

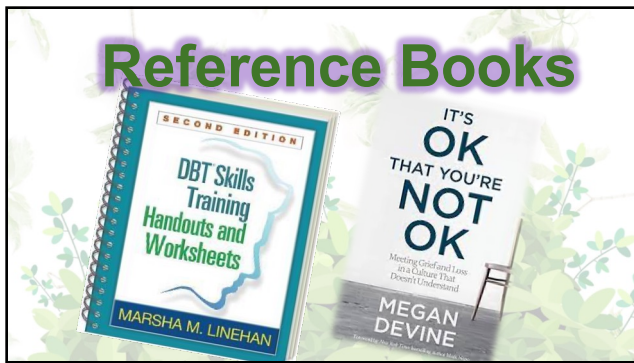
DBT Skills Self-Help Course



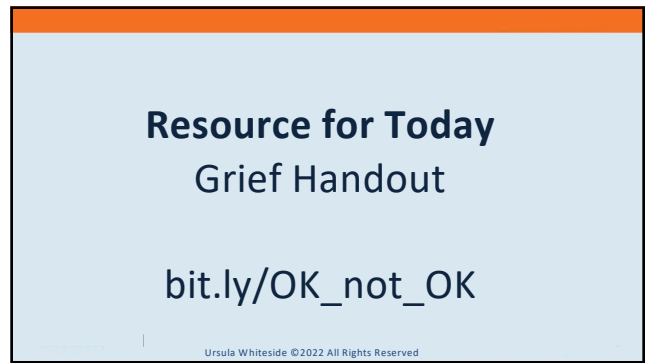
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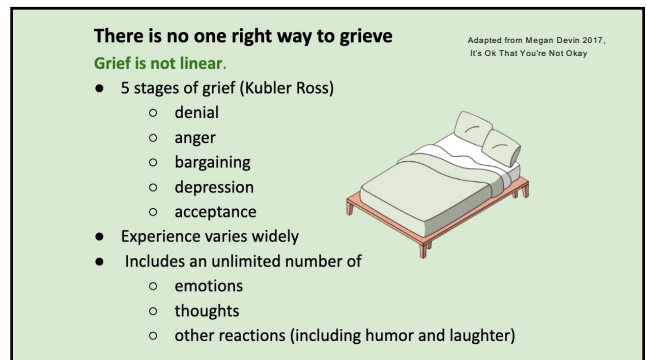
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Grief is not a problem to be solved
Grief is **natural and inevitable**.

- Result of loving and caring for others.
- Feel like we have to pretend
 - okay when you don't feel okay
- You have the right to grieve
 - in your own way
 - at your own pace
- Grief can be unpredictable

"Some things cannot be fixed. They can only be carried."




Adapted from Megan Devin 2017.
It's Ok That You're Not Okay

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Acknowledgement, ritual and ceremony
Honoring can be important.

- blessings, sage, sweetgrass
- speaking to a higher power
- lighting candles, holding space, sharing memories
- creative writing or writing letters, painting
- celebrating anniversaries, planting vegetation, collecting items



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It's Ok That You're Not Okay

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Advice for supporting others' grief
People's good intentions can **backfire**.

"They are in a better place,"
"I know exactly how you feel,"
"You are so strong,"
"You shouldn't feel that way," may not be comforting.

Grief does not need

- judgment
- advice
- a timeline.

Listen without trying to make them feel better.



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Don't compare griefs. Every person has experienced loss in their life, but no one else has experienced *this grief*. It's tempting to offer your own experience of grief to let the grieving person know you understand. But you don't understand. You can't. Even if your loss is empirically very similar, resist the urge to use your own experience as a point of connection.

Do: Ask questions about their experience. You can connect with someone by showing curiosity about what this is like for them. If you *have* had a similar experience, it's OK to let them know you're familiar with how bizarre and overwhelming grief can be. Just stick to indications that you know the general territory, not that you know their specific road.

Checklist from Megan Devin 2017.
It's Ok That You're Not Okay

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Don't give compliments. When someone you love is in pain, they don't need to be reminded that they're smart, beautiful, resourceful, or a fantastically good person. Don't tell them that they're strong or brave. Grief isn't typically a failure of confidence.

