

# Pause and Action Community Grief

JFS Boulder and Lyda Hill Institute for Human Resilience

## Mission

Improving the lives of individuals and families in need throughout Colorado by taking an integrated approach to delivering comprehensive support services.

## Programs and Services

- Aging Care & Connections
- Baskin Jewish Community Chaplaincy
- Disability Programs
- Employment Services
- Housing Stability & Food Security
- JFS Boulder
- Mental Health Counseling & Services
- Yana Vishnitsky Refugee Resettlement Program

## JFS Boulder

- **Emergency Assistance**—Providing financial assistance to individuals and families for rent and mortgage payments.
- **Care Management**—Supporting access to a continuum of services that help older adults live in their community of choice.
- **Counseling** - Offering compassionate counseling via teletherapy or in person from trained social workers with a wealth of expertise. Conversation-driven community groups are also offered to build connections.
- **Friendly Visitor Program**—Pairing a Friendly Visitor volunteer with an older adult to promote meaningful friendships and prevent social isolation.
- **Holiday Services**—Trained volunteer para-chaplains conduct Shabbat and other Jewish holiday celebrations at older adult residential communities, giving residents an important connection to their faith.
- **Monthly Caregiver Support Group**—For those caring for their aging parent.
- **Virtual Grief Support Group**—Jewish Family Service and Colorado VNA Hospice present an online grief support group open to all members of the Jewish community, affiliated and non-affiliated.

# JFS Boulder

- **Mental Health Services**—JFS Boulder has expanded its mental health services to provide ongoing high-quality outpatient mental health support to adults who need therapy, including those impacted by the Marshall Fire or Straight-Line Wind Event in Boulder County.
- **Pause and Action Community Grief**
- **Marshall Fire Resources**
  - **Boulder County Crisis Counseling**—This program, generously supported by CFBC’s Boulder County Wildfire Fund, supports the behavioral health needs of those affected by the Marshall Fire.
  - **Processing Groups**—Process groups allow individuals to share their experiences and express emotions with others and a trained therapist. They provide a unique space to deepen perspectives, receive support, and gain feedback from peers. Process groups offer group members a chance to connect with their peers to process, cope, and grow from difficult experiences. Groups are for those impacted by the Marshall Fire. Several dates and times available. Group will be capped at 10 attendees per group.

# Contact JFS Boulder

**Main:** [720.248.4686](tel:720.248.4686)

**Address:** 6007 Oreg Ave., Boulder, CO 80303

**[jewishfamilyservice.org](http://jewishfamilyservice.org)**

Melissa Mascareñas, BSW

JFS Boulder Associate Director

P/T: 720.459.3883

A photograph of a man and a woman embracing from behind in a modern, brightly lit hallway. The man is wearing a blue and green patterned sweater, and the woman has long, wavy brown hair and is wearing a black jacket with a red bag strap. The background shows a blurred hallway with a glass wall on the left and a white wall on the right.

# Pause and Action

COMPOUNDING GRIEF AND HEALING

APRIL 4, 2023

# Agenda

---

Nicole Weis, LPC, LAC

Director of Community Training and  
Empowerment

Lyda Hill Institute for Human Resilience  
at UCCS

This Evening:

