



# Change, Grief and Loss

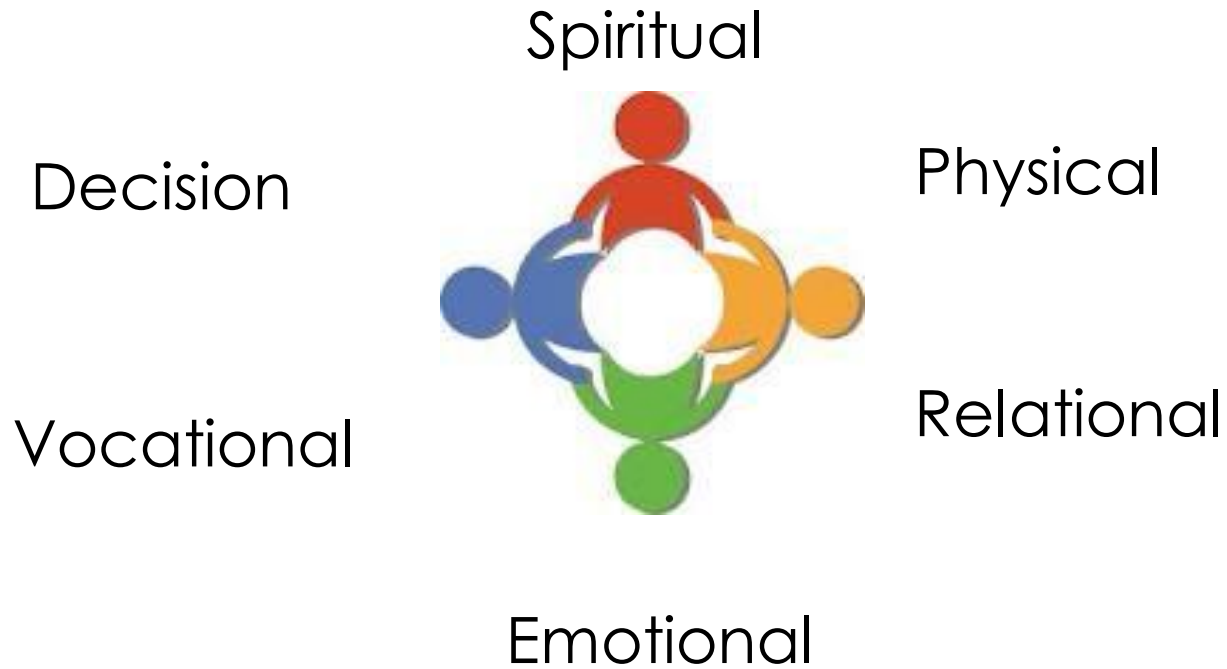
National Youth Ministry Conference

St Columba Centre  
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It is  
hard  
to  
fly  
when  
something  
is  
weighing  
you  
down.

# The Human Dimensions



# Change, Grief and Loss in Young Adulthood

.....a time of significant change and transition

**Transition** from College to University

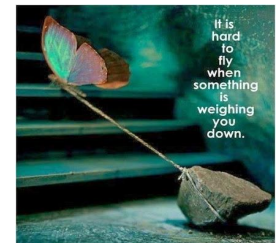
**Graduation**

Choosing a **career** path

Dependence to **independence**

Significant **relationships**

Search for **purpose** and **meaning**



Death of a parent/family member/friend

Divorce of parents

Loss of friendships

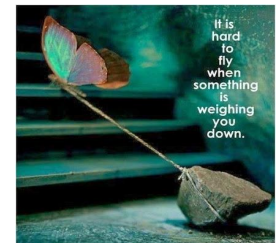
Chronic illness

Academic failure

Unemployment

Loss of special possession

Death of pet



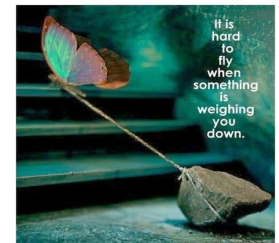
Grief is OK, *but only for a while*

It's something to *get over*

Stage based expectations

A strong will can help us to move on

Grief should be rational, solvable

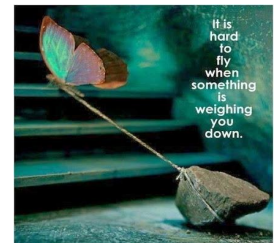


## Consider:

*Are these views rational and practical?*

*Are these views helpful or harmful?*

*Do these views foster hope or anxiety?*



# The Tasks of Grief *(based on The Tasks of Mourning by J William Worden)*

**Accept**  
*the reality of the loss*



**Re-invest**  
*emotional energy*

**Experience**  
*the pain of loss*

**Adjust**  
*to an environment where the  
person/thing is no longer  
present*



# Stuck for Words?

**DON'T** avoid grieving people

**DO** ask how things are going

**DON'T** try to minimise the loss

**DO** say something to acknowledge their loss

**DON'T** be afraid to say the name of their loved one

**DO** let them cry/talk about their loss

**DON'T**

tell them how they should or shouldn't feel

**DO**

let them ask WHY?

**DON'T**

try to compare grief experiences

**DO**

remember significant days

**DON'T**

tell them you know exactly how they feel

**DO**

listen



# Effective Listening...

Stop talking

Give full attention to the person speaking

Convey acceptance no matter what

Use eyes, ears and heart to listen

Tune in to the feelings behind the words

Put aside assumptions and judgements

*“The most basic of all human needs is the need to understand and be understood. The best way to understand people is to listen to them.” – Ralph G Nichols*

# Effective Listening...

Respect silences

Don't interrupt

Pay attention to non-verbal communication

Restate what was said if necessary

“Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.”

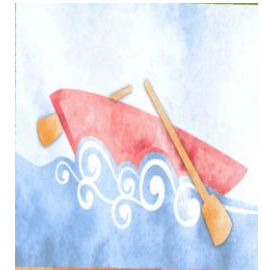
Stephen R Covey

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

# Support Networks

Our sanity .... our sense of being in control of our lives rests heavily on being part of a human network ....

When survivors scramble into a lifeboat, they not only experience the relief of knowing that they are all in the same boat, but they also find it helpful to have someone else to share the rowing!



*-an extract from Re-inventing Australia by Hugh Mackay*

## Three simple yet effective strategies...

Who can you talk to?

Where can you go?

What can you do?

## Some Facts about Change

Change is **inevitable**

Some **change** is **unwelcome** and even **unfair**

Change can invoke great feelings of **loss** and **grief**

This grief should be **recognised, acknowledged**  
and **validated**

Even “good” change can be **difficult**

There is no “right” way to cope with change and loss; each experience is unique.

We are all capable of cultivating resiliency – but some may need more guidance than others.

Encourage one another to accept help and companionship from others; it's OK to be vulnerable, perhaps even courageous.

*Healing takes courage, and we all have courage, even if we have to dig a little to find it.*

*- Tori Amos*



## Rationale:

We can best help each other by acknowledging the inevitability of change, loss and grief and then encouraging them to live with these experiences in a purposeful and healthy manner.

*We can't stop the birds of sorrow from flying over our heads,  
but we can prevent them from building nests in our hair.*  
- Chinese Proverb



## Final Thoughts.....

It is only when we incorporate the lessons we've learned from change, loss and grief that we are able to move forward.

At times society does not support these endeavors; thus, the responsibility of providing support falls to those of us who understand.



*With the breakdown of what has gone before,  
the possibility of rebirth comes.*

*-Marian Woodman & Jill Mellick*