



Is it Depression or is it Grief?

Symptoms and Significance in Bereavement

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*The Well
of Grief*

David Whyte



Today's Goals

- Compare and contrast symptoms of depression and grief in bereavement
- Recognize the role of a quest for meaning in mourning, and growth in grief
- Identify some practical principles for addressing both forms of distress in bereavement



Depression

vs.

Grief

- Self-focused, alienated from others
- Hopelessness
- Low self-esteem, self-loathing
- Guilt about feeling worthless or useless to others
- Pervasive inability to experience pleasure with people or activities
- Chronic feelings of not wanting to live; acute suicide risk

- Maintained connections to others
- Hope for improvement
- Overall feeling of self-worth
- Guilt and regret about “letting down” the deceased
- Loss of pleasure related to longing for loved one
- Suicidal feelings related to yearning for reunion
- Consoled by friends, music, etc.

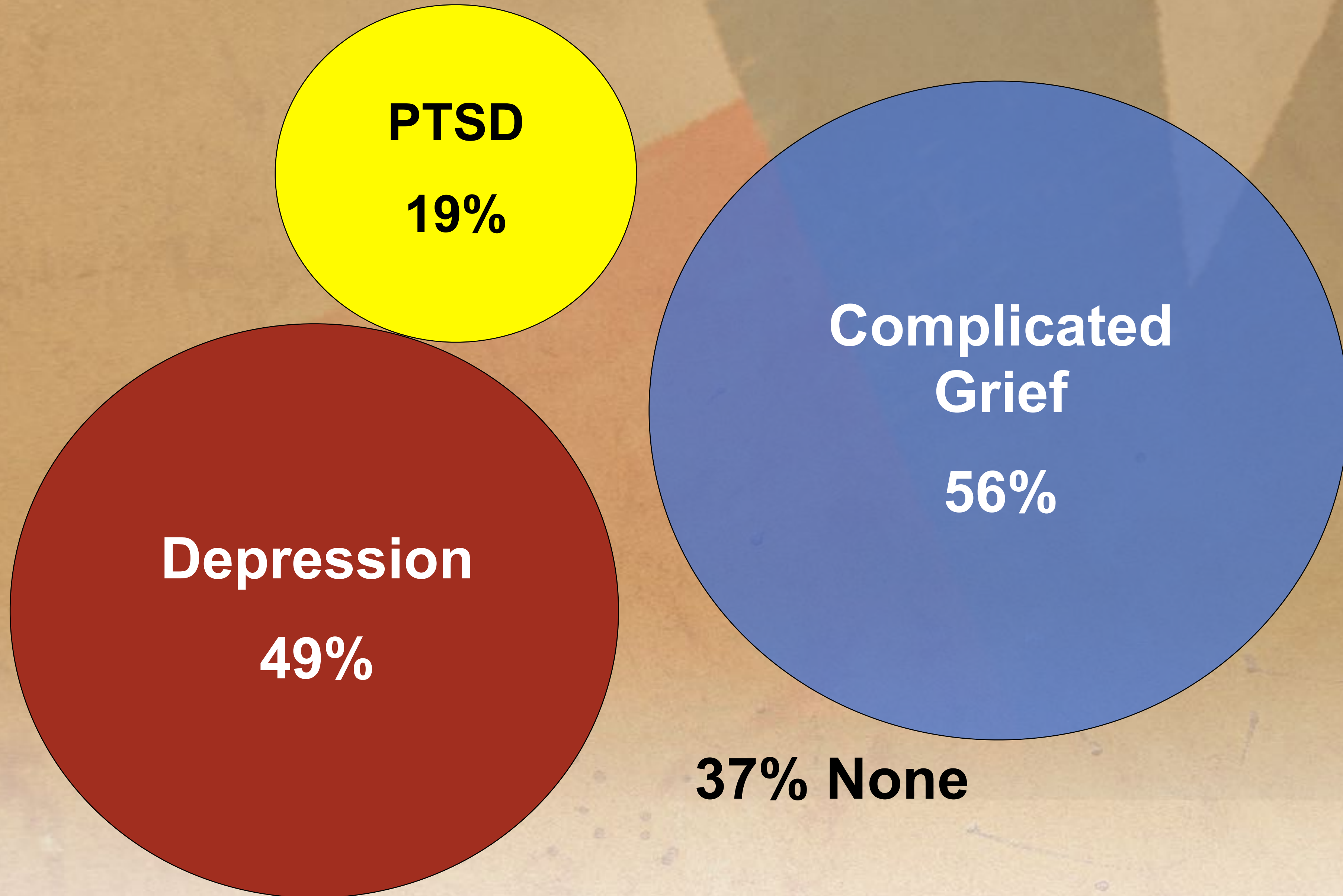


The Toll of Tragic Loss:

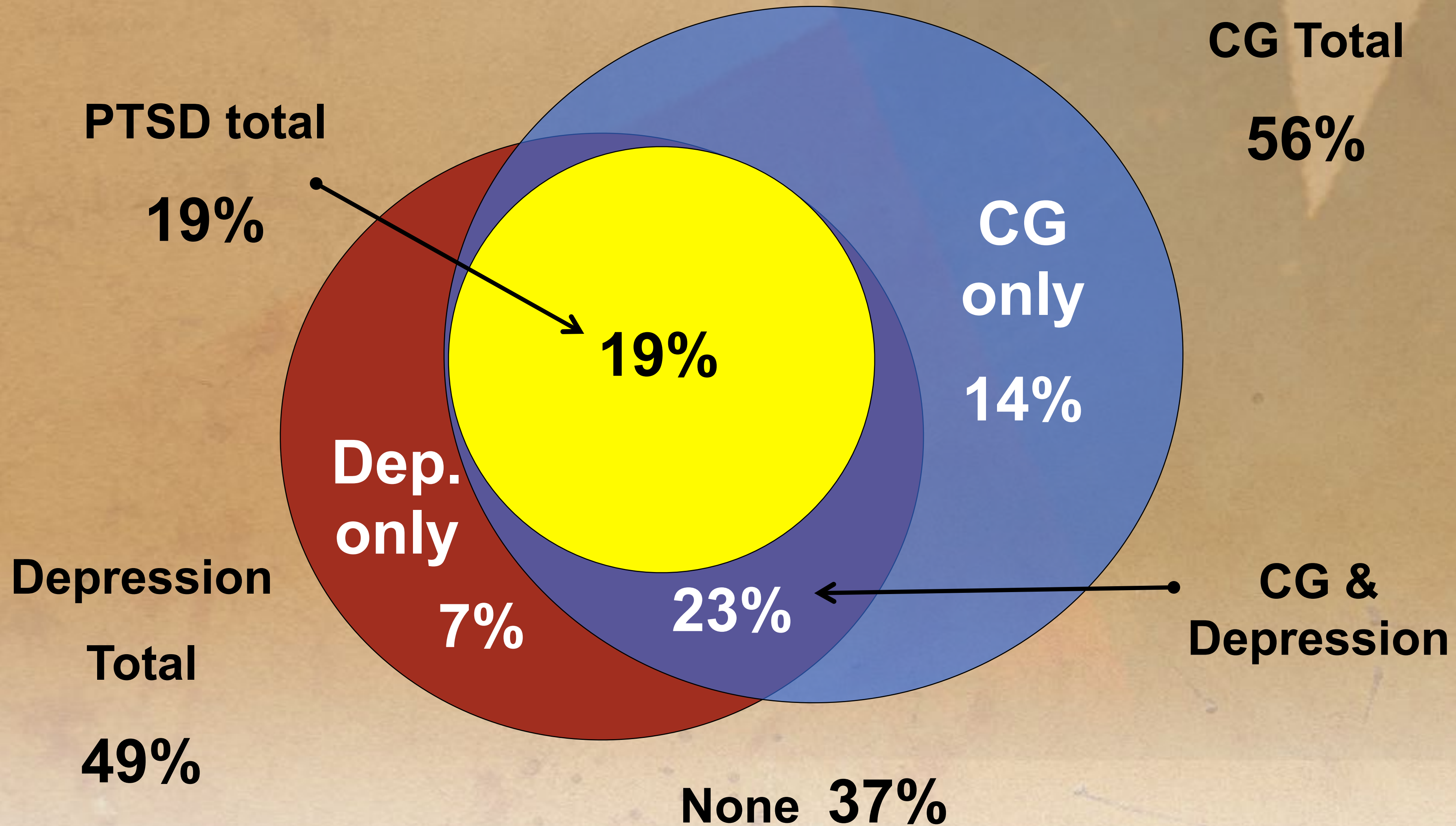
*Grief, Trauma and
Depression in
Bereavement*

McDevitt-Murphy, Neimeyer et al., *Psychological Trauma*

Incidence of PTSD, CG, and Depression



Co-morbidity of PTSD, CG, and Depression




Adaptive Grieving

Acute Grief Processes

- Process “event story” of the death, attempting to make sense of it and its meaning for our lives now
- Access “back story” of relationship to restore attachment security and resolve unfinished business with the deceased

Integrated Grief

- Finality of death acknowledged
- Bittersweet emotions accessible & changing
- Mental representation of deceased revised
- Coherent narrative of loss formulated
- Life goals redefined



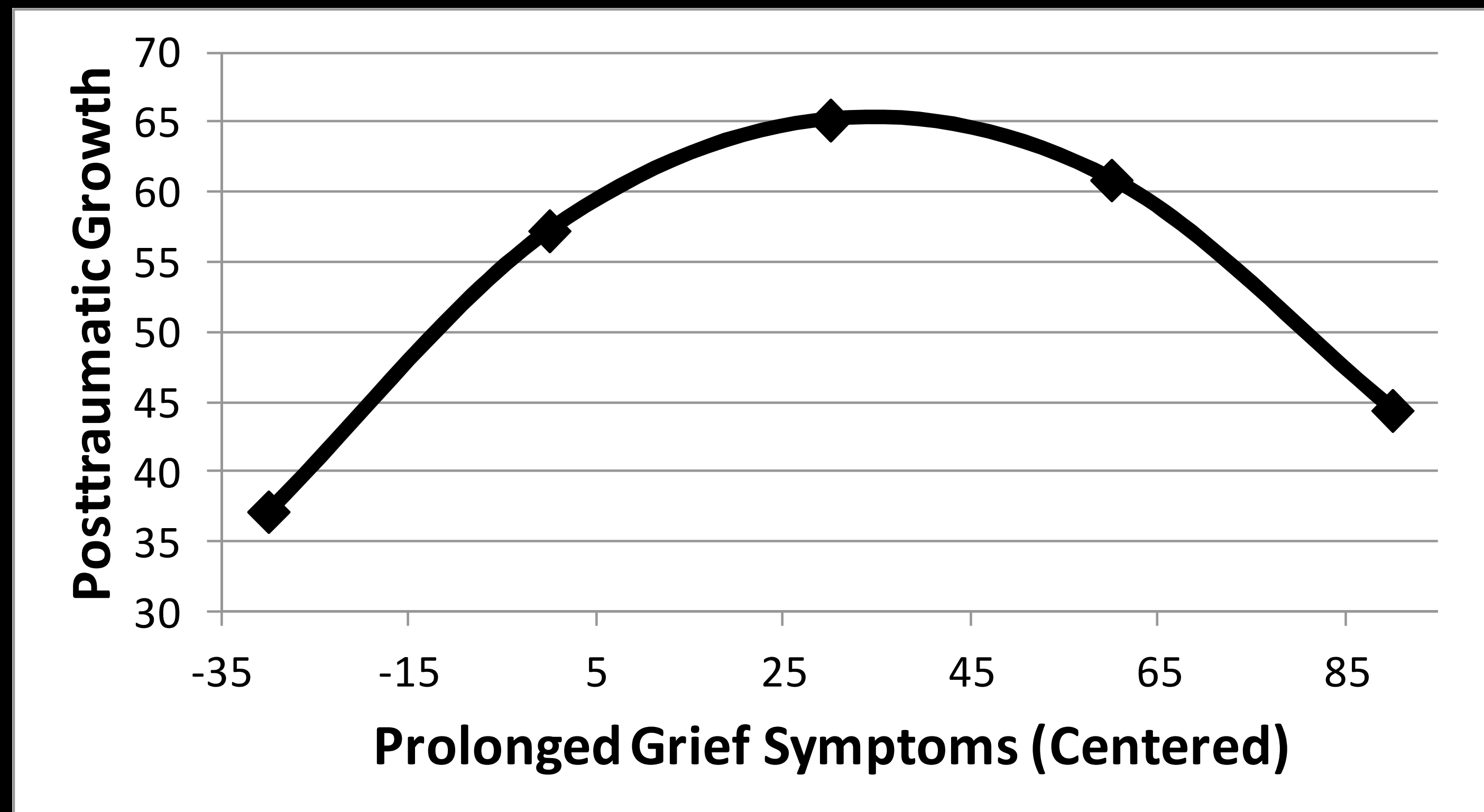
Sense-making predicts better grief adaptation in:

- Palliative care
- Natural death losses
- Violent death losses
- Bereaved:
 - Parents
 - Spouses
 - Young adults

Complicated Grief Symptoms & Posttraumatic Growth

Currier, Holland & Neimeyer, *Traumatology*

- 617 ethnically diverse adults in first two years of loss
- Controlled for cause of death, nature of relationship and other background factors



Principles of Practice

- Stabilize depression when present
- Draw on people's prior resources for coping
- Practice self-soothing skills
- Seek supportive interactions with others: DLRs
- Structure days with manageable goals
- Name and claim grid-related emotions, and address the needs implicit in them
- Honor the deceased, and restore the bond
- Treat the trauma, when present
- Find a way to tell the story, and make it whole
- Integrate the loss into life in a way that promotes growth and the capacity to love
- Medicate depression when necessary, not grief



Boy van Dulman;
Omdat ik hou van jou

Travelers

Lisa Jennings:
The Eternal Circle



Questions?

