



THE
GRIEF
CENTRE

Post Traumatic Growth after grief and loss



The experience of living includes the encounters we have with loss and change in our lives. These may include:

- The death of someone we are close to
- The loss of a job
- Illness; disability
- An accident
- Moving



- The breakup of a relationship
- Any traumatic experience

Change and loss in life, although common, are experienced differently by each person, but often the outcome of these events is GRIEF.

Grief is probably not something that we can fully understand until we personally face one of life's many losses and changes.

It's a very personal process.



Although your grief is intensely personal and it can feel as if no one understands what you are going through, coping with loss and change is common.

There are other booklets in The Grief Centre series. These booklets may be helpful after your loss.





Because we want to understand the impact of life's loss and change experiences and how best to support people in these times, there has been considerable research into the effects and the outcomes of coping with trauma in life.

This booklet explores the concept of Post Traumatic Growth described as: “positive change experienced as a result of the struggle with trauma” (Kilmer, 2006)

Post Traumatic Growth

Research has often focused on the negative effects of stress and trauma, but more recently there is also an increasing focus on the potential positive outcomes.

Importantly, this is not to detract from the grief that is experienced as a result of life's losses and changes.

GRIEVING IS A NORMAL, EXPECTED AND VITAL OUTCOME AND PROCESS AFTER LOSS AND CHANGE.

At some stage in your grief process, you may want to explore and understand the concept of Post Traumatic Growth (PTG) and consider what this may mean in your life, going forward.

The concept of PTG calls attention to the potential for positive change and transformation after experiencing stress and trauma.

While you may feel that even thinking about the idea of positive change and transformation is impossible...there may come a time when you DO want to consider it...this is YOUR journey...you will know.





Possible areas of positive change you may experience include:

1. New Possibilities

- Changed view of oneself and an awareness of the potential for the 'new'



2. Relating to Others

- A different view of your relationships
- A deeper understanding of who your “true friends” are and on whom you can rely in times of stress, trauma and grief
- A greater sense of compassion and empathy for others





3. Personal Strength

- Changes in your view of yourself
- An awareness of your vulnerability yet a greater understanding of your personal strengths
- An appreciation of your ability to survive and capacity to endure



4. Appreciation of Life

- A different perspective and philosophy of life
- Changed priorities and values about what is important in life and what isn't



5. Spiritual Change

- A deepening of the spiritual aspect of your life
- Increased thinking, beliefs, understanding of human existence, yours in particular

Post Traumatic Growth has the potential to develop out of encounters with stress and trauma and the struggle to cope and to make meaning of life's challenges.

However much time it takes, you may come to a point when you are able to consider the potential for growth after your experiences of stress and trauma.

With acknowledgement and reference to:

Calhoun, L.G., & Tedeschi, R.G. (Eds.) (2006). Handbook of posttraumatic growth: Research and practice. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Kilmer, R. P. (2006). Resilience and posttraumatic growth in children. In L. G. Calhoun, & R. G. Tedeschi (Eds.), Handbook of posttraumatic growth: Research and practice (pp. 264–288). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Meyerson, D.A., Grant, K.E., Carter, J.S., & Kilmer, R.P. (2011). Posttraumatic growth among children and adolescents: A systematic review. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 31, 949-964.



Grief is a natural response to loss and grieving takes time, patience and support.



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