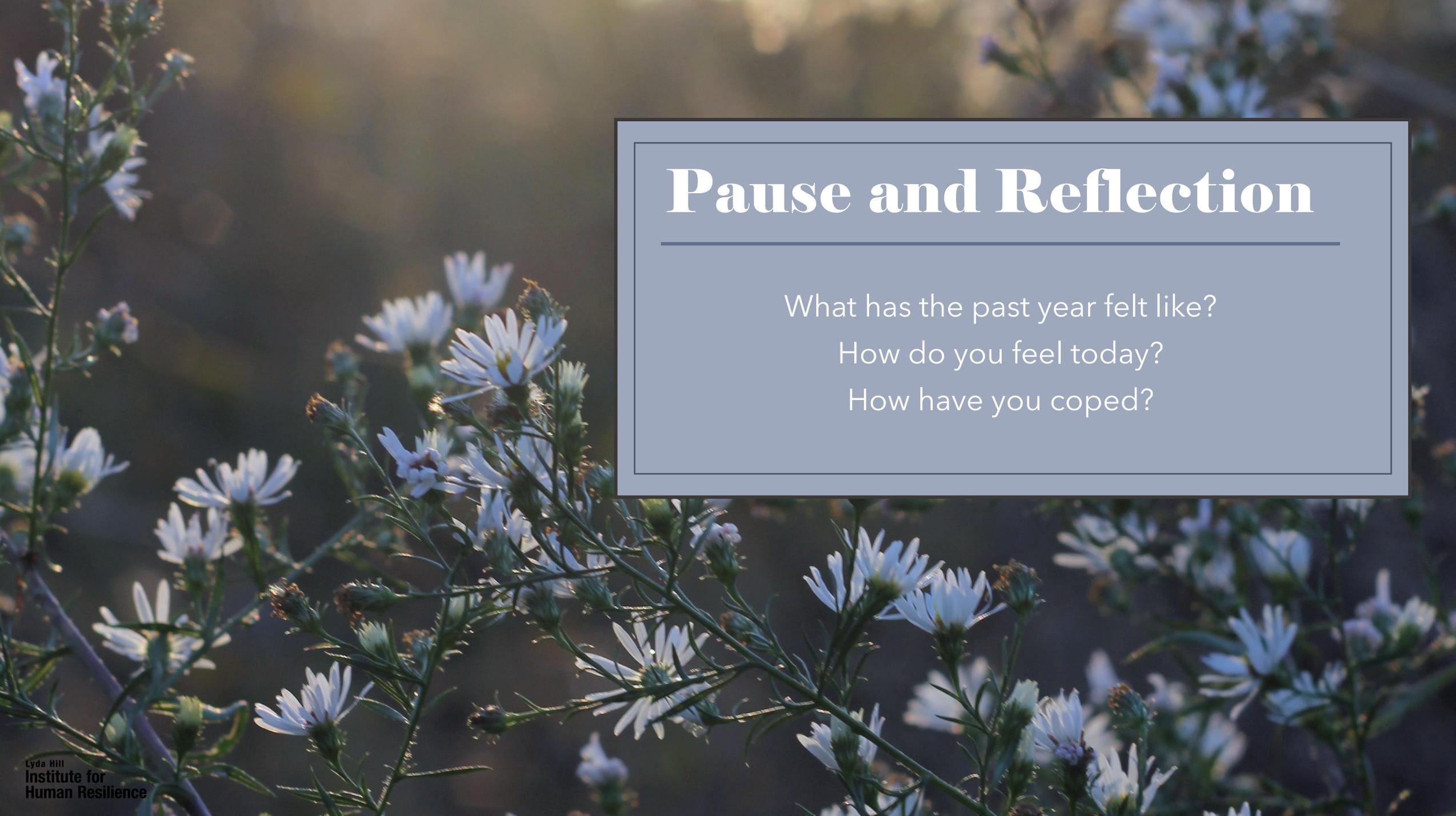
Community Pause

Stress and Disasters

How Disasters Cause Grief

Stages of Grief

Actionable Steps



# Pause and Reflection

---

What has the past year felt like?  
How do you feel today?  
How have you coped?

# Stress

Mind and body's reaction to an unusual demand such as a threat or challenge

The interaction between environmental conditions and the person where perceived demands exceed perceived capability for managing those demands



