

# Holiday Stress Managing Loss and Change in the Season of Joy

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A Program of Bill Wilson Center



#### Loss and Change

- \* Grief and stress: Our natural response to loss and change
- **\***Acute, Delayed, Cumulative & Occupational Stress
- **★Emotional trauma equals physical** injury
- \*We can do an action step



## Social Distancing = Physical Distancing

When I hug you, I hug me, I hug you....



### 360 Grief



Natural Disasters

**COVI**D-19 Pandemic

Racial Equity & Justice

Climate Change

- **★Entire life impacted**
- **★**Every area affected
- \*Acknowledge magnitude
- **★**Share the experience
- \*Tend and befriend



#### Holidays

- **★Intensify good and painful memories of incidents we are surviving**
- **★** We gear up for the holidays
- ★We can prepare with actions to honor our loss and love
- \*We can include others in our ceremonies
- **★** Isolation to community, OOC to control





#### What is the Centre?

- ★ Provides support, intervention and education for the life issues of grief, loss, serious illness, trauma and change for community members, caregiving professionals and responders.
- \* Non profit program of Bill Wilson Center for Silicon Valley and surrounding areas.
- \* Group, individual, children, family and community support and intervention.
- \* For almost 45 years, over one and a half million people served.



#### Pandemic Fatigue

- Exhaustion: mind, body, soul
- More critical incidents in addition to pandemic
- Secondary trauma
- Erosion of resiliency



#### During the Holidays

- **★Permission to grieve in our American**Society
- ★Men and Women: How are we taught to grieve
- **★**Cultural traditions in grief, loss and change
- \*How do we acknowledge stress and grief in an affirming way in the season of joy?



#### What is Grief?

- **★** Natural response to any loss or change
- \*A normal person having a normal reaction to an abnormal event
- ★Unpredictable waves of emotions and memory triggers
- ★ Very individual and unique, and yet our universal human experience
- **★** Grief and trauma know no time



#### PTSI and the Holidays

- **★Prolonged stress and grief**
- **\***Repeating and intrusive memory triggers
- \*Cascade effect
- **★**Backpack dynamic
- \*Managing acute symptoms first

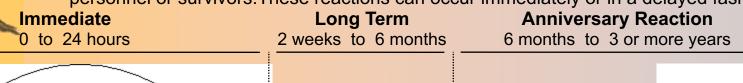


#### Grief and Loss

- \*Magnitude of loss
- \*Spiral of Reactions
- **\***Sensory, Time and Memory Reminders
- \*Loss of Life meaning/purpose
- **★**Heart Hotel

#### Reactions in the Aftermath of a Critical Incident

A critical incident is any event that causes unusually strong reactions in the responding personnel or survivors. These reactions can occur immediately or in a delayed fashion





- •Shakiness Angry

  •Shakiness Hostile
  •
- Nausea

**Short-term Memory** 

- Excitable
- Agitated
- Clammy

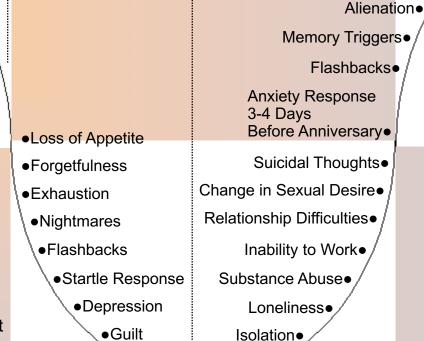
Shock

#### The Centre for Living with Dying

A program of the Bill Wilson Center (408) 243-0222

#### Bay Area CISM Team

Critical Incident Stress Management



Sensory, Memory, & Time Triggers

These symptoms, feelings, reactions or events may occur at any time:

Repeating Stuck Surprise Phantoms Withd

Out of Control Withdrawal

Vulnerability Paralysis

Caregivers Delayed Response

Dread Physical & Emotional Pain

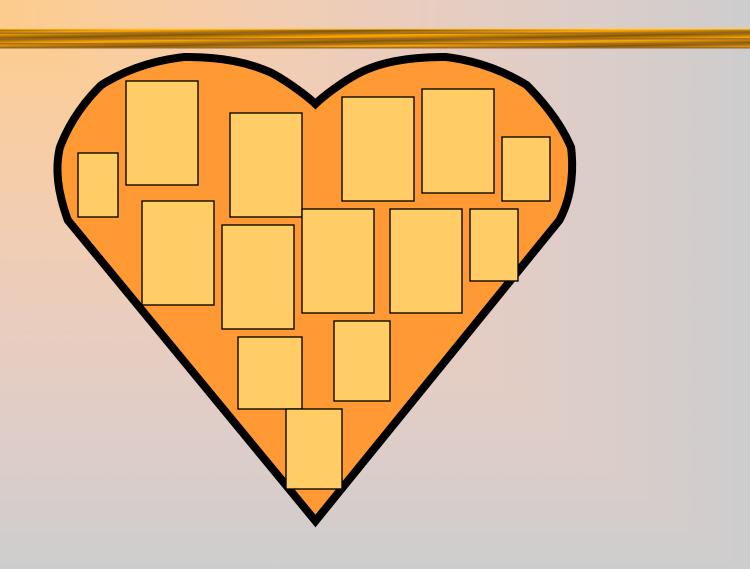


## Spiral of Change





#### Heart Hotel





#### Family Dynamics

- \*Judge each other on behaviors vs. reactions/feelings
- \*Have specific roles
- **★**Conflict because each person has a different reaction
- \*Focus on individual experience and needs



## Adapted Maslow's Needs Hierarchy

- \*Survival
- \*Safety
- \*Emotional Needs/ Relationships
- \*Building the New Normal
- \*Creating Meaning from the Trauma/ Life Transformation





#### Need

#### Don't Need

- \* Acknowledgement
- \* Presence
- \* Choice
- \* Ask
- \* Listen
- \* Permission
- \* Validation
- \* Space

- \* Advice
- \* Judgment
- \* Clichés
- \* War Stories
- **\*** Minimizing
- \* Ignored
- \* Pity
- \* You should . . .



#### Support Tips

- **\***Stay in the present moment.
- \*Normalize grief/stress response.
- \*Focus on most difficult issue RIGHT NOW.
- \*Assess what is needed RIGHT NOW.
- **★**No easy way over grief, but moment by moment, we get through grief and build the NEW NORMAL.



#### Triage the Holidays

- \*What is the thing you are most dreading this holiday season?
- **★ What is the action step you can do?**
- \*What tradition can you change or let go of this year?
- ★If it takes more energy than it gives you, let it go this year



### Tools for Survival

- \*Acknowledge
- \*Express
- \*Act
- \*Reconnect



### Tools for Survival

**ACKNOWLEDGE** 

**EXPRESS** 

ACT

RECONNECT



#### Daily Log

- **★My body** what does it say?
- \*What did I eat?
- **★Did** I move?
- \*Any unfinished business?
- \*What did I do just for me?
- \*Dreams and day dreams
- \*Identify: what is the most powerful today and what do I need?
- **★ Mes**sage for me in the day





#### Triage

- \*Breathe.
- **★** Drink plenty of water.
- \*Move.
- \*Eat.
- **★**Give yourself a break.
- **★** Ground: Get in the present moment.
- **★** Identify: what is the most difficult
- \*And what do I need to get through it right now.



#### Remember

- **★Be gentle with your own process.**
- \*What you do does make a difference in people's lives and their ability to survive the loss. *It is never too late to respond*.
- \*We have today. Savor what's good in your life now.
- **★** Do something fun and life affirming for yourself in the next 24 hours.