



# **Twin Cities Jewish Community Mental Health Education Conference**

## **Caregiving: Fostering A Circle of Caring**

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**Take a Pause...**



# The Guest House

**This being human is a guesthouse.  
Every morning is new arrival.**

**A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
some momentary awareness comes  
as an unexpected visitor.**

**Welcome and entertain them all!**

Beginning lines of a poem by Rumi



**Is A Time When  
Predictability Breaks Down**

**Our Predictable Ways  
Of Thinking About And Doing Things  
Are Interrupted By Change**

**Change Results**

**In Uncertainty**



# Five Principles

- **If Something Is Unmentionable, It Is Also Unmanageable**
- **Not Everything That Is Faced Can Be Changed, But Nothing Can Be Changed Until It Is Faced**
- **Understanding is more Important than Agreement**
- **The Direction in which you Look will Determine what you See**
- **HOW things are Handled is often as or more important than WHAT Happens**



# Losses and the Resulting Grief

**LOSS refers to  
being deprived of or ceasing  
to have something  
that one formerly possessed  
or to which one was attached**

**LOSS can and does disrupt  
past, present and future stories**

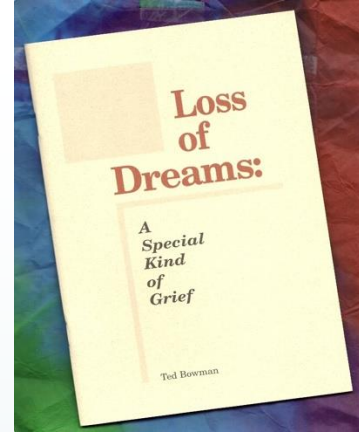
**Grief is a whole body response to losses:  
emotional, cognitive, spiritual, and  
physical**

# Examples of Shattered Dreams and Elders

- the dream of aging, of retirement, of caring
- the dream about how or where a home  
"should be"
- the dream of time for self (autonomy/control)
- the dream of being or seen as competent
- the dream that the family relationship could  
withstand any stress or challenge
- the American dream of "social security"
- the dream that plans would be sufficient
- the dream of dying and death



# Inquiries about Shattered Dreams



- *When you pictured this time in your life, what did you picture?*
- *When you thought about being \_\_\_\_\_, what did you picture?*
- *If and when you thought of losses in your family, how did you think it would be, how would it happen?*
- *Tell me about the plans you and (the name of the person had?*



# Caregivers

**There are only four kinds of people in the world:**

**Those who have been caregivers**

**Those who are currently caregivers**

**Those who will be caregivers and  
those who need a caregiver**

Rosalynn Carter

**You ARE a caregiver...currently and  
in the future**

**You deserve and will continue to  
need a caregiver (s)**

Ted Bowman



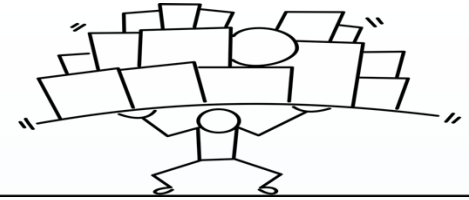


# 4 Phases and 4 Requirements

- **Caring About**                      **Attentiveness**
- **Taking Care Of**                      **Responsibility**
- **Care-giving**                      **Competence**
- **Receiving Care**                      **Responsiveness**

Joan Tronto – Who Cares?

# Further Assertions



**Caregiving is about skilled nursing, competent social work, rehabilitation efforts of physical and occupational therapists, and the hard physical work of home healthcare aides.**

**Yet, for all the efforts of the helping professions, caregiving is for the most part the preserve of families and intimate friends, and of the afflicted person herself or himself. They struggle to undertake the material acts that sustain the household, find practical assistance with activities of daily living, address financial aid, legal and religious tasks, emotional support, meaning making and remaking, and moral solidarity.**

from Arthur Kleinman, adapted by Ted Bowman



# Self Awareness - Families

**The expectation that a family can live with a chronic condition and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet.**

**The expectation that we can leave stresses in our personal, school and work lives and not bring them to other parts is also unrealistic.**

**The way we deal with distress and loss shapes our capacity to be present to life more than anything else.**



# **The Almost Widow / The Gagging Daughter**

*I have read in a number of places that a woman married to a man with Alzheimer's is living a widow's life.*

*By the time I realized I had settled into the role of spousal caregiver, my role had changed to include the experience of mourning the relationship that, for better or worse, had been.*

*When I leave my home, grief is my escort.*

EstherAltshul Helfgott

*Handling Mother's body violated her and me. Carrying her bedside commode from her bedroom to the toilet...disgusted me. I would gag and that would never stop.*

Lynne Tillman

# Creative Care



Creative care is a reciprocal model. Each of the care partners is imagined to receive benefit; care is an exchange. Creative care is an agreement between people to imagine themselves, each other and their worlds a little differently.

A personal example, a threshold moment, while washing dishes together, her mother asked where a bowl went after drying ... a bowl whose place had been the same for years. Rather than respond with surprise or “don’t you know!”, even a scolding tone...a new choice can be something like “oh, let’s look around and find it’s home.”

Basting suggests that too many exchanges with persons who live with dementia are factual, right or wrong, exasperation about memory loss, ... not choices using creativity with words and phrases that are respectful for all involved (2020).