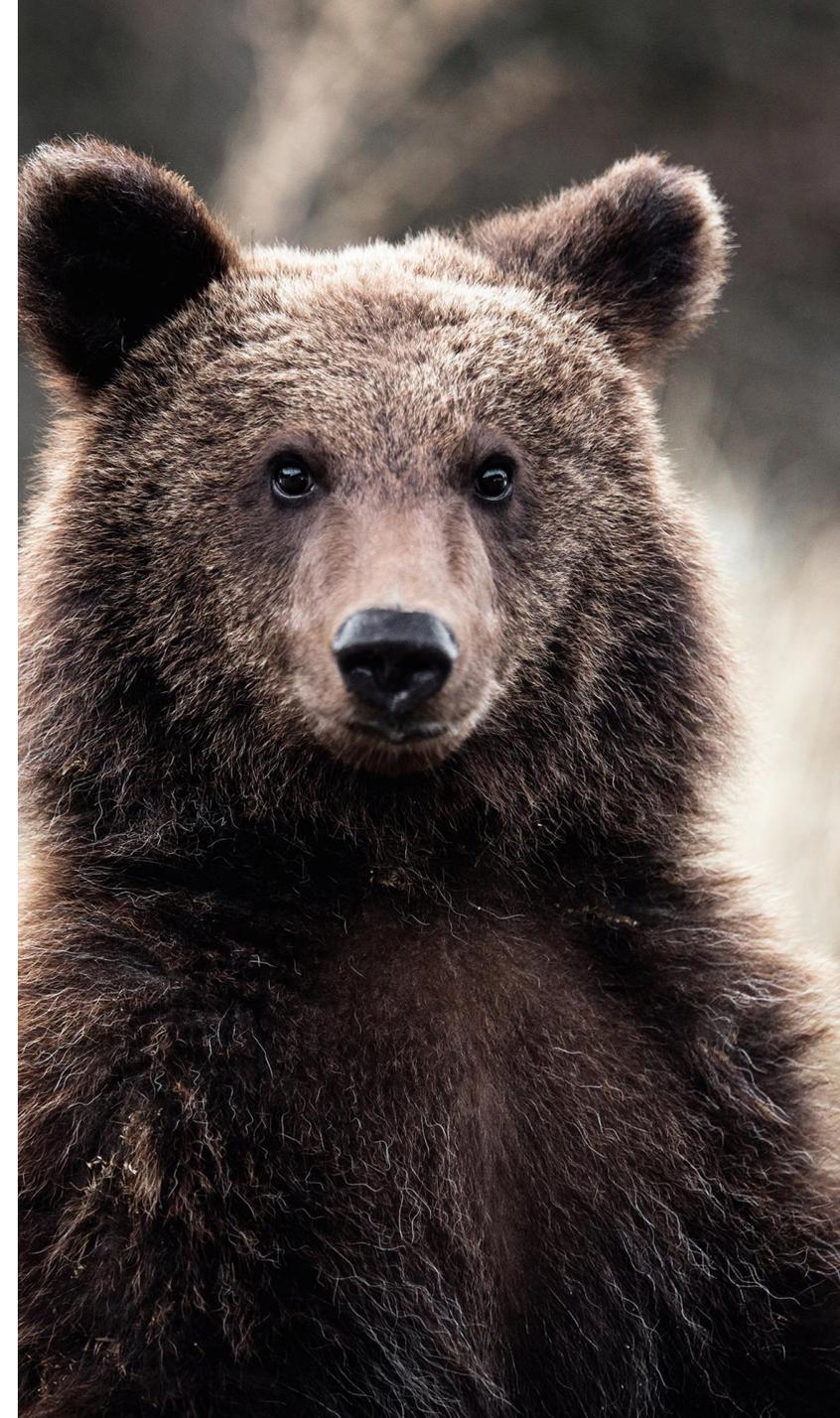
# WALKING IN A FOREST

Fight

Flight

Freeze

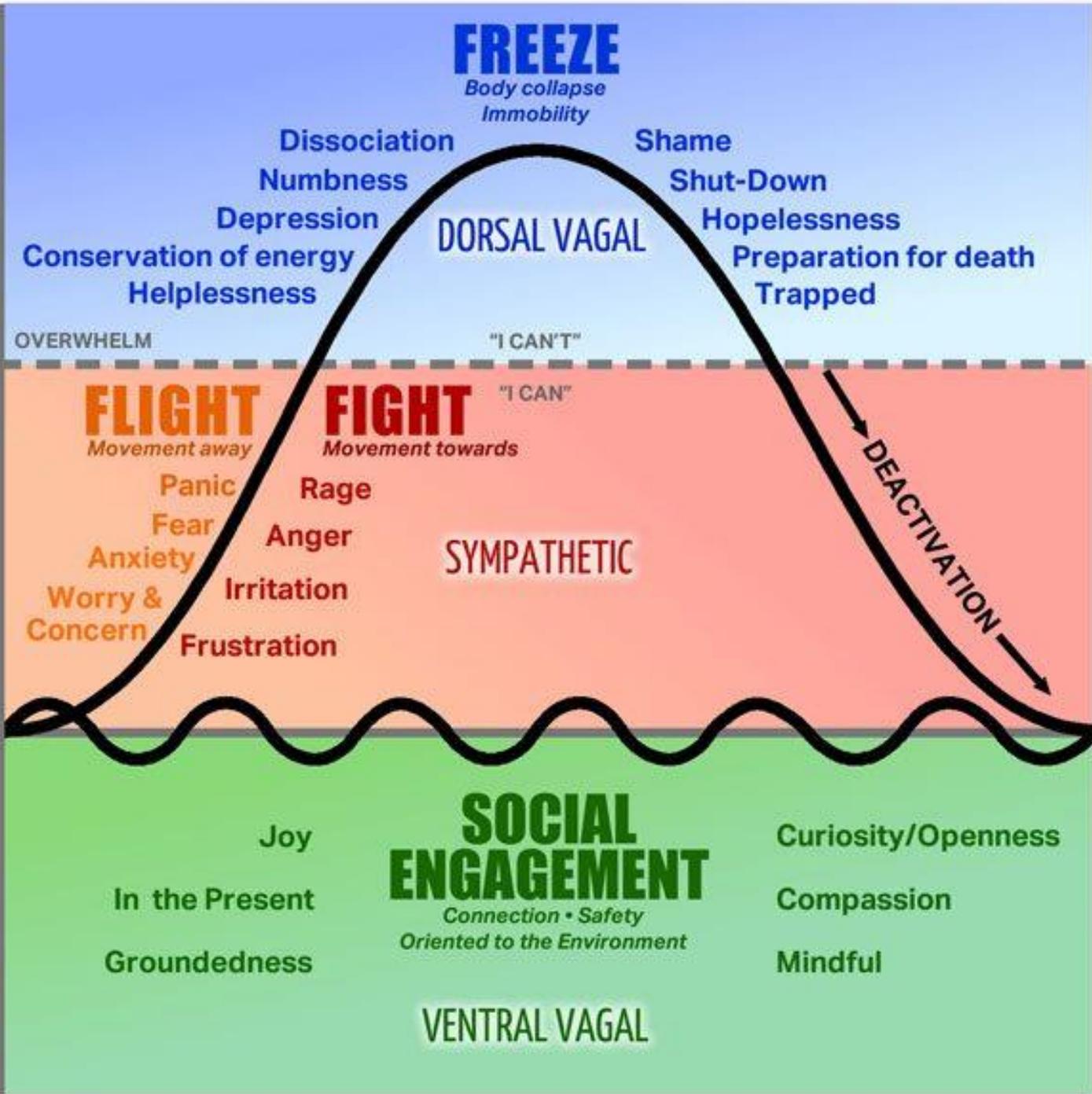
(Fawn)





# SYMPATHETIC AND PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

↑  
AROUSAL INCREASES



**PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM**  
DORSAL VAGAL - EMERGENCY STATE

Increases  
Fuel storage & insulin activity  
Endorphins that help numb and raise the pain threshold.

