



#### Submodule 6.6 - Focusing on Positive Memories and Maintaining a Healthy Connection with the Deceased

Bereavement is often associated with profound sadness and a feeling of emptiness, which can cause grieving individuals to focus on the loss and suffering. However, it is equally important to connect to positive memories and maintain a healthy relationship with the deceased to facilitate the healing process and make sense of the loss. As a GRIEF COACH, you can support your clients in this delicate work, helping them explore and incorporate the positive aspects of their relationship with the departed loved one, while ensuring that this connection does not impede personal growth.

One of the initial steps in this work involves inviting your clients to recall and share positive memories they retain of the deceased person. Encourage them to recount anecdotes and describe moments of joy, camaraderie, or tenderness they shared together. You can suggest they create a photo album or a memory book, where they collect images, objects, and testimonies reflecting their loved one's personality, passions, and achievements. In doing so, you assist them to honor the deceased's life comprehensively, recognizing the positive influence they had on their lives.

It's also important to explore with your clients, the qualities, values, and lessons they received from the deceased, that continue to inspire and guide them. You can invite them to reflect on occasions when they felt moved by their loved one's generosity, humor, wisdom, or bravery, and how those instances may illuminate their own path. For instance, a client may remember her grandmother's passion for painting and the joy she found in creation and decide to enroll in an art course to honor this legacy and explore her own creativity.

Maintaining a healthy connection with the deceased might also involve rituals or symbolic acts, enabling grieving individuals to express their love and gratitude tangibly. You can motivate them to write a letter to their loved one, sharing memories, emotions, and reflections that have arisen since the loss. They can also choose to observe anniversaries or special occasions by lighting a candle, visiting a cherished place, or engaging in an activity that the person enjoyed. These acts, when performed with intention and awareness, can foster a sense of connection and continuity while allowing those grieving to progress in their process of bereavement.

However, it's crucial to ensure that the bond with the deceased does not become a hindrance to the development and fulfillment of those in mourning. Some clients might tend to idealize their loved one, constantly compare themselves with him or her, or cling to projects or roles that no longer suit their present situation. Your role as a GRIEF COACH is to help them strike a healthy balance between maintaining a meaningful connection and the need to open up to new horizons. You can invite them to consider what their loved one would have wished for them, how he or she would have urged them to pursue their path, while keeping their memory in their hearts.

It is also essential to normalize and validate moments when those grieving feel the need to distance themselves from the memories and focus on their own life and needs. Grief is a fluctuating process, alternating between phases of connection and separation, and respecting these natural movements is essential. You can reassure your clients that their love and bond to the departed will not be threatened by these moments of pause or retreat, but rather, they can serve to strengthen and deepen that relationship over time.

By assisting your clients in focusing on positive memories and maintaining a healthy connection with the departed, you help them to honor their loved one's life, incorporate their legacy into their own story, and find a comforting balance between the past and the present. You provide them with a secure and compassionate space to explore this unique relationship, guiding them with empathy and respect through the various stages of their journey. Your attentive presence and empathic listening allow them to navigate the sometimes turbulent waters of mourning, knowing they have a solid anchor in the loving memory of the deceased, as well as your unwavering support.

#### Key Takeaways:

1. Encourage clients to recall and share positive memories of the deceased, by telling stories and moments of joy, companionship, or tenderness.
2. Explore with clients the qualities, values, and lessons learned from the deceased that continue to inspire and guide them.
3. Suggest rituals or symbolic actions to maintain a healthy bond with the deceased, such as

writing a letter, lighting a candle, or visiting a cherished place.

4. Ensure that the bond with the deceased does not hinder the clients' growth and fulfillment, by assisting them in finding a balance between maintaining a significant connection and opening up to new horizons.

5. Normalize and validate moments when clients feel the need to distance themselves from the memories to focus on their own life and needs.

6. Offer a safe and caring space to explore the unique relationship with the deceased, guiding clients with compassion and respect through the various stages of their journey.