
Seven Phases[©] to Reconcile Loss and Grief as a Prevention and Intervention to Suicide

Submission to the
Senate Inquiry into
Suicide in Australia.

Rosemary Wanganeen

“What if there is no ‘mental illness’ just inter-generational suppressed unresolved grief that’s compounded and complicated contemporary Aboriginal society?”

(Rosemary Wanganeen)

Overview

This submission describes a model developed by the author, Rosemary Wanganeen, called the **Seven Phases to Reconcile Loss and Grief**[®]. It describes how the idea of suppressed unresolved grief can inform the understanding of suicide and self-harming behaviours, and the development of culturally appropriate suicide prevention and intervention training packages. The author describes the model as a framework that can align itself to four groups: originally for the author as an individual that healed her personal grief; she then identified she was ‘carrying’ her inter-generational ancestral grief; it was just a matter of time before her Seven Phases could be applied to the ¹Aboriginal community, but also has broad relevance to non-Aboriginal community. These 4 groups came about as she became consciously aware that the pinnacle to loss and grief is it’s a human experience and it doesn’t discriminate making our model devoid of shame and blame. It’s been my experience that shaming and blaming potentially debilitates, but like ²Brasch, I too want to advocate for change. But what is quite disturbing at the time Brasch’s book was published in 2005 she believes that much hasn’t changed since her son Riley was born, she says: *‘many of the attitudes and policies towards mental illness and suicide are the same now as when Riley was born in 1971’*. I want this submission to discuss a practical alternative that transformed the authors’ life from a pattern of anger, rage and violence to suicidal thoughts and plans on how to do it to reclaiming her life’s purpose ‘back’ from her suppressed unresolved grief to setting up her own healing Centre in 1993. From her commitment to putting loss and grief out into the broader community and it being ‘accepted’ in broad terms, she registered it as a company in 2005 as the Australian Institute for Loss & Grief P/L (CV attached).

Introduction

The models based on my own personal experiences lead me to understand and resolved what I refer to as my inter-generational and contemporary suppressed unresolved grief. I believe this type of grief still overwhelm much of my family members, much of my community and my people as a whole race, since the ‘arrival’ of 1788. This Seven Phases is what I call the next generation loss and grief model; it ‘unpacks’ not just my individual story but the other 3 groups as outlined above, and for this reason it is important that I use personal examples to illustrate the model. However, I also use personal examples because I do not want to de-personalise the model. It is important that healing grief as a process is seen as an experience of the individual – real, uncomfortable and confronting. And yet, the model goes beyond me as an individual. It is not simply about the resolution of my grief in my life-time. I would also like to propose it as a model for the resolution of others inter-generational grief as an individual, their families, and their communities and particularly understand that self harm, suicidal thoughts and successful suicide is a symptom of suppressed unresolved. Hence why western society has experienced suicide for many generations as its been past across and down the generations only to compound and complicate contemporary losses and suppressed unresolved grief leading to their contemporaries committing self harm and or successfully committing suicide. Finally, if suppressed unresolved grief makes sense to the reader, I believe it’s imperative that we harvest our beliefs, concepts, understandings and practices to validate this unique and innovative model as a ‘pathway’ to addressing self harm, attempt and successful suicide in the Australian society. In my experiences of ‘being raised’ bi-culturally such a loss and suppressed unresolved grief model has never been tried and tested in a way I describe though out the Seven Phases. Staying committed to approaching loss and grief holistically presented me with many beliefs, concepts and understandings and the following is one of them: we cannot heal as a race of people; as a region; as a community; as a family until first the individual takes responsibility for their own healing! What will occur for the individual is they must reach what they consider is their ‘rock bottom’. Only when this occurs will that individual be prepared mentally and emotionally for a prolonged

¹ Where the word Aboriginal is present it also embraces Torres Strait Island people

² www.ipoz.biz/titles/nmn.htm Reviews on Brasch, T. 2005. **No Middle Name – A mother talks about youth suicide.**

healing program and with 22 years 'unpacking' a holistic loss and grief model I say with confidence that unbeknown to them, many in the 21st century still don't realize that their loss and grief 'stuff' is from their ancestors suppressed unresolved grief that's compounded and complicated their losses and suppressed their unresolved grief from learnt behaviour!