Do: Remember that all those things you love about the person, all those things you admire, will help them as they move through this experience. Remind them that you're there, and that they can always lean on you when the load of grief gets too heavy to carry alone. Let them be a right awful mess, without feeling they need to show you a brave, courageous face.

Checklist from Megan Devin 2017.
It's Ok That You're Not Okay

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Don't fact-check, and don't correct. Especially in early grief, a person's timeline and internal data sources are rather confused and wonky. They may get dates wrong, or remember things differently than they actually happened. You may have a different opinion about their relationships, or what happened when and with whom. Resist the urge to challenge or correct them.

Do: Let them own their own experience. It's not important who's "more" correct.

Checklist from Megan Devin 2017.
It's Ok That You're Not Okay

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Don't talk about "later." When someone you love is in pain, it's tempting to talk about how great things are going to be for them in the future. Right now, in this present moment, that future is irrelevant.

Do: Stay in the present moment, or, if the person is talking about the past, join them there. Allow them to choose.

Checklist from Megan Devin 2017.
It's Ok That You're Not Okay

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Don't evangelize (part one). "You should go out dancing; that's what helped me." "Have you tried essential oils to cheer you up?" "Melatonin always helps me sleep. You should try it." When you've found something that works for you, it's tempting to globalize that experience for everyone else. Unfortunately, unless the person specifically asked for a suggestion or information, your enthusiastic plugs are going to feel offensive and—honestly—patronizing.

Do: Trust that the person has intelligence and experience in their own self-care. If they aren't sleeping well, they've probably talked to a trusted provider, or done a simple Google search themselves. If you see them struggling, it's OK to ask if they'd like to hear what's helped you in the past.

Checklist from Megan Devin 2017.
It's Ok That You're Not Okay

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Don't be a cheerleader. When things are dark, it's OK to be dark. Not every corner needs the bright light of encouragement. In a similar vein, don't encourage someone to have gratitude for the good things that still exist. Good things and horrible things occupy the same space; they don't cancel each other out.

Do: Mirror their reality back to them. When they say, "This entirely sucks," say, "Yes, it does." It's amazing how much that helps.

Checklist from Megan Devin 2017.
It's Ok That You're Not Okay

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Don't minimize. You might think your friend's grief is out of proportion to the situation. It's tempting to correct their point of view to something you feel is more "realistic."

Do: Remember that grief belongs to the griever. Your opinions about their grief are irrelevant. They get to decide how bad things feel, just as you get to make such decisions in your own life.

Checklist from Megan Devin 2017.
It's Ok That You're Not Okay

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Don't charge ahead with solutions (evangelizing, part two). In all things, not just in grief, it's important to get consent before giving advice or offering strategies. In most cases, the person simply needs to be heard and validated inside their pain or their challenges.

Do: Get consent. Before you offer solutions or strategies, you might borrow my friend and colleague Kate McCombs's question: "Are you wanting empathy or a strategy right now?" Respect their answer.

Checklist from Megan Devin 2017.
It's Ok That You're Not Okay

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It's Ok That You're Not Okay

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Allow it to exist


"Pain is a normal and healthy response to loss."
Pain not recognized or supported,

- could make us unstable
- or sick over time.

Grief, for many, is not a lesson or a gift.

- Be open,
 - even just 5%,
 - to the idea of **not turning away**

"Pain wants to be heard."
*But also, it's okay and even important to **distract** yourself from grief when it's not the right time, place, or person for you.*



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Opposite Action

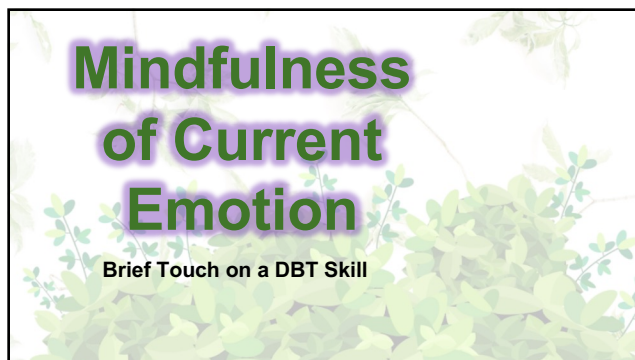
Brief Touch on a DBT Skill



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Mindfulness of Current Emotion

Brief Touch on a DBT Skill



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Radical Acceptance

Brief Touch on a DBT Skill



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