



Walking Through the Wilderness of Anticipatory Grief

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Definition of a Caregiver for this Webinar

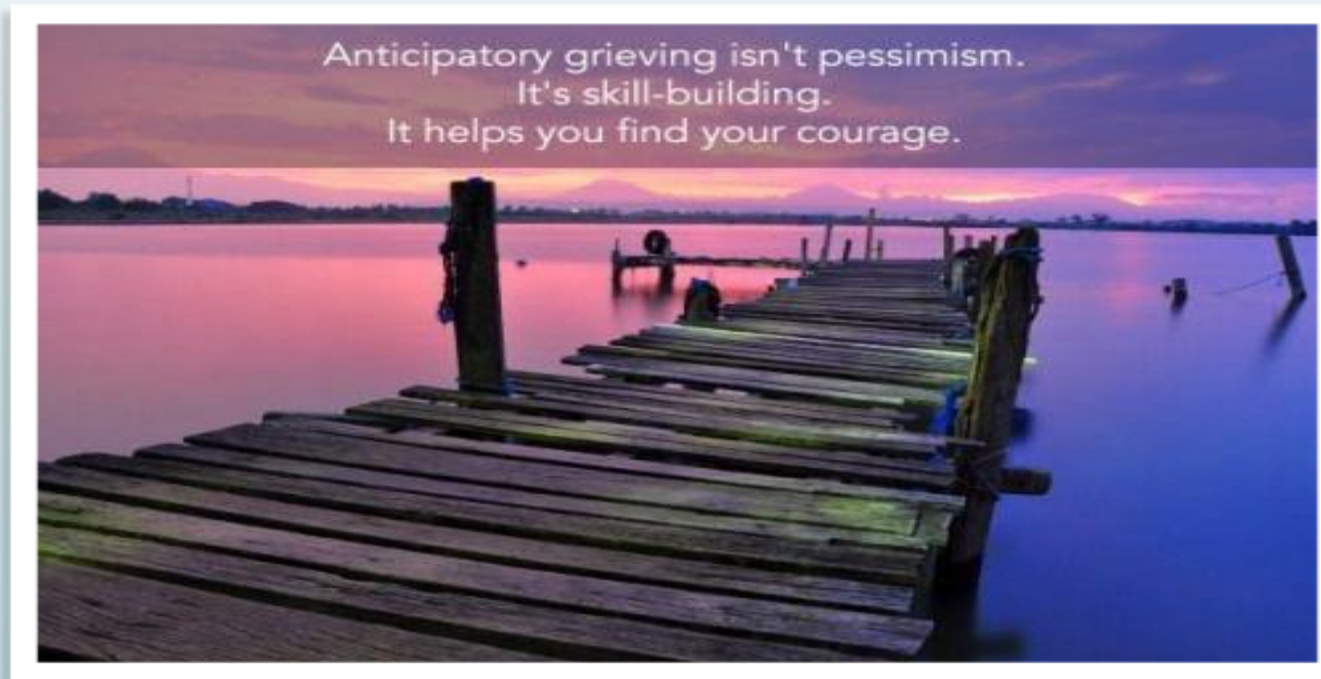
A caregiver includes:

- Housekeepers
- Volunteers
- Program Coordinators
- And others

Anticipatory Grief: Saying Hello Before Saying Goodbye

The Gift of Being Present

Anticipatory grief is defined as grief that occurs before a loss. Anticipatory grief is common both among caregivers and those being cared for, often occurring simultaneously.



Anticipatory Grief: The Unknown

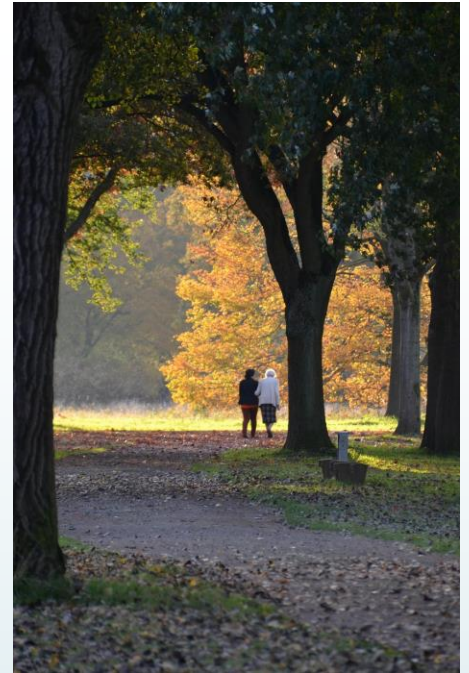


The Journey Begins

The end may not be in sight.

The road forward comes with many hills and turns.

Many possible changes occur in health.



Building Trust and a Relationship with Your Client

- Centre yourself before entering
- Smile when greeting your client
- Ask about sharing pictures of memories; have them talk about their loved one
- Sacred listening and holding the space
- Taking time when possible
- Playing music that they like

Anticipatory Grief Journey



A Journey for Caregivers, Too



Hope – Worry – Fear



Not Knowing the End Or “Unknown Fear”



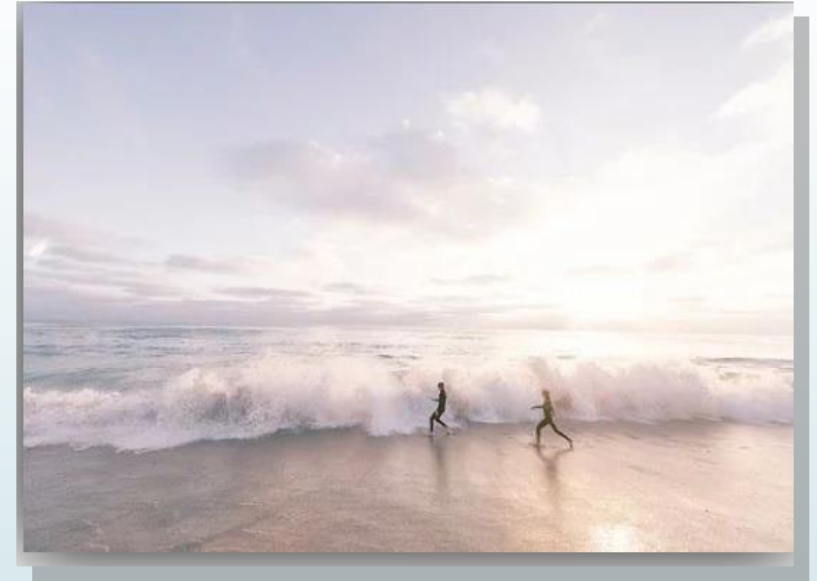
The Journey

- The journey can be long as much as a year or more from diagnosis
 - Autoimmune diseases, Dementia, Parkinson's, Multiple Sclerosis, Rheumatoid Arthritis
- The journey can be less time
 - Car accident, a brain injury, certain cancers, complications such as pneumonia
- With shorter timelines, there may be little you can offer
 - Holding a vigil until the loved one passes
- Differing impacts on clients / loved-ones



Anticipatory Grief: Possible Feelings

- Shock & numbness (with diagnosis)
- Denial & disbelief
- Hope (for a better outcome)
- Frequent worry
- Fear as symptoms change
- Explosive emotions (such as anger) – Why?
- Regret: Not being able to go forward with plans
- Sadness of losing the person



A place between hope, worry and fear, a wave crashing on the shore and then residing back to the ocean



What is Mourning a Possible Loss?

With every visit you are may be unaware of the experiences and emotions of the client:

- Feeling powerless
- Worry
- Fear of the unknown
- Physical symptoms
- Want to stop their loved one from declining
- Feeling helpless



Possible Ongoing Emotions

- Hopelessness
- Overwhelmed
- Tired
- Guilt
- Ruminating
- Exhaustion
- Feeling unable to deal
- Wishing it was over, but not wishing a loved one to die
- ***Burnout***: Starting to feel unable to cope



I have experienced burnout twice;

- Working in “Homecare” when I was taking people home to die, I emotionally burned out.
- Following retirement, saying “yes” to requests and taking on way too much, I was over committed without time for myself. This was physical burnout.

Emotional Burnout

- Avoiding going out
- Not answering the phone
- Sleeping a lot
- Getting lost in other things like watching TV
- Unable to handle new challenges
- Depression



Emotional Burnout (cont'd)

- Anxiety
- Irritation
- Not looking after yourself
- Guilt
- Lack of motivation
- Self-criticism
- Loss of interest in activities



Physical Burnout

- Just want to be alone
- Low energy
- Fatigue
- Recurring headaches
- Frequent sickness
- Body aches
- Loss of appetite
- Insomnia
- Inability to accomplish things
- Chest pain
- Heart palpitations
- Gastrointestinal pain
- Dizziness
- Fainting



Caring for Self

- Physical self
- Emotional self (talking to others on the team)
- Cognitive self (gathering information)
- Social self (spending time with others)
- Spiritual self (meditation, prayer, being in nature)



**TAKE CARE OF
YOURSELF**



Additional Considerations

Spending time in the now

Making conscious choices one day at a time

Sharing memories with others

Embrace, allow and accept whatever is happening, happens

Small steps at a time, even if they seem to go backwards

Grief bursts on leaving

Dosing themselves

Stepping away to do something to calm oneself

Additional Ideas for Self Care

- Small breaks
- Relaxation
- Exercise
- Stretching
- Mindfulness
- Massage
- Conversation - positive people
- Journaling
- Reading
- Taking a shower
- A spa day
- Walking in nature
- Listening to music
- Yoga
- Sauna
- Sacred silence

What are you doing for self-care?





Coping Skills for Loss

- Sharing of memories
- Going through photos
- Listening to music
- Being in nature
- Special activities
- Going to a memorial or celebration of life
- A linking object
- Visiting a special place

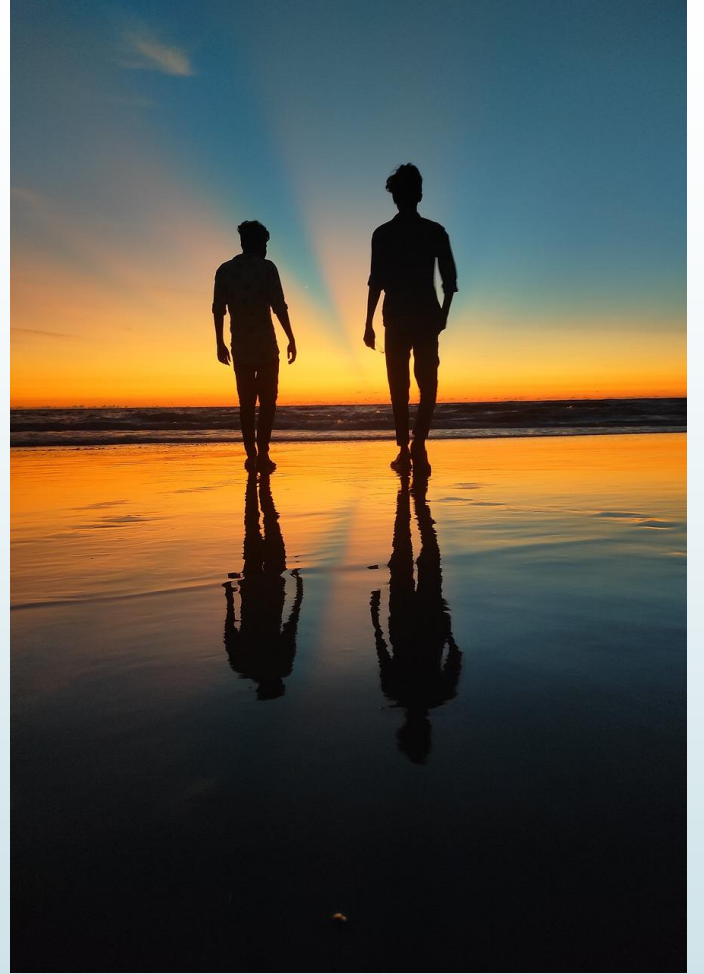
Seeking Help

- Reaching out for help
- Support groups
- Empathetic friends
- Seeking professional help
- Sharing your emotions with others
 - Family, friends, etc.



The Journey Ends: Saying Good-bye

- The “Journey” can be long or short.
- Impacts both the client and the caregiver
- Comfort care versus curative care (palliative)
- Saying hello before you say good-bye
- Letting go
- Giving loved one permission





Another Journey Begins

- Give the caregiver (you) permission to let go
- Attending a celebration of life.
- Now we move into GRIEF

Thank you for your attention. Please put any questions on the side.



Continuing the Journey

Journaling:

- Self care activities.
- Creative activities
- Identify your support people.
- Using a calendar to journal special days.
- Goals and plans for you.
- Identify activities to honour the person



Thank You

- The United Way
- The Caregivers of the East Kootenay Seniors
- Invermere Public Library

AND --- All the caregivers that have helped me to understand their learning's.