Decreases  
Heart Rate • Blood Pressure  
Temperature • Muscle Tone  
Facial Expressions • Eye Contact  
Intonations • Awareness of the Human Voice • Social Behavior • Sexual Responses • Immune Response

**SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM**

Increases  
Blood Pressure • Heart Rate  
Fuel Availability • Adrenaline  
Oxygen circulation to vital organs  
Blood Clotting • Pupil Size

Decreases  
Fuel Storage • Insulin Activity  
Digestion • Salvation  
Relational Ability  
Immune Response

**PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM**  
VENTRAL VAGAL

Increases  
Digestion • Intestinal Motility  
Resistance to Infection  
Immune Response  
Rest and Recuperation  
Circulation to non-vital organs (skin, extremities)  
Oxytocin (neuromodulator involved in social bonds that allows immobility without fear)  
Ability to Relate and Connect

Decreases  
Defensive Responses

# Traumatic Stress

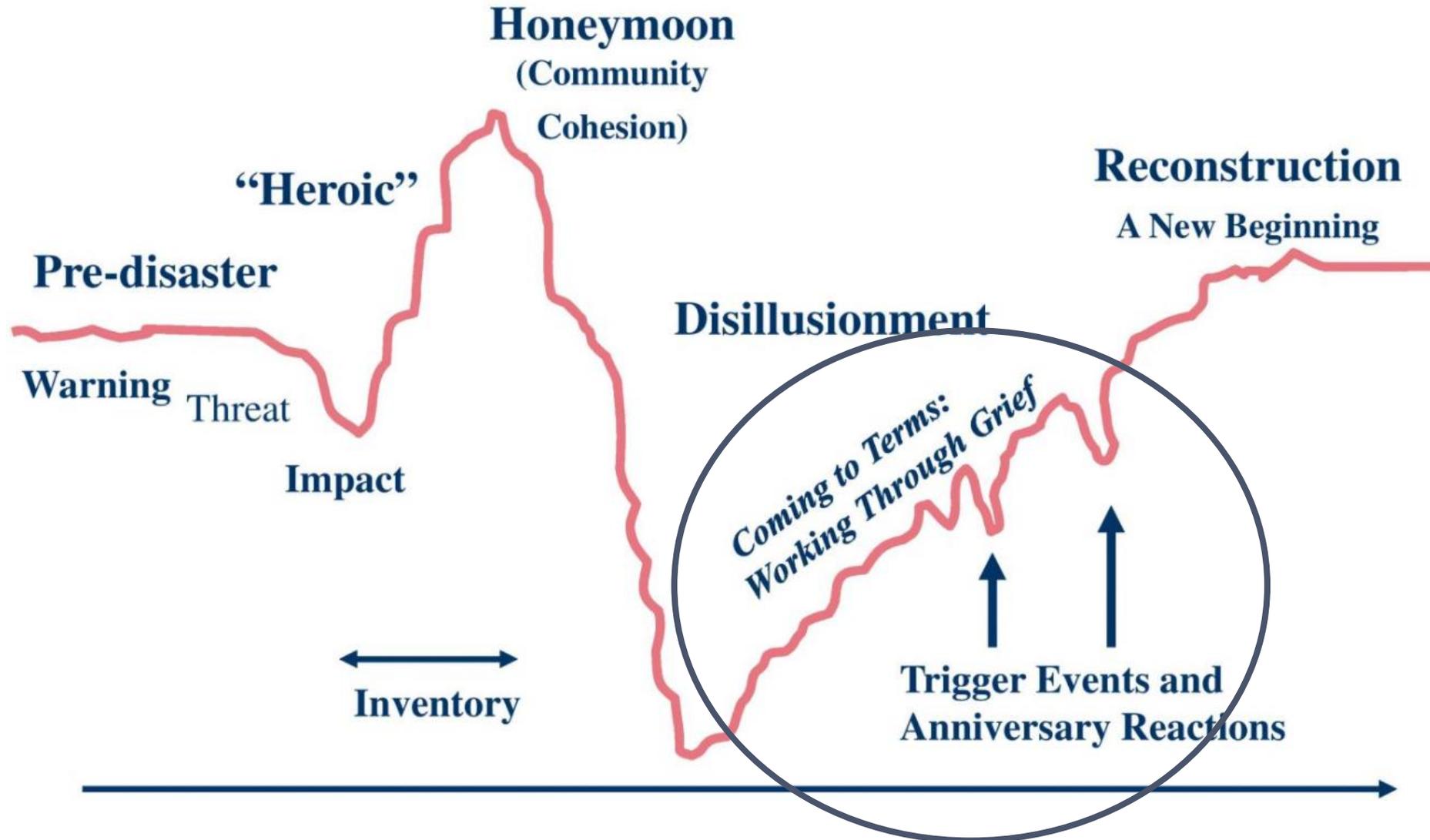


Events that threaten the life, health, or safety of an individual, either directly or indirectly.

- Physical and sexual assaults
- War
- Child abuse and neglect
- Life-threatening illness
- Traumatic loss
- Natural and human-caused disasters

Distress and symptoms following exposure to such an extreme event may be more severe or persistent than general stress reactions.