# Assumptive World

All of us from the moment of our birth, have been building inside ourselves a model of the world, a set of assumptions on the basis of which we recognize the world that we meet and plan our behaviour accordingly. Because this model is based on reality it is, most of the time, a valid and useful basis for thought and behaviour. We rely on the accuracy of these assumptions to maintain our orientation in the world and to control our lives.

Anything which challenges this model incapacitates us.



# Ambiguous loss occurs when there are...

**Unanswered questions, uncertainty and the disruption of family and work life due to Covid19  
(and many other local, national, and world events)**

**“What is distressing us is not just the virus, but the ambiguity surrounding it, what it will do, and what we should do about it. Science provides some answers, but we are experiencing uncertainty, and that’s very stressful for a society that is accustomed to solving problems and having definitive answers.”**

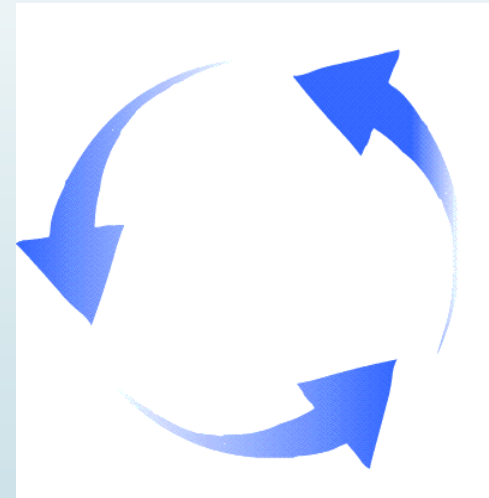
**Pauline Boss**



# Therefore:

**Families will routinely experience distress as they face caregiving matters. That can lead to:**

ambivalence      faith crises  
ambiguity      perspective  
regret      guilt  
flashbacks/history context  
second guessing      conflicts  
the need for an internal compass





# Responses to Ambiguity

- **Label what people are experiencing (responses will vary)**
- **Provide a structure and setting for contact**
- **Provide information**
- **Increase tolerance for ambiguity**
- **Be flexible, adapt routines, minimize helplessness, normalize situation**
- **Emphasize what can be changed or addressed and what can not...**
- **Move from “either/or” choices to “both/and choices”**



**SHRINKING  
GRIEF**

**GROWING YOUR  
WORLD**



**Storying And Re-storying  
After Loss or Disruptive Change  
Involves Grieving The Old Story**

**Before Creating The Next  
(Not Necessarily New) Story**



**Listen For**

**Major Components/Themes/Values  
Of The Old Story**

**How Can They Be Reframed In  
The Next Story**

# Responses To Stresses/Losses

**Name Losses**

**Address Stressors/Grieve Losses**

**Put The Loss In Perspective**

**Reinforce Or Build Support Connections  
(Support Groups, Teams, Informal Support)**

**Set Limits  
(Saying No To Some Things So That You Can Yes To Others)**

**Develop A Healing Plan**

**Appreciative Inquiry**

# Examples of Resiliency

- Accepted What They Could Not Change, Changed What They Could
- Manageable Pieces/Steps
- Realized: Bad Things Happen To Good People
- Used Creativity
- Healed Themselves By Helping Others
- Did Not Allow Bitterness To Consume / Define Them
- Hopeful Visions Of Future
- Drew On Spiritual Resources



# Assertion: It Takes a Team



# Wisdom From Caregivers – March 2022

*What do you know now, you wish you had known?*

Get information about caregiving from various sources

Few things will stay the same, be prepared for changes

Support for caregivers is crucial

When attending a group or reading, make note of “take-aways”

Ask for help    Accept help    Know the difference

Create a list of “help” you can pass on to friends, family, neighbors

Form a “team”

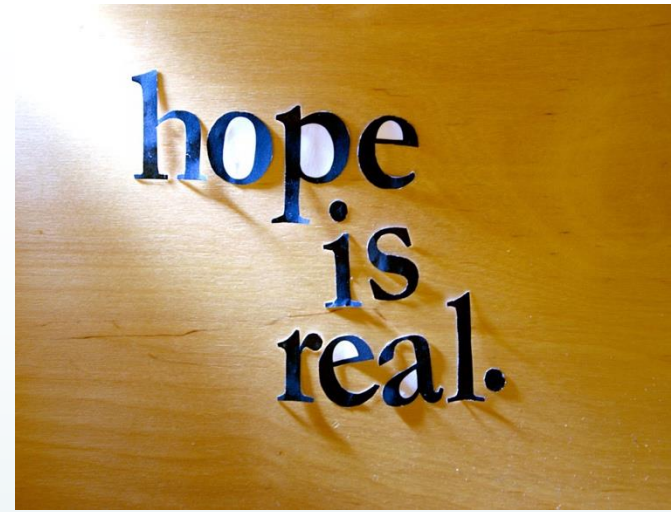
Don't be too hard on yourself

Group members often share what seems mundane, but which may be amazingly helpful to another caregiver





# Hope



Definitions usually include:  
**EXPECTATION**

**DESIRE**

Which can involve **GOALS, ATTRIBUTES,  
REDEFINITION, MEANING,  
PEACE, ENERGY**



# Reasonable Hope

**Reasonable hope is relational**

**Reasonable hope is a practice**

**Reasonable hope maintains that the future is open, uncertain, and influenceable**

**Reasonable hope seeks goals and pathways to them**

**Reasonable hope accommodates doubt, contradictions, and despair**

Weingarten

# GROUP DISCUSSION