Such a process can take its toll; has taken its toll and will continue to take its toll on family members as they truly have no choice but too more or less sit by and wait for their family member to 'hit their rock bottom'. As we know, many grief stricken family members don't hit their rock bottom and survive because these are the ones who succeed in successful suicide.

I don't advocate for individuals to go off medication but we must understand that medication can be a contributing factor to maintain their grief being suppressed and possibly remaining unresolved.

Not wanting to pre-empt what is loss and what is grief but I would like to briefly outline the 10 common grief emotions in italics only in this section that I studied in 1994 with Harold Jones of Bereavement Educational Services. With respect, I have his permission to use what I would call his basic model and have augmented it probably beyond his recognition.

³*10 Common Grief Emotions:

**Anger*

In my opinion when this persons anger remains suppressed it evolves into rage and still unresolved it evolves into violence

**Shock*

In my opinion this can cause the persons soul to 'split' from the physical body to 'protect' the mind and emotions from 'spinning' out of control

**Panic*

In my opinion panic for this person can have run away but running away from grief can be disguised

**Apathy*

In my opinion this person can commit submissive aggressive behaviour

**Depression*

In my opinion this person can display self harm which can move into more serious suicidal thoughts still unresolved can attempt and/or successful suicide;

**Guilt*

**Physically Illness*

In my opinion grief pressurises the physical body which can lead to mild to a severe diseased body leading to death. I also believe there are many different ways a human being can commit suicide

**Emotional release*

**Hope & Readjustment*

What I have found interesting in his model is it incorporates depression as a part of a loss and grief model yet somewhere in the history of mental health services and providers they have followed the beliefs, concepts, understandings and practices of 'dissecting' loss and grief and isolated depression and turned it into a stand alone disease. It seems to me it's been 'marketed' as 'something is wrong' with the individual, similarly anger has been isolated and 'marketed' as 'something is also wrong' with the individual. In my view dissecting loss and grief is what has created an individual with 'complex needs', and I've described this in more detail further into the submission.

As you will see throughout the submission, my work has 'unpacked' loss and grief for 22 years, and in so doing delved so much deeper into it which is why I refer to it as the next generation loss and grief model.

When it comes to losses the Seven Phases will more or less present what constitutes losses in much broader terms.

³ BES Marion Rd, Ascot Park South Australia

The Seven Phases Model

Below is an adaptation of the Seven Phases model and the model is divided into 3 parts: the past, present and the future. In the column called Phases it outlines the seven phases that I ‘went into’ as a powerless victim and came out the other end empowered firmly clutching my life’s purpose and work.

As you read each phase it’s imperative that you keep an open heart and mind to the relationship of each phase to the other. The source of this relationship is inter-generational: each human being have the ability to ‘inherit’ the last generations beliefs, concepts, understandings and most vital is practices and depending on what’s being ‘practiced’ by the generation before, it can be insidious, as I hope I’ll shown throughout my submission. As you read, my research will explain how some aspects of ancient Greek civilization became related to contemporary western societies and their systems today that seems to have kept contemporary society unwell.

PARTS	PHASES
The Past	5. Traditional cultural grieving processes – spiritually based
	4. Traditional cultural grieving processes - physically based
	3. Ancestral losses & source of their suppressed unresolved grief: - ⁴ Invasions/colonization experienced by Indigenous European culture 388BC. - Aboriginal Australian experiences of 1788
	2. Contemporary child/teenage loss & suppressed unresolved grief
The Present	1. Contemporary major grief reaction (more often in adulthood)
The Future	6. Develop traditional/contemporary grieving programs – spiritually bases
	7. Develop traditional/contemporary grieving programs – physically based

NB: Each Seven Phases is always divided into **two categories:**

Phases 1 – 3 (what they lost) discusses losses which ultimately amounts to **GRIEF FEAR:**

CATEGORY 1 are recognized losses that **can be seen** with the naked eye – death; removal from family; ancient and contemporary abuses: mental, emotional, spiritual, physical, cultural, sexual, & social; loss of traditional grieving processes

CATEGORY 2 are categorized as *losses that **cannot be seen** with the naked eye* – sense of identities; mother, father, sister, brother, cultural, granddaughter, grandson/power/confidence/self esteem/dreams/hopes/intelligence/safety/self respect/love.