# Typical Phases of Disaster



# Beyond the Disaster



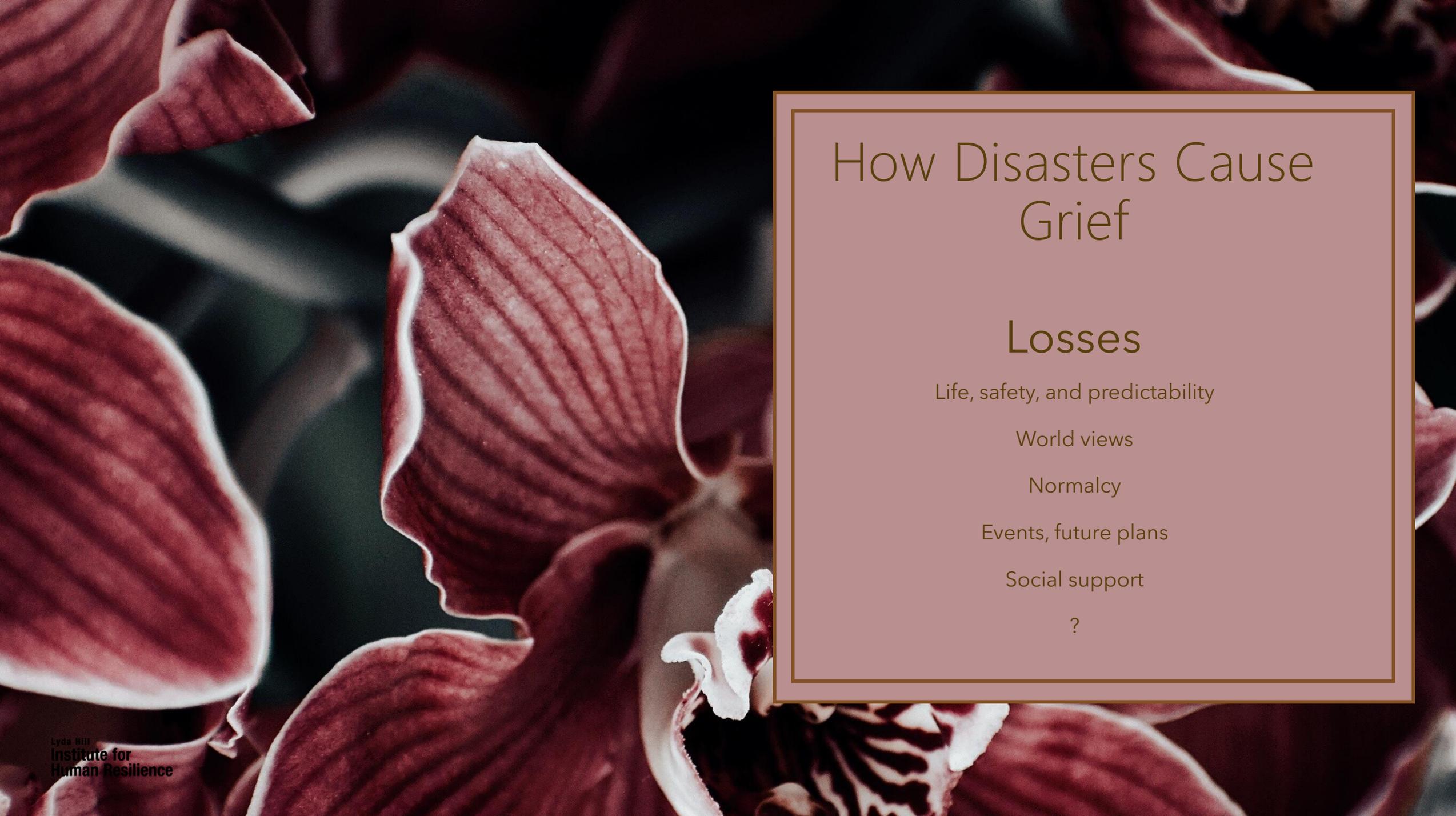
Ongoing stress and  
burnout



The Unknown



Compounding Trauma



# How Disasters Cause Grief

## Losses

Life, safety, and predictability

World views

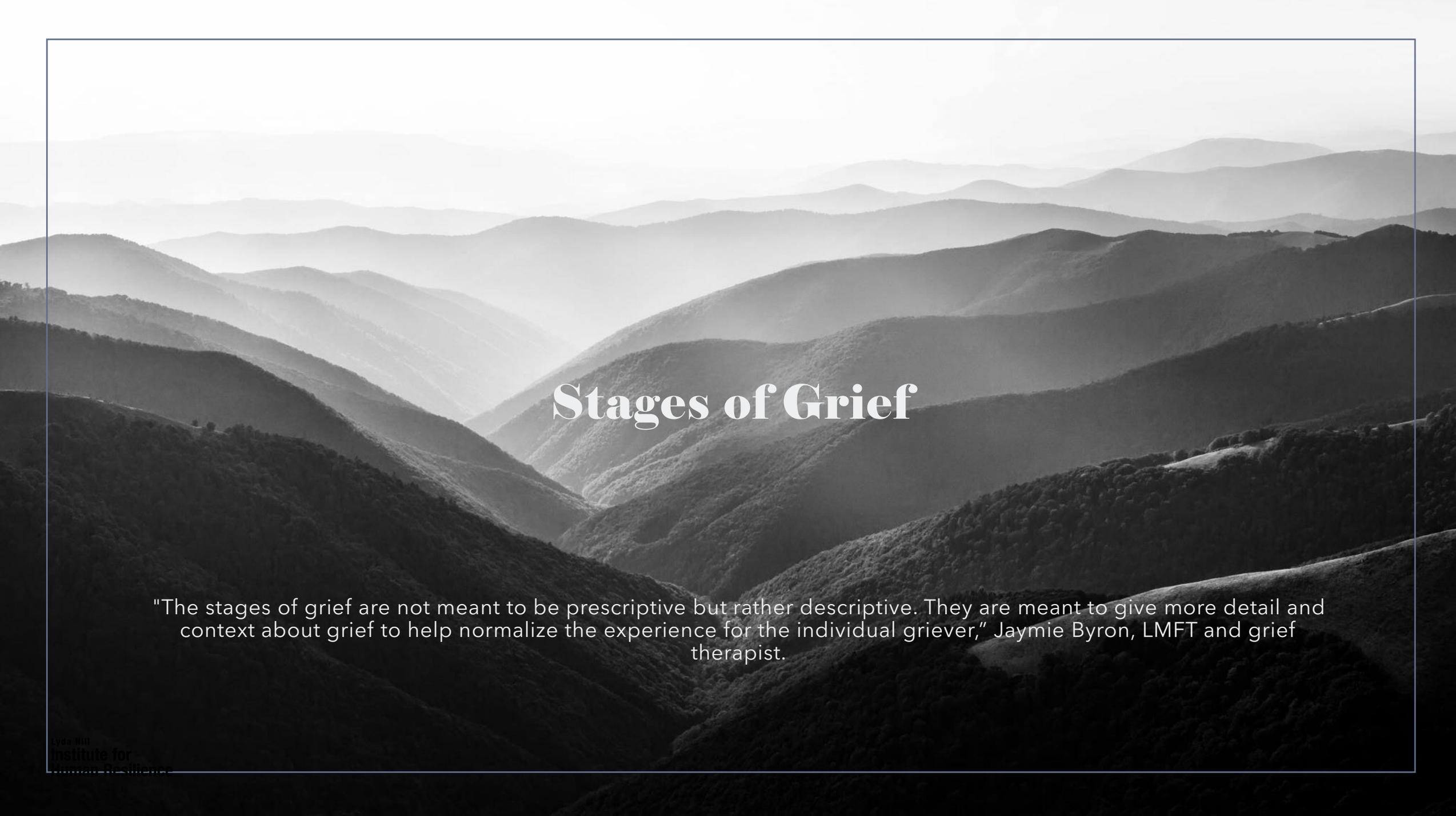
Normalcy

Events, future plans

Social support

?





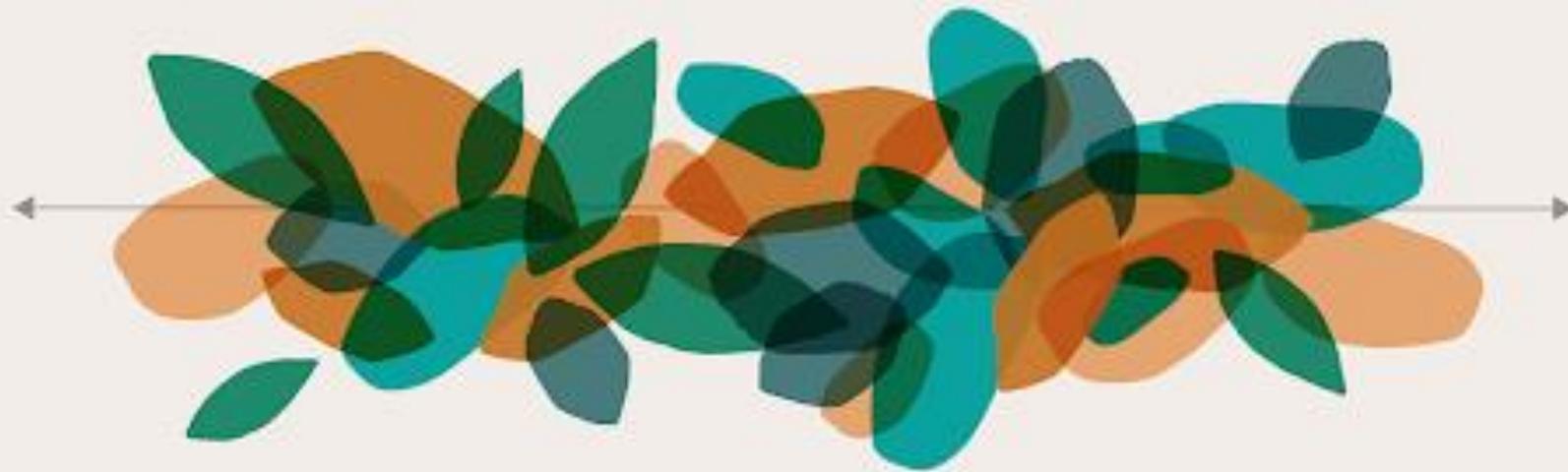
# Stages of Grief

"The stages of grief are not meant to be prescriptive but rather descriptive. They are meant to give more detail and context about grief to help normalize the experience for the individual griever," Jaymie Byron, LMFT and grief therapist.

# The stages of grief



Reality



# A “New” Stage: Finding Meaning

“Looking at how your life has changed...it’s likely that your ability to connect and grieve has changed as well. Hence, it is important now more than ever, to reflect on ways of managing this grief through the lens of finding meaning. We can find ways to move through the grieving process by NAMING WHAT WE HAVE LOST, making meaning of our grief, and marking it by recognizing its value in our life.” —Past the Pandemic Mental Wellbeing Toolkit



# Finding Meaning

- Memorialize/Honor what has been lost
- Name meaningful moments as they happen
- Honor the hard while holding space for positive outcomes or memories
  - Its an "and"
- Focus on strengths
- Consider self-compassion



# Actionable Steps

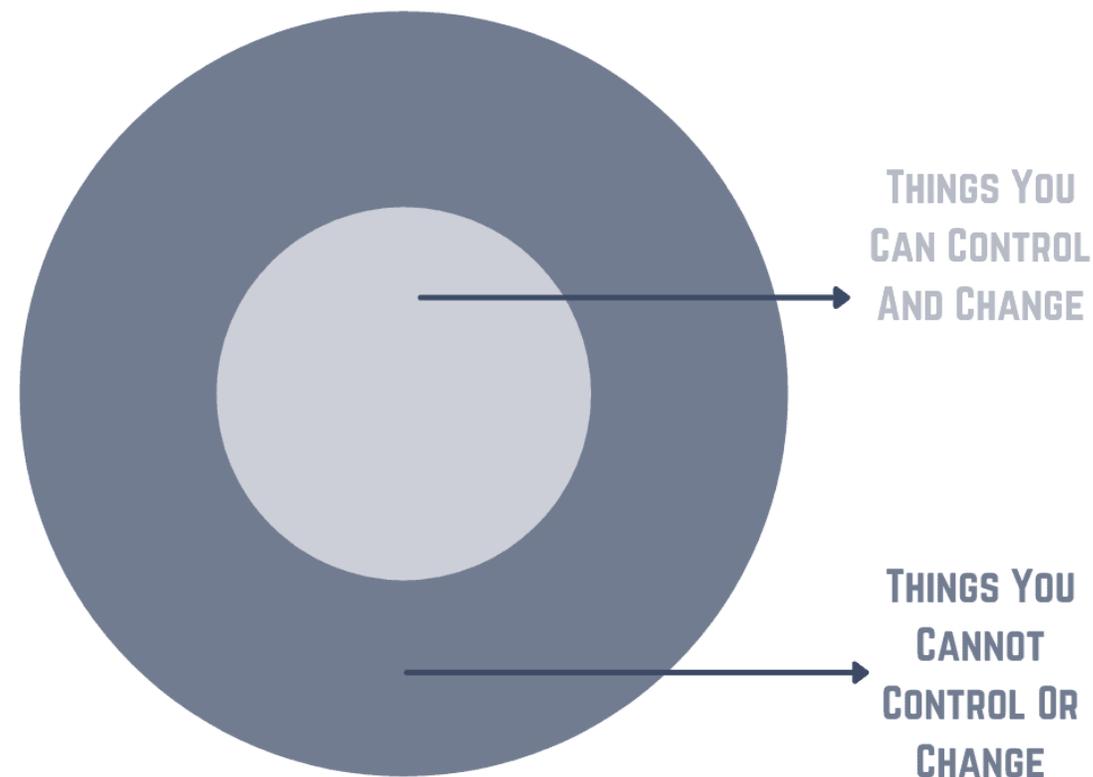
- Name your feelings (and feel them!)
- Stay connected – safe and social!
- Be flexible, practice growth mindset
- Minimize news exposure, social media
- Avoid unhelpful/ineffective coping strategies
- Think about locus of control



# Locus of Control

The degree to which people believe that they (as opposed to external forces) have control over the outcome of events in their lives.

Our beliefs about what we are able to control impact our cognition (thoughts) and our behavior (actions).





# Our Brains are Pattern Makers

Flexible Thinking  
Reinforcing Patterns of Control  
Self-talk

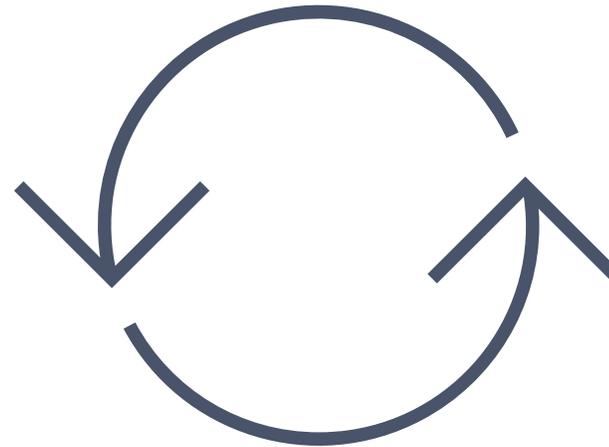
# Safe and Social

## Getting Support

- Bolsters resilience in stressful situations
- Reduces the psychological and physiological consequences of stress
- Enhances immune function

## Giving Support

- Inhibits stress responses
- Leads to increase in:
  - Happiness
  - Belonging
  - Self-esteem
  - Self-worth



## Types of Social Support



Informational

Messages of knowledge or facts  
Advice or feedback



Emotional

Expressions of caring  
Concern, empathy, or sympathy



Esteem

Messages that promote one's  
skills, abilities, or intrinsic value



Social Network Support

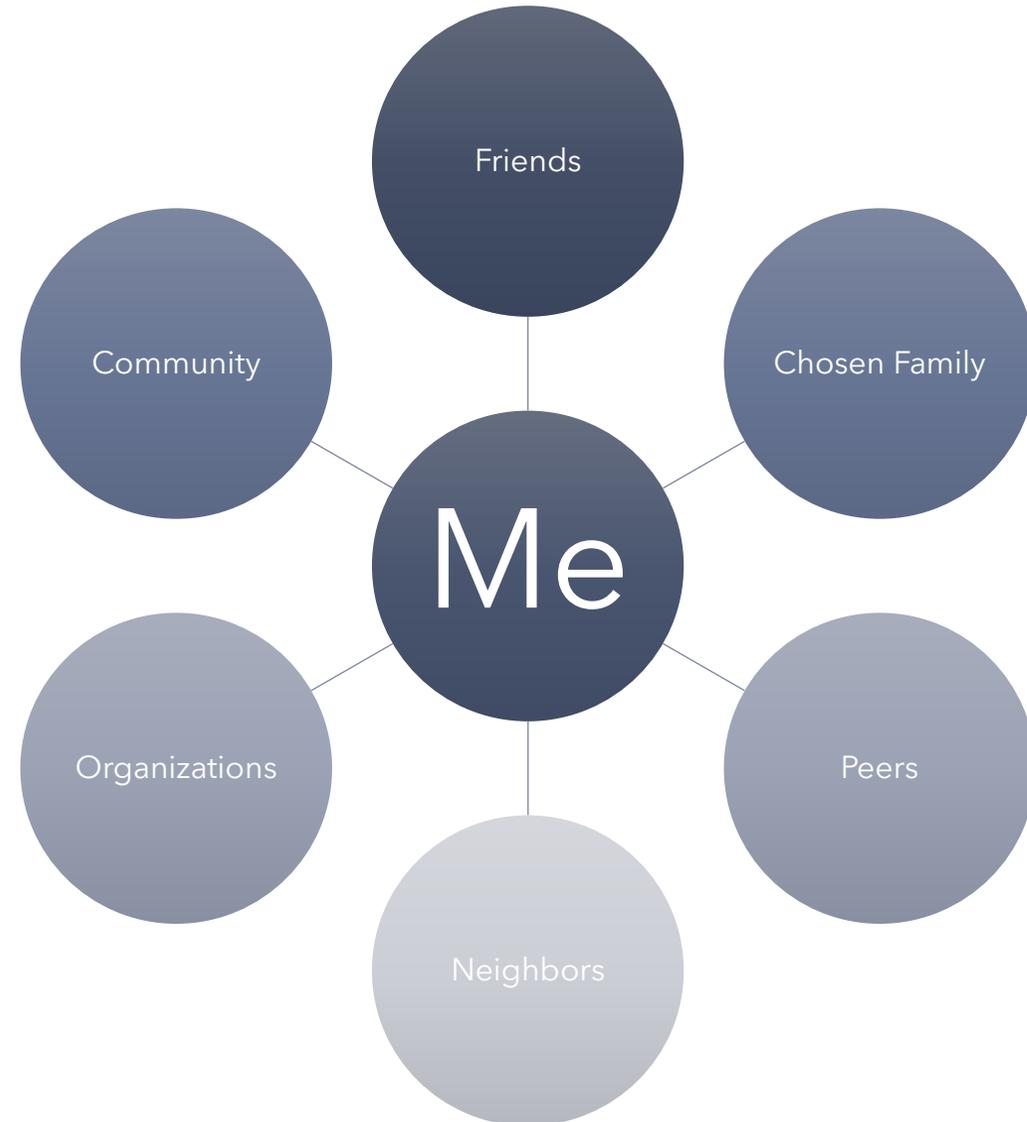
Messages that help to enhance  
sense of belonging



Tangible

Physically providing needed  
goods or services

Create a  
Map: Who's  
In Your  
Corner?



# SELF-EFFICACY

An individual's belief in their innate ability to achieve goals; centers around an individual's belief in their efforts and accomplishments and gives the individual a sense of control over their actions.



MASTERY  
EXPERIENCE



VICARIOUS  
LEARNING



SOCIAL  
PERSUASION



PSYCHOLOGICAL  
STATE

---

Plays a large role in resilience and coping styles  
Helps an individual estimate their capacity  
Helps regulate emotional states

A photograph of two runners, a man and a woman, running away from the camera on a paved road. The scene is set at sunrise or sunset, with the sun low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow and long shadows. The landscape is open and scenic, featuring rolling hills, a body of water, and snow-capped mountains in the distance. The runners are silhouetted against the bright light. The man is on the left, wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt and dark pants. The woman is on the right, wearing a pink long-sleeved shirt and dark leggings. The road has a white dashed line down the center.

# Running a Marathon

Grief, I've learned, it really just love. It's all the love you want to give, but cannot. All of that unspent love gathers in the corner of your eyes, the lump in your throat, and in the hollow part of your chest. Grief is just love with no place to go." - Jamie Anderson



# Final thoughts and reflections



# Thank you

---

[nweis@uccs.edu](mailto:nweis@uccs.edu)

[Resilience.uccs.edu](http://Resilience.uccs.edu)

Custom Trainings and  
Healing Options

Lyda Hill  
**Institute for  
Human Resilience**

