Grieving the Body You Had and the Future That Was

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AGENDA

INTRODUCTION
OVERVIEW OF GRIEF
MANAGING EXPECTATIONS
DAYS OF OUR LIVES
NO WAY AROUND IT
EXERCISES
SUMMARY
Corporate marketing and music promotion
Professional mental health journey
Diagnosis
Merging professional passion with need
Mission
OVERVIEW OF GRIEF
“You will likely not make it to body acceptance without experiencing body grief.”
WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Sweat

Short of Breath

Crying

Vision Changes

Pain

Clumsy
WHAT IT FEELS LIKE

- Insecurity
- Anger
- Low Energy
- Betrayal
- Nausea
- Emptiness
WHAT COULD BE HAPPENING COGNITIVELY

• Confusion
• Preoccupation with memories
• Mood swings
• Overplanning
• Existential questions
• Identity shifts
MANAGING EXPECTATIONS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT WE EXPECT OF OURSELVES</th>
<th>WHAT WE EXPECT OF OTHERS</th>
<th>WHAT OTHERS EXPECT OF US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Similar energy level</td>
<td>Patience</td>
<td>No inconvenience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar appearance</td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>Meet same commitments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar level of health &amp; wellness</td>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>Warrior disposition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DAYS OF OUR LIVES
WHAT WAS

• Weight
• Skin
• Hair
• Athleticism
• Flexibility
• Energy
WHAT IS

• Treatment
• Illness
• Pain
• Fatigue
• Appointments
• Questions
WHAT MAY OR MAY NOT COME TO PASS

- Cognitive changes
- Relationship changes
- Mistrust of medical community & treatments
- Shifts in identity and purpose
- Shifts in values and priorities
NO WAY AROUND IT
How we **want** grief to work

How grief **actually** works
GO THROUGH IT

• Sit in it (and sometimes ignore it)
• Will not be the same for everyone
• No one ‘right’ way
• Asking care partners and friends to hold space
• Transparency and crying are okay
RESONATE?
'You don't look sick.'
I know.
I am just that awesome that I can look this way and be chronically ill.

I used to be your size
Then they put me on Prednisone
I just want to feel better.

How do you answer the question, “how do you feel?” when you’ve forgotten what “normal” feels like?

I’ve been sick for so long, some people seem to think I should be used to it. What they don’t understand is that it doesn’t get easier, it just gets more exhausting.
EXERCISES
### SPECIFIC EXERCISES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROCKS</th>
<th>Paint or break or carry</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LETTERS</td>
<td>Impact or what you meant to say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RITUAL</td>
<td>Fires and paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ART</td>
<td>Color and create</td>
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<tr>
<td>JOURNALING</td>
<td>All the things</td>
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</table>
IT HAPPENS...

1. WHEN YOU ARE BLINDSIDED BY A TRIGGER

2. WHEN NOTHING IS WORKING
SUMMARY

There is no ‘one size fits all’ guide to grief

Learn what it looks and feels like for you

Be willing to try different techniques

It’s okay to feel not okay

No way but through
THANK YOU

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