Phases 4 – 5 (what they had) discusses cultural experiences before an invasion or colonization and such a culture thrives not by a world of academia but lived using their **INNATE HUMAN INSTINCTS.**

Phases 6 – 7 (what we can reclaim back) discusses how humanity can reclaim our **INNATE HUMAN INSTINCTS** by reclaiming loss and grief processes.

⁴ Both terms are in recognition for how some people in society still describe the experiences of 1788.

Phase 1 – Contemporary Major Grief Reaction

Let's begin by 'unpacking' Phase 1 which examines the present. My grieving began in 1987 and it's what I refer to as having a 'major grief reaction' rather than a nervous breakdown. A snapshot of the present shows that I, Rosemary Wanganeen, am in a women's shelter, bruised and battered yet again, from my second marriage. I am becoming aware that I'm a victim of family violence yet again but simultaneously becoming conscious of my own anger, rage and my own violence as a woman. I am also becoming aware of my own abilities to perpetrate and perpetuate family violence at one time or another. I am also becoming conscious of my deep sadness and at times was experienced as suicidal thoughts. Most importantly, I am also becoming aware of how shallow and superficial my life is; retrospectively I was just surviving and not thriving. So many unanswered questions:

- What have I become? – I'm a victim and a perpetrator of family violence
- Where am I going in my future? – had no idea
- When am I going to stop being someone's victim and perpetrator?
- How am I going to stop?
- Why am I so angry and full of rage and intermittent violence?

3 months in the woman's shelter became my 'rock bottom'!

At this time, I knew intellectually that I was an Aboriginal person but I did not feel Aboriginal. I didn't know what it was like to feel myself as a Nunga. This realisation of the absence or loss of identities led me to an awareness of my subsequent feeling of powerlessness. I realised that I had lost faith and trust in myself and my own abilities, and as a result of this, lacked faith and trust in others. In the early stages of 'unpacking' this phase and once I'd left the woman's shelter, I asked myself: how did I end up this woman? To answer this, I had to go back into my past, and one single adult incident in 1985 triggered my unresolved Stolen Generation childhood memories – the incident involved being accused of something I didn't do. So, returning to my past was one of the most terrifying things I have ever had to do. Raised as a Nunga child, then as an Aboriginal teenager and woman in a colonial/mainstream culture, I had been socialised and conditioned into believing many things, but the most earth shattering of which was to 'avoid the past.' The underlying rhetoric was always one of "what has happened has happened - you can't change it, Rosemary, so just move on". I had been raised to fear the past, but now it was time to feel this fear of my past but go back into it anyway: move into it and through it, wherever that might take me. The fear was so profound that I actually feared not coming out of 'it' – I was in fear of dying, somehow taking my own life out of fear of what I would find out about what happened to me.

Phase 2 – Individual Childhood Major Loss Experiences

Phase 2 is divided into two parts: The first part is identifying what I call 'recognised losses' and these are 'unpacking' losses that can be seen with the naked eye and the second, and the most significant part of the loss and grieving process, is identifying losses that are what I call 'unrecognised' and these are losses that cannot be seen with the naked eye. But these in effect become 'subsequent unrecognized losses' and they are generally experienced as a direct result of a major recognized loss.

For example, a major recognized loss is me at 7 years old in a school setting where my school teacher called me a 'dummy' in front of the whole class – all who was exposed to this experience couldn't see, feel or hear that I'd 'lost' my sense of intelligence in that moment, so the unrecognized loss became my sense of intelligence and I now 'secretly' believe 'I'm nothing but a dummy' and this led to me sabotaging much of my adult education and any dreams and hopes of finding my true purpose through my teens and early adult life. For me, understanding recognized losses involved arriving at an increasing awareness of the impact of the death of my mother when I was 9 years old, only to be removed and taken into the 'welfare' to be assimilated (the 1951 Assimilation Policy was still in force). As a direct result of my mother dying my numerous subsequent recognized losses became the following abuses in foster care – mentally, emotionally, spiritually, sexually, physically, culturally and socially.. I recalled, for example, the day I was suddenly whisked away from the second foster home at 12 years old when the 'foster father' and I were in the lounge room and through the noise of the television I said in a panic, 'I can smell gas!' We raised to our feet nearly tripping over each other, slid open the sliding door to see the 'foster mother' literally gassing herself in 'our' kitchen oven. Giving evidence at the Mulligan enquiry enable me to discover that she did not die from her attempt suicide and was alive and in her 90's living in a SA country town. I can only speculate that she knew what he was doing and that this was her way of dealing with it! If she did know that he was perpetrating sexual abuse upon me, what would have been her numerous subsequent recognized and unrecognized losses and this being a sign of our times, she had no where to go too grieve, neither did I or her husband. This was her having a major grief reaction!

Other recognized losses I've experienced as a child was loosing my baby brother to what I believe was AIDS; taken into Care meant experiencing numerous losses from extended family members as well as each sibling and my father.. For me as her daughter, my mother's death wasn't just about losing a mother (whom I loved dearly), but my subsequent unrecognized loss was my ability to love became fearful of love. My sense of will power or commitment to myself in regards to visualizing my, dreams, hope and expectations for the future became fear of the future; my secret fear was why develop dreams, hopes and expectations when one of my inner children (7 year old) kept reminding me that my dreams, hopes and expectations won't come true because I'm a 'dummy'. I took my 7 year old in my adult life and they now became my adult fears of dreams, hope and expectations.

By age 11, I had spent approximately two and a half years in the Welfare system. During this time, I did not have any contact with my family or with other Nungas, and therefore had no opportunity to speak my own Aboriginal English. When I was in the second foster home and attending school, I was the only Aboriginal child in a classroom with a non-Aboriginal teacher teaching "Australian Studies". The teacher talked about Captain Cook and the arrival of the first, second and third fleets. All I heard was: "and Aboriginal people were savages". By this time my Nunga identity was already growing weaker and weaker. When the teacher described my ancestors as "savages", suddenly something inside me felt like it snapped. My identity was replaced with an emotional legacy called shame and embarrassment - I began to feel ashamed of what my ancestors had done to those "poor" colonialists, and as a result I felt shamed and embarrassed by my own Aboriginality. I carried the shame and embarrassment for being an Aboriginal for days, months, and eventually years.

As a child I had no psychological support that explained the deeper meaning of what happened to my mother so I gave it a childish interpretation and from my experience it is now my hypothesis that children also need to

make sense of what is happening to them and their family when a family tragedy occurs, as do adults. When this doesn't occur; and the adult explanation still doesn't make sense to the child or they have no one 'trained' that understand loss and grief and their grief emotions its left open for the child to construct their own interpretation. I believe childish interpretations can occur instinctively but from what I call, grief fear. .I believe it's a human phenomenon that can originate predominately in childhood and the potential for these childish grief fear interpretations to be harmful to them is more likely than not; such grief fear interpretations can shape a child's major social and health challenges in adulthood, for example:

For the first 10 years of my life my mother went off to have babies and always came home with one, then this time the baby came home but she didn't return – even though I experienced some family violence I also experienced love between us as a family. At 10 years old, I attended the funeral of my mother and at such an age, she not with us didn't make complete sense to me. Now totally isolated from my father, siblings and extended family I was taken into foster care with no psychological support and it was here that I started to question what's happening to me. Being a child I didn't know how to approach anyone and these people are total strangers to me anyway so I suppressed my grief fears which enabled me to develop my childish 'grief fear interpretations' about what's happening to me and why and this is what evolved: "I must have loved my mum too much and it killed her and this is my punishment (isolated from family and abused in Care)", so in adulthood this led me too fear a spiritually based deep and meaningful loving relationship, I feared long term relationships and I even feared deeply loving my children incase I 'killed them'. So, from a warped sense of love for my children I brought them in close to me then sabotaged our love for each other.

In my adult life my baby son died from SIDS and my doctor not knowing what to do with my feelings of deep sadness prescribe anti-depressants (he never called it grief). I have experienced abusive marriages and relationships. Depending on the situation, my use of alcohol brought out a 'monster' in me, which at times progressed into aggression and violence. I struggled to make any sense of my anger, rage and violence and what exacerbated these feelings was not having anyone to go too that I could trust would support me and make me feel safe: mentally, emotionally, spiritually, sexually, physically, culturally and socially.

The impetus for recovery became a series of questions and this one was: 'who gave the authorities the right to take me away from my family?' In order to find an answer to this, I had to go back further into my past.

Phase 3: Part 1 - Aboriginal Ancestral Losses and Source of Suppressed Unresolved Grief –.

When ⁵Charles Darwin cruised into Sydney Harbour on January 12 1836 he encounters a group of Aboriginal people from the Darak Nation and the documentary reminiscences that *Darwin is deeply moved by the devastation of the Aboriginal; an impression he won't forget.*

Phase 3 is divided into two parts; I found it compelling research to find out what was the truth about what really happened to traditional Aboriginal people during and after 1788 but then found myself compelled to research the truth about English Europeans when they experienced their invasions/colonization by the Roman Empire during and after 43AD. As a part of 'unpacking' Phase 3, I was led to reading books, watching documentaries and talking to people about history.

There seem to have been three overall strategies implemented to 'dismantle and desecrate' my Ancestors' traditional culture: outright warfare (the use of weapons), germ warfare (rampant diseases) and psychological warfare (lawful policies & practices). It was just a matter of time before my ancestors experienced the loss of all aspects of their culture – spiritual traditions, social and political systems, the forced migration of people from their lands and forced to live upon another traditional groups 'country', the loss of traditional foods and medicines and pastoral practices, the removal of artefacts and the desecration of sacred sites. The introduction of diseases killed countless ancestors of contemporary Aboriginal people who live today. These too are all categorised as recognised losses that can be seen with the naked eye. As a direct result of them losing all aspects of their traditional culture their subsequent un-recognised losses also became the loss of their unrecognized losses for example they would have lost faith and trust in themselves, each other and others.. Also as an example, they're unable to access their traditional lands for ceremonies, and not permitted to identify with their traditional clan/group so they would have lost their clan group identify because simply became "Aboriginal" people, a homogenous people lumped together without individual, family or clan identities. As a direct result of loosing their clan groups cultural beliefs, concepts, understandings and practices they weren't able to pass onto the next generation those beliefs, concepts, and practices pertaining to their traditional clan groups culture 'that can be seen with the naked eye.'

I started to question this notion that my ancestors were 'the savages', and began to see that what my teacher had said to me, so long ago, was not true. Amongst other horrific lawful policies and practices the authorities 'designed' and implemented at the time of my removal, I came under two South Australian policies – the policy that sanctioned the removal of Aboriginal children from their families The Aborigines Act 1923 (Training of Children), and the Assimilation Policy, 1951), and even though I wasn't removed until 1965 (approximately) it seems my removal and my family experiences was sanctioned under these two policies.

From the document Major Policies and Events Affecting Aboriginal Society (Relating to South Australia) our first lawful policy dates back to 1844 pertaining to the Aborigines Ordinance No: 12 which states: An Ordinance to provide for the protection, maintenance and upbringing of orphans and other destitute children of the Aborigines (28th August, 1844) and in 1911 the first Aborigines Act states: The first Aborigines Act of South Australia was to "protect" Aboriginal people who were seen to be a dying race. It segregated many Aboriginal people onto reserves away from non-Aboriginal people.

Broadly speaking all three warfare's beliefs, concepts, understandings and practises was designed to instil fear, submission and assimilation into the first generation of traditional people as they experienced the day to day desecration of their traditional culture, then out of their fear of the repercussion for themselves and the next generation they instil into their children the beliefs, concepts, understandings and practices of fear, submission and assimilation. To 'protect' the next generation the cycle begins!

⁵ ABC Television: 3 part series - Darwin's Brave New World-Series 1 Sunday 8 November

This far back in my research had me raising another question: If my Ancestors weren't 'savages', then what sort of people were they? To find out more about this, I had to go back even further into my past whereby I was compelled to research traditional 'Aboriginal' culture. But before I begin this journey back 50-60,000 years, I had another compelling question that needed discussing: where did Europeans come from before 1788 'arrived' in Australia. If we acknowledge that Aboriginal people have handed down their suppressed unresolved grief fears from one generation to the next the same acknowledgment need to be applied to European Australians to explain why 1788 'arrived' with such violence and inhuman behaviors? Those with Anglo-Saxon/Celtic descendents may also benefit from embarking on a grieving process for what happened to your ancestors as they were ripped away from their families and culture? I believe there is enormous guilt and shame still being carried amongst this group for the actions of 1788.

We know we cannot live in the past but the past lives with us. (Charles Perkins)

Phase 3: Part 2 - English Ancestral Losses and Source of Suppressed Unresolved Grief –

Ancient Greek Civilization

The following narrative is a broad outline into Ancient Greek Civilization as my 'research' enabled me to 'find' where in contemporary western civilization their European Ancestors ceased the basic human right too grieving processes which in contrast to traditional Aboriginal culture our Ancestors honoured and respected their structured grieving processes. Their grieving processes were practised as individuals; as families; in their traditional clan group and as a race of people for thousands of generations. It's my theory that their ability to grieve is what kept the Aboriginal ancestors ⁶holistically evolved particularly spiritually and in physical peak condition.

Broadly speaking, comparing the health of our traditional Aboriginal ancestors to us as their contemporary's ill health today, I found myself asking 'how and why has this happen?' To answer this question, I found myself comparing traditional Aboriginal people's health and wellbeing to western civilization's health before, during after they arrived on this continent. Sadly, I've identified when they arrived they were holistically impoverished and destitute and this way of life had been past across and down their generations, for centuries. Here it must be said, with the utmost respect; my intension is not to shame or blame the English European ancestors of 1788 in anyway shape or form but I have a responsibility to stay true too my beliefs, concepts, understanding and practises that SUG can cause humanity to permeate inhume abuse and violence. What supported my intent was finding English author, Geoff Walters.

I've often 'seen, felt and heard' Western society putting ancient Greek civilization on a pedestal for developing the building blocks to all that is western culture and the founding of democracy to name just one 'system'. For example, from the documentary ⁷The Greeks – Crucible of Civilization is yet again, confirming how proud contemporary western society is. The following documentary:

'Recounts the rise, glory, demise and legacy of the empire that marked the dawn of Western Civilization. In the fourth and fifth centuries, BC, the Greeks built an empire that stretched across the Mediterranean from Asia to Spain. They laid the foundation of modern science, politics, warfare and philosophy, and produced some of the most spectacular flourishing of imagination and achievement in recorded history'.

⁸Geoff Walters and his research found Socrates the ancient Greek philosopher who expressed to his students on his death bed that grief is a 'disturbance'. Grateful to have found Walters who is an English minister of religion, began observing many of his parishioners who were unable to grieve and throughout his observation the following question became his thesis and the title of his book: "Why do Christians Find it Hard to Grieve?" The following narrative is Walters recording Plato's narrative and quotes it in full:

At the conclusion of Socrates drinking his poison Socrates' friends give vent to a perfectly natural outpouring of grief. Immediately Socrates himself turns upon them with a rigid defence against any show of emotion. Plato's writing regarding the death is worth quoting in full:

"Up till this time most of us had been fairly successful in keeping back our tear; but when we saw that he was drinking, that he had actually drank it, we could do so no longer; in spite of myself the tears came pouring out, so that I covered my face and wept broken- heartedly – not for him but for my own calamity in losing such a friend. Crito had given up even before me and had gone out when he could not restrain his tears. But Apollodorus, who had not stopped crying even before, now broke out into

⁶ Mental; emotional; physical; sexual; spiritual; social and cultural.

⁷ Empires: The Greeks - Crucible of Civilization (1999)

⁸ Walters, G. (1997) *Why Do Christians Find it Hard to Grieve?*

such a storm of passionate weeping that he made everyone in the room break down except Socrates himself, who said:

Really my friends, what away to behave! Why that was my main reason for sending away the women, to prevent this sort of disturbance; because I am told that one should make one's end in a tranquil frame of mind. Calm yourselves and try to be brave."

(Phaedo 182) In these few words we have contrasted for us the natural expression of grief and its prohibition on the basis of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. What may be of even greater significance is Phaedo's comment at this point? "...this made us feel ashamed and we controlled our tears..." (PHAEDO 182)

A most important precedent is being set here. For the first time in Western literature we are informed that the expression of grief is something of which to be ashamed. In the interest of philosophy, tears are to be controlled. The encouragement of the stiff upper lip, which we tend to associate with the English public school, has its origin in classical antiquity. (p48-54)

After Socrates' death, according to Walters's research he discovered that Plato went on to develop the following theories about grief and not to be outdone, Plato's theories were later 'baptized' by Emperor Augustus as described by Walters:

*In and around 388BC **Plato's theory** on grief:*

The human soul is immortal...

The soul not only outlives the body which it currently inhabits, but existed before it...

The body is a hindrance to the soul's fulfilment of its potential...

Grief is not only illogical but a weakness...

The well-educated individual therefore has no place to grieve...

*In and around 385AD **Augustus's theory** on grief:*

God himself is a refuge from the pain of living in the body – and this includes the pain of bereavement...

