**COPING WITH LOSS COURSE – WEEK ONE**

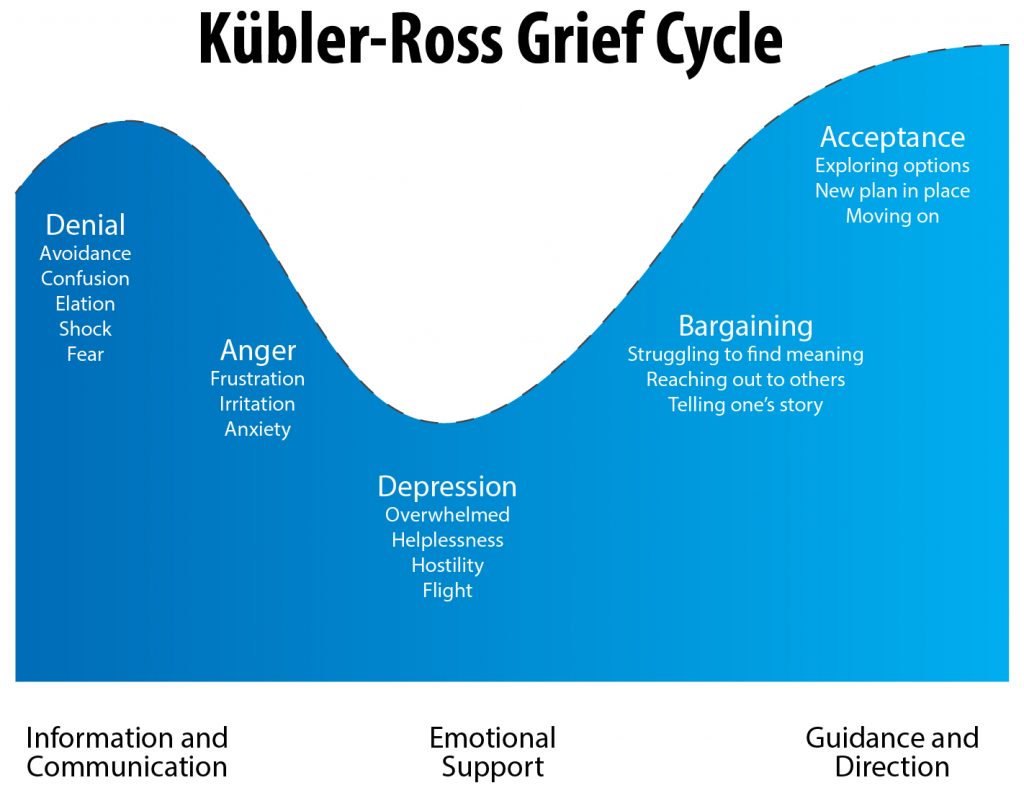
**Grief** is the universal emotional, cognitive and behavioural response to a significant loss. Most individuals think of the death of a loved one, however we can also experience grief following the loss of e.g. a job, status, our health, a relationship, a precious belonging. There is no right way to grieve, our experiences are individual.

**Bereavement** refers to the state of the loss (being bereaved) although people often use grief and bereavement interchangeably.

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**Mourning** is the social expression of grief, which enables the bereaved to accept the loss and begin to adapt to the day-to-day changes as a consequence of the loss.

**Five Stages of Grief (Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, 1969)**

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**Exercise 1 If grief is manageable, what do you hope to be able to do? (Think about changes you wish to make in the following areas – physical health, mental health, home and family, social life and relationships, work, spiritual development.)**

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**Acute grief** is the first stage following notification of the death.

**Integrated grief** is when you have accepted your loss and resumed normal functioning e.g. returned to work and social activities.

**Complicated grief** is no different to acute grief. The intensity and duration of emotions are prolonged and considered abnormal according to one’s culture.

**Grief and Gender**

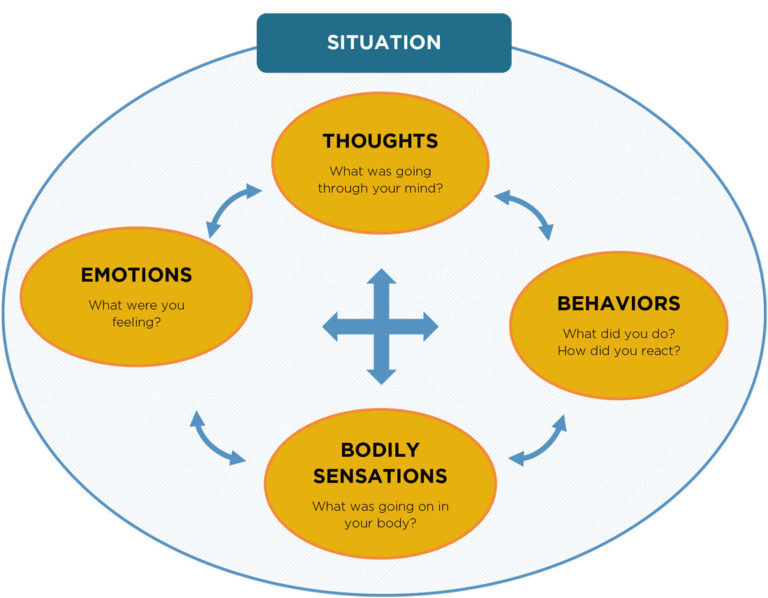
**Biological differences**

* One side of brain processes emotion and the other thoughts
* Men more likely to express grief from thoughts and women from emotions

**Historical differences**

* Men were considered the hunter and provider and are therefore more likely to problem solve (practical)
* Women seen as carers and nurturers and are more likely to seek out support of others

**Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) Vicious Cycle**



Common physical symptoms experienced when grieving

* Heart problems
* Lowered immune system – more at risk of cold/’flu’
* Aches and pains
* Headaches
* Digestive problems
* Disturbed/lack of sleep
* Fatigue/Exhaustion

**Exercise 2 List all the physical symptoms you are currently experiencing**

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**Exercise 3 List ways in which you can manage your physical symptoms (controlled breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, imaginal relaxation, exercise)**

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| **HOMEWORK**   * Practice breathing and relaxation techniques daily. Use a relaxation monitoring diary to record how you feel *before* and then *after* you practise these techniques. * Aim to engage in some form of exercise, at least 3 days per week |