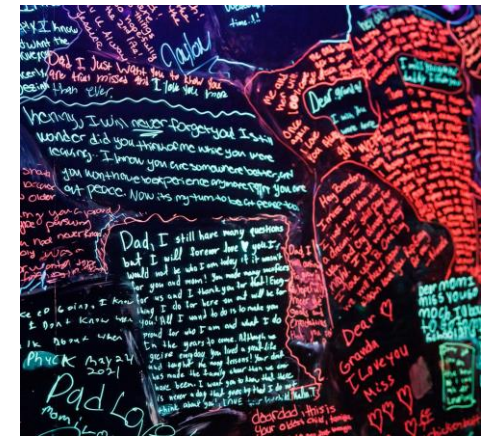


Matthew Bunt, M.Ed., LPC-S - Matthew.Bunt@childrensal.org

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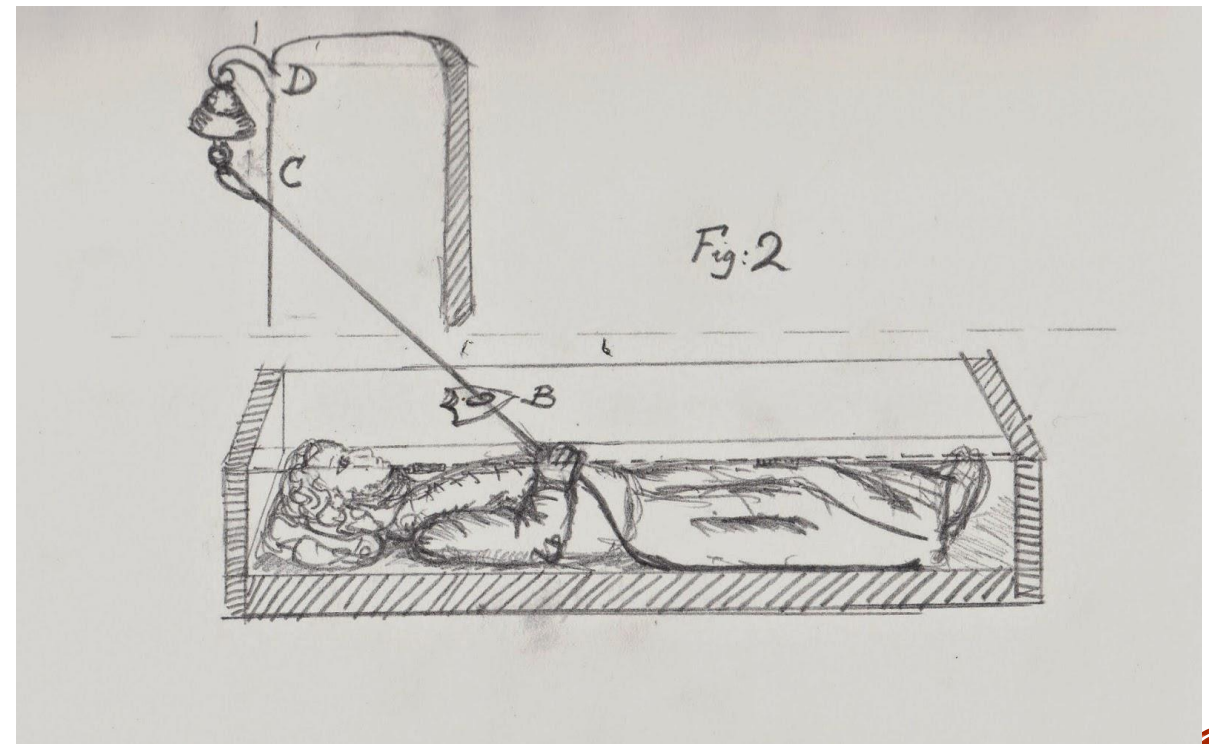


CULTURE AND GRIEF



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- Past and present mourning rituals
- Expectations





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WHAT'S NORMAL IN GRIEF?

- Natural and normal response to loss
- Everyone responds differently
- Duration
- Eye of the beholder
- Impacts us on numerous levels
- Stages





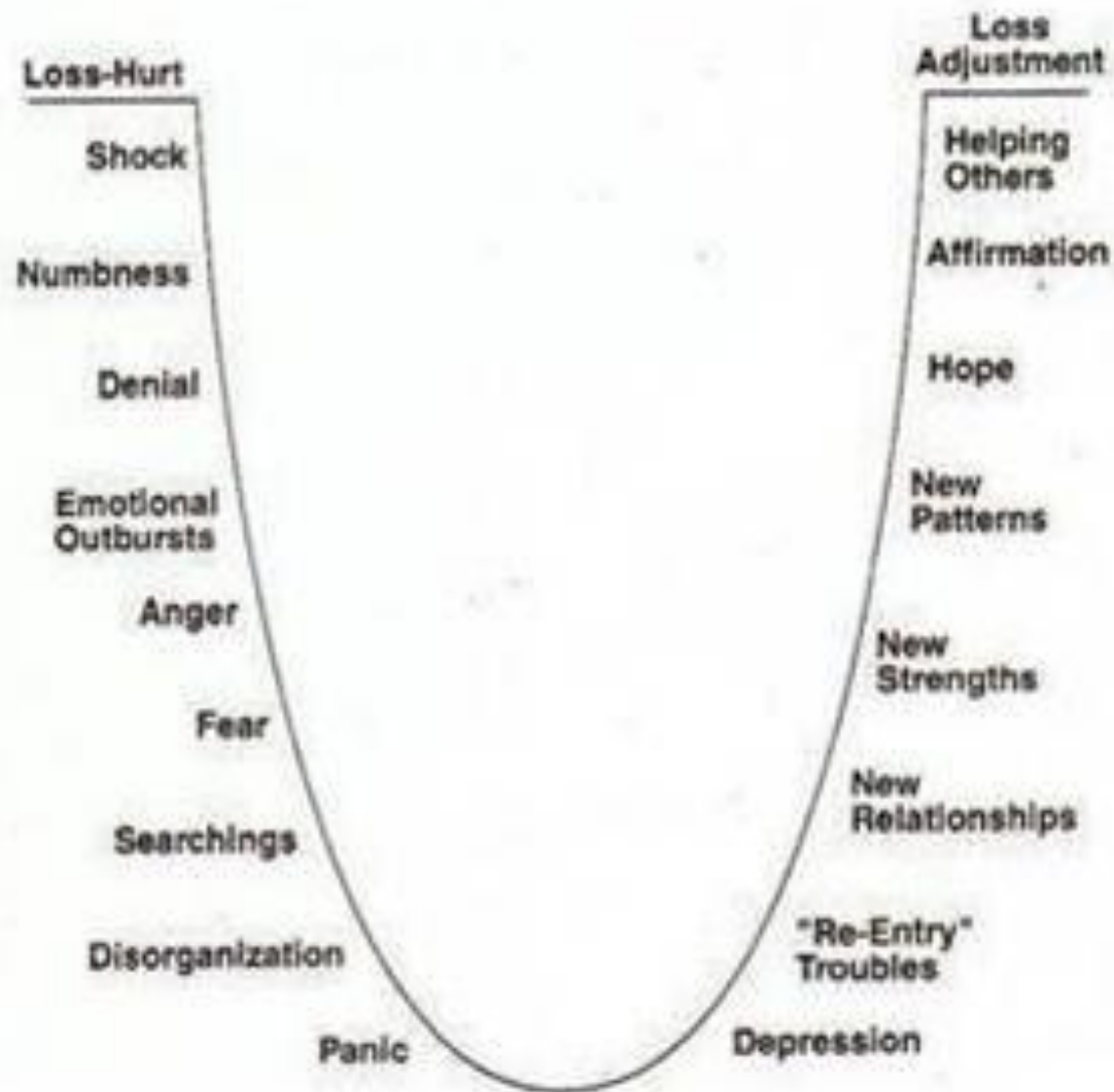
1926 - 2004

ELIZABETH KUBLER ROSS

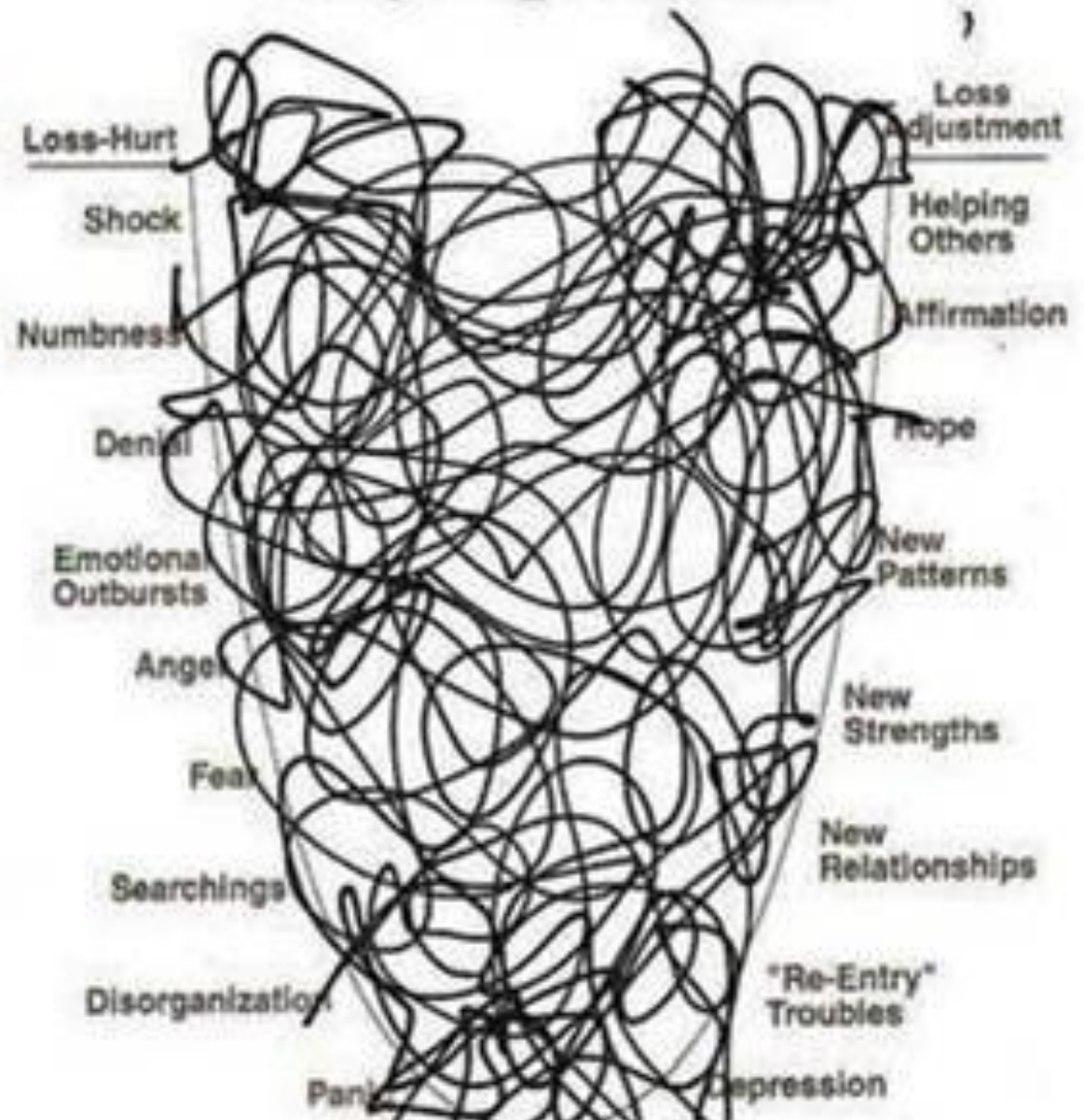
The reality is you will grieve forever. You will not get over the loss of a loved one; you will learn to live with it. You will heal, and you will rebuild yourself around the loss you have suffered. You will be whole again but you will never be the same nor should you want to.



STAGES OF GRIEF



My experience



FOUR TASKS OF MOURNING



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Task 1: To accept the reality of the loss

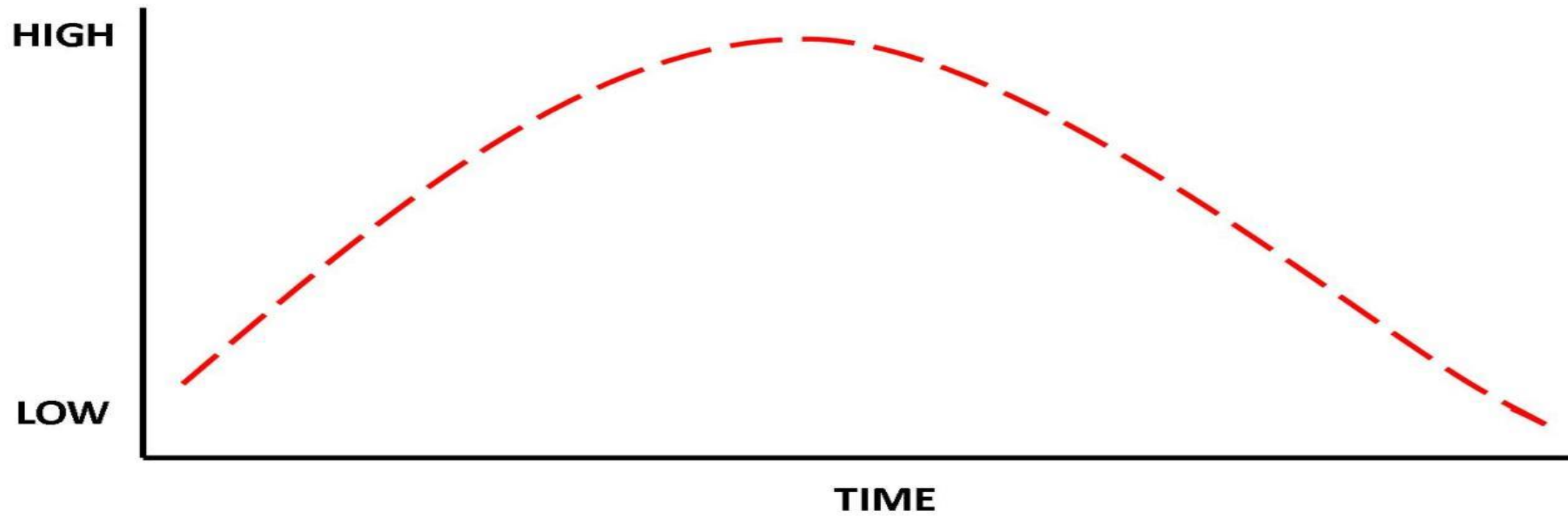
Task 2: To process the pain of grief

Task 3: To adjust to a world without the deceased

Task 4: To find a way to remember the deceased while embarking on the rest of one's journey through life

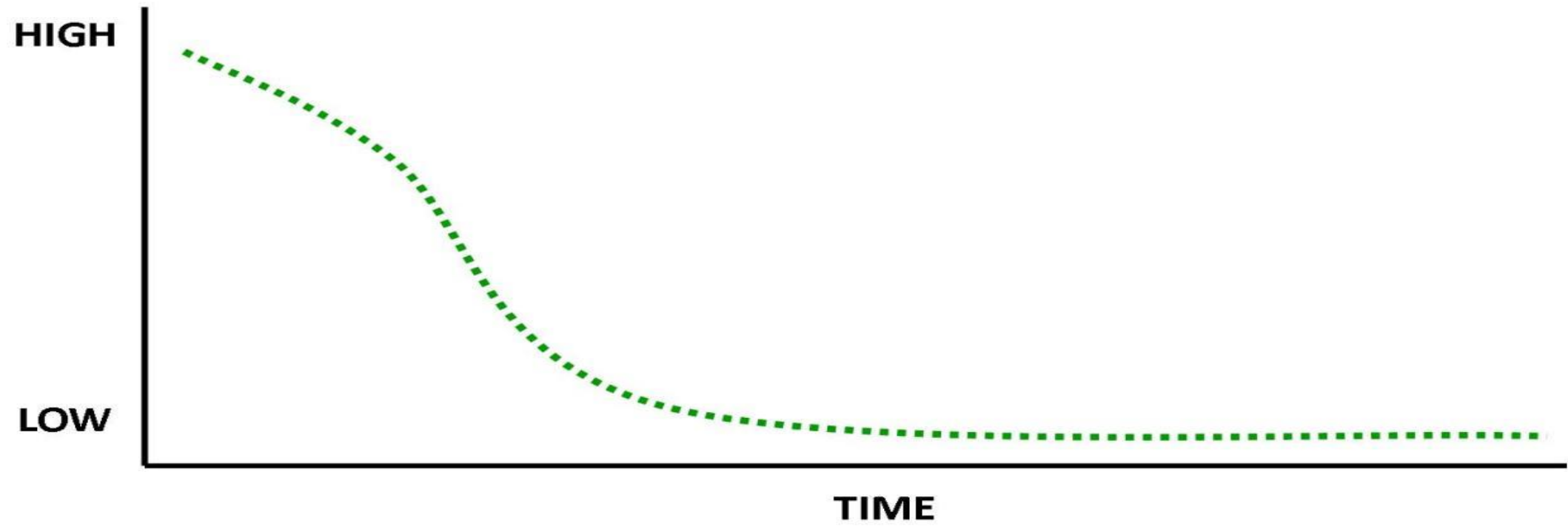
William Worden



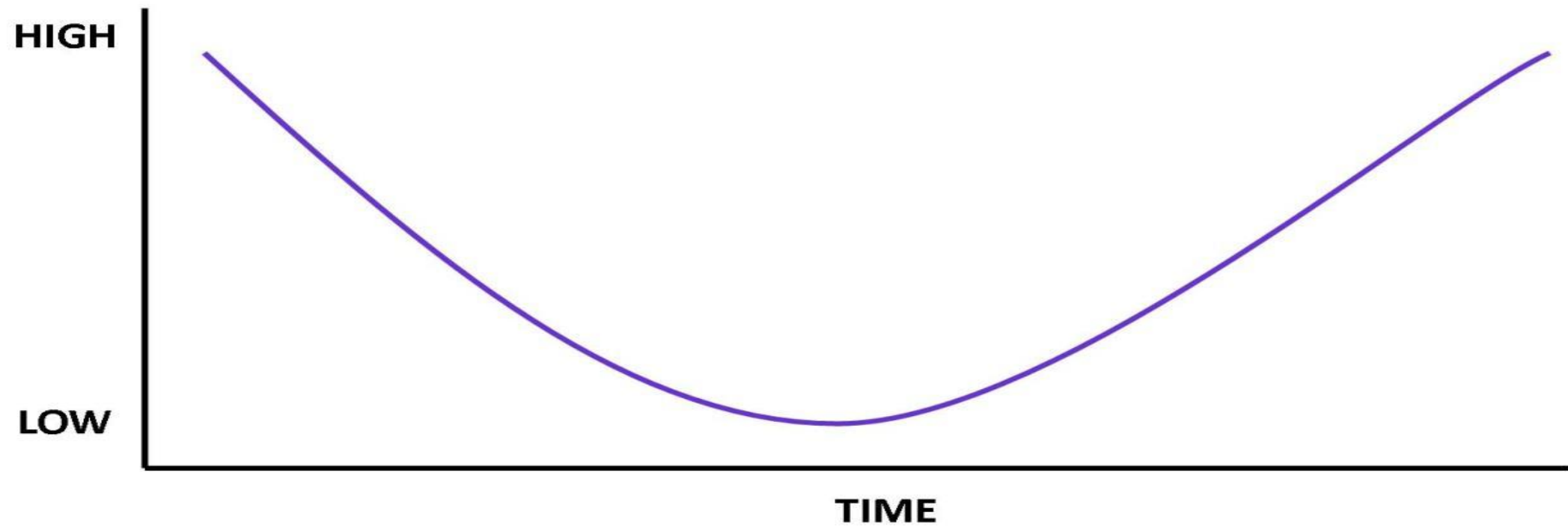


- Emotional Distress
- - - Shock
- ... Social Support



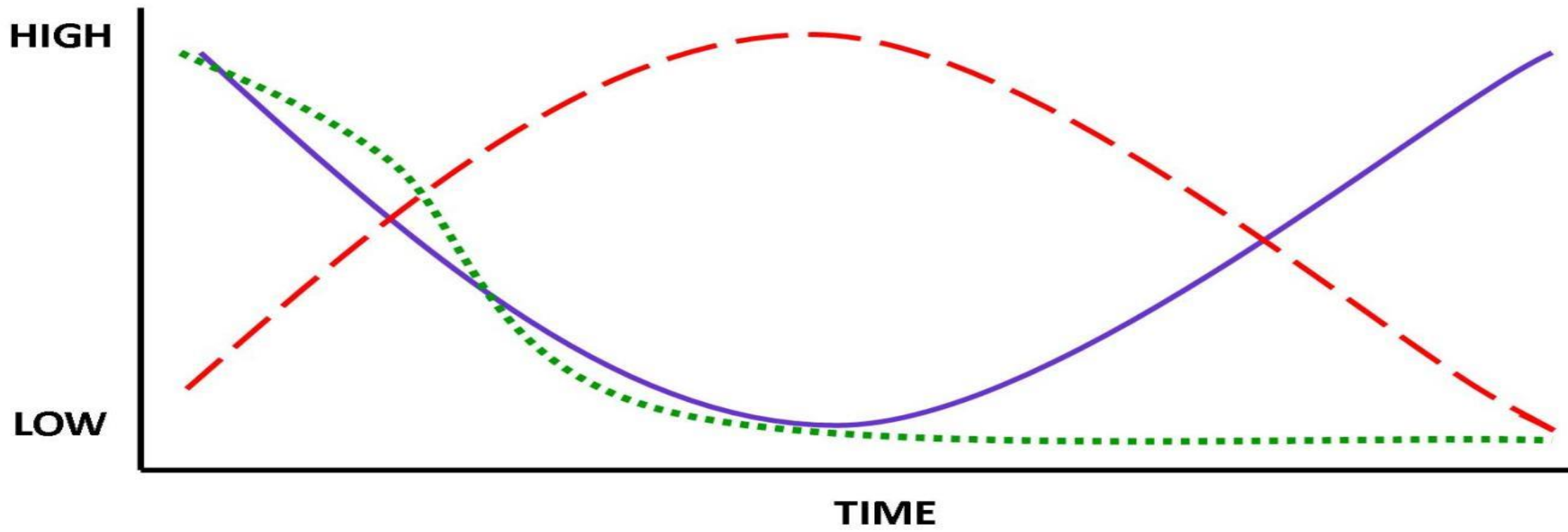


- Emotional Distress
- - Shock
- ... Social Support



-  **Emotional Distress**
-  **Shock**
-  **Social Support**





-  **Emotional Distress**
-  **Shock**
-  **Social Support**



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SCHEMAS AND WORLDVIEW

- Perceptions of how the world is supposed to work
 - Perceived order of life and death
 - Understanding of family
 - Universality of death
 - Friends
 - God/Spirituality
 - Justice
 - Trust





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GRIEVING BEYOND GENDER

- What are some reactions that women typically have in their grief? What about men?
- Personality vs. Gender
- Intuitive vs Instrumental grieving- Kenneth Doka and Terry Martin





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GRIEVING BEYOND GENDER

- **INTUITIVE GRIEF**

- Based on work of Terry Martin and Kenneth Doka
- Grief is experienced as waves of emotion
- Grief expression mirrors inner feelings and emotions
- More feeling than thinking
- Focused on exploring and expressing feelings and processing emotions
- More “feminine” way of grieving





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GRIEVING BEYOND GENDER

- **INSTRUMENTAL GRIEF**

- Based on work of Terry Martin and Kenneth Doka
- Grief is experienced in more physical or cognitive ways
- Grief is expressed in more physical, cognitive or behavioral ways
- More thinking than feeling
- Focused on doing and actively responding to grief
- More “masculine” way of grieving



GRIEVING BEYOND GENDER

INTUITIVE GRIEF



INSTRUMENTAL GRIEF

This is a continuum



FAMILY DYNAMICS AND GRIEF



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- Put yourself in the role of a child after a death
 - Taking on more of an adult role, worrying about surviving parent, becoming emotional spouse for the parent
 - Behavioral issues arise- testing new boundaries, who's in charge?
- Put yourself in the role of a parent
 - Spouse dies - the role redefined, how am I going to be a single parent, what roles do I need to fill now, Challenges parent- how do I create new structure by myself
 - Emotional absence/hyperfocus from parents after death of child, marital stress with different grieving styles
- How do you think these stressors would affect family functioning?



EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES IN CHILDREN & TEENS

- Regression
- Acting out, aggression
- Somatic symptoms
- Lack of focus
- Withdrawal
- Acting less or more mature
- Risk-taking behaviors
- Personality changes
- Crying
- Sadness
- Fear/Anxiety
- Confusion
- Anger
- Responsibility for the death/guilt
- Strong perceived attachment to deceased



HOW TO HELP CHILDREN

- Use concrete terminology and be honest
- Correct misconceptions/magical thinking
- Enter their world to help – art, music, play
- Maintain structure and routine
- Follow the child's lead
- Recognize they will revisit grief as they get older



HOW TO HELP TEENS

- Expect emotional swings and thoughts and feelings to be inconsistent
- Answer questions honestly
- Allow for defensive behavior if it basically harmless to themselves or others
- Respect teen's wishes and allow them to choose how to be involved in death and mourning process
- Grieve not only present loss, but also future losses
- As adults, be honest in your own grieving and share in discussions when invited
- Connect with resources





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WHAT IS NOT HELPFUL

- Assuming they have support elsewhere
- Forcing them to talk about the death
- Using clichés and euphemisms
- Imposing own cultural ideas of how individuals and families should grieve
- Sharing books about grief too early in the process
- Overstaying your welcome



GOING BACK TO SCHOOL

- Talk to student/family before returning to school
- Develop safety-net plan for tough moments
- “Grief-induced ADHD”
- How lenient should you be?
- Recognize grief takes a lot longer than most people think
- Let them be okay or not be okay





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WHEN TO REFER

- Excessive crying
- Significant behavior changes
- Prolonged decreased engagement in school activities
- Asking to talk to someone
- Prolonged somatic symptoms (after seeing primary doctor)



RESOURCES



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- ameliacenter.org
- communitygriefsupport.org
- [National Alliance for Grieving Children](#)