Platonic-Augustinian view

If Plato was the first to give this attitude literary and philosophical expression, it was Augustine who 'baptized' it as semi-official Christian doctrine and ensured its dissemination down the centuries among countless Christians. It is based on the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul and declares grief to be an inconsistent emotion which must be minimized if not suppressed altogether. (p47-69)

So, combining my research with Walters's I found what I believe is a connection between the past Ancient Greek culture with contemporary Australian societies' major social and health challenges, particularly what is commonly known as depression that has the potential to lead to a mental illness within Aboriginal communities. Again, without any shame or blame as many know, when Europeans arrived in 1788 they had the practical means to impose all aspects of their violent cultural beliefs, concepts, understandings and practices upon the traditional ancestors, because the English and convicts were in the depth of their own grief, anger, rage and violence. I believe this became possible to commit such horrific violence as a critical mass because by now they have culturally maintained the 'stiff upper lip'. If Europeans were forced to learn not to grieve across and down the generations from Plato's teachings, it became just a matter of time before our ancestors were also forced to 'learn' not to grieve. Subsequently, it stands to reason that the following generations from 1788 'learned' not to grieve out of fear, but more to the point many contemporary Aboriginal individuals have misplaced many if not all the beliefs, concepts, understandings and practices relating to grieving ceremonies/activities.

In my opinion the source to structured grieving ceremonies by moving the physical body through dancing; wailing and crying is to constructively express the build up of grief energy that's generated from a major loss according to the clan group. If grief energy is left suppressed and unresolved the grief energy is still generated but now the physical body becomes a 'pressure cooker' that has no means to rid the build up of steam. The steam is in actual fact the build up of toxic grief energy waiting to explode.

When 1788 arrived on this continent as individuals, as families, as a community as a race of people and collectively as non-Aboriginal people on mass their physical bodies eventually became pressure cookers many years before they even left the shores of the 'Mother Land' and on arrival their body exploded into grief anger, rage and violence and for some I think we can confidently assume some would have plummeted into grief depression.

So initially we have two groups of people deeply grieved – traditional Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people and through their body language, physically and verbally they begin expressing themselves through grief fear of each other and on both sides their body language becomes inter-generational.

It's since become obvious that the year 388BC became 1788 and 1788 has rolled over into the 21st century but more insidiously than this happening is suppressed unresolved grief has infiltrated each new generation making some contemporary Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal societies misunderstands and some would even refute the relationship between inter-generational suppressed unresolved grief and today's major social and health challenges particularly mental health challenges. It's imperative that we as service providers realize that much of today's major social and health challenges are not unique to the 21st century it has been permeating western civilization for centuries, it's just in a different place, different time and with a different name, which I think continues to confuse each new generation of contemporary service providers. Contemporary major social and health challenges in particular mental health challenges had been disguising inter-generational suppressed unresolved grief that has compounded and complicated contemporary human beings losses and grief.

So, at the conclusion of Phase 3 the following question arose: if my ancestors weren't savages what sort of people were they?

The more extensive a man's knowledge of what has been done; the greater will be his power of knowing what to do. (Benjamin Disraeli)

Phase 3 & 4: Traditional Cultures

When ⁹Charles Darwin cruised into Sydney Harbour on January 12 1836 he encounter a group of Aboriginal people from the Darak Nation, and his journals '*finds them a peaceful people*'. The documentary reminiscences his representation of the Darak Nation as the journals recall that *their countenances were good humour and pleasant and they appeared far from such utterly degraded beings as usually represented.*

When I began to discover how my ancestors were able to maintain a powerful and rigorous structured traditional culture, the shame I had felt at being a ¹⁰Nunga gradually lifted and was replaced with pride. Once I understood that I and all generations of Aboriginal people had been born into suppressed, unresolved grief of a once-proud and cultured people I began to develop and express my contemporary grieving processes. By going back into my past, on behalf of parent's and grandparents and my ancient ancestors on their behalf, I was able to 'reclaim back' what was taken from my them, and not much in the way of traditional practices but their innate emotions, as outlined below I was able to reclaim back our sense of power and identity, their confidence and self esteem, their faith and trust. I was also confronted with an opportunity to apologise profusely to my Ancestors for being ashamed and angry at them. I was angry at them for not fighting back hard enough, for not fighting hard enough to keep their culture, even though intellectually I knew they couldn't fight with their boomerangs and spears against guns and bullets, or develop immune systems that protected then against colonialist diseases. recall I 'channelled' my grief, anger and rage to forgive the perpetrators of this horrific transgression - and this does not in any way, shape or form, excuse their violent behaviours. When studying loss and grief with, Harold Jones shared with us his perception of forgiveness:

¹¹Forgiveness does not excuse the behaviour, it does not negate the wrong, and it is an acknowledgment of what has happened, a choice has been made and forgiveness does not mean forgetting.(

In a desperate need to understand what they had before it was lost my research found some truly interesting and powerful beliefs, concepts, understandings and practices relating to social practices and grief, for example:

¹²Sorrow and grief are highly dramatized in Aboriginal society. Both men and women wail and lament long after the death of a relative. The tearful demonstrations continue until, as the Aborigines say, "they become empty of grief". Grieving is sometimes accompanied with ritual wounding. Bloodletting, like emotion, is an outpouring of spirit into a larger reality. In the dramatization of sorrow, both spirit and blood escape the body in acknowledgment of suffering and death that universally befall mankind. (p249)

Interesting enough when Lawlor discusses the 'ritual wounding' it reminds me of young Aboriginal girls who come to me with their arm cut up and down. Because they come to me with the scars I explain it to them as more than like coming from innate cultural beliefs, concepts, understanding and practice that our ancestors practiced in a state of grieving – in a contemporary setting I describe it as 'releasing the build up of grief energy that's pressurizes their physical body like a pressure cooker. For some, it's not a pretty sight, but they 'get it' fairly immediately and it normalizes the practice but we discuss contemporary grief strategies that can express the build up of their grief energy so that they don't have cut up and down their arm.

⁹ ABC Television: 3 part series - Darwin's Brave New World-Series 1 Sunday 8 November

¹⁰ Describes South Australian Aboriginals predominately south of Coober Pedy

¹¹ Jones, H. 1994 Bereavement Educational Services Course Manual

¹² Lawlor, R. 1991. Voices of the First Day-Awakening in the Aboriginal Dreamtime

But equally valuable to discuss is the beliefs, concepts, understandings and practices of the Celts as ¹³Harpur describes them as:

Originating in ancient Europe – produced one of the world’s riches treasuries of myths. Full of magic, adventures and love stories, Celtic tales open a window into a realm where heroes fought in ferocious battles; engaged in duels with warriors, giants and animals; went on dangerous quests; and frequently fell in love. (p6)

But after much research English Archaeologist Mike Harter Pearson has enough evidence to show that Stonehenge ‘housed the spirits of their dead’.

Both these ancient groups had structured ceremonies before the invasion/colonization arrived in 1788 and before Christianity and the invasion/colonization of the Roman Empire in 43AD upon the ‘traditional’ Celts. It’s imperative that contemporary Australian societies reconstruct old ceremonies where possible with new contemporary activities, as I found it necessary to do.

¹³ Harpur, J.2008 Celtic Myths – A Treasury of Legends, Art and History

Phase one – Full circle: The need for Loss and Grief Healing Centres

It is important to understand not just the psychological effects that are experienced by Aboriginal children and their teenager years as they 'grow up' in a society previously dominated by non-Aboriginal systems and had been delivered by non-Aboriginal people, as was my generation. It's imperative to understand that when an individual is and or begins to feel powerless and helpless as two examples of emotional legacies fused with going into a grief stricken state, they can still make 'choices' from this place of grief fear. Grief fear is a by-product of inter-generational suppressed unresolved grief past onto the next generation only to compound and complicate their descendents contemporary suppressed unresolved grief. As individuals they can be forced into becoming seduced and or coerced into unhealthy life styles and violence to the self, others, and property; this is what I refer to as grief behaviours. And depending on the circumstances grief fears can 'drive' and individual too become submissive aggressive (sulking) through to violence (murder).

So, here I am having done the full circle, over a five year period and virtually single handed I committed myself to expressing my toxic grief fears resulting from my contemporary losses and that of my ancestors. I could not have done it any other way because throughout my grieving processes I lived in grief fear of mainstream services because it was non-Aboriginal people who delivered those services, predominately. My grief fears evolved from what I had experienced throughout my childhood and adolescent years as being my fault; often growing up, I was so afraid I would experience racially motivated comments or behaviours from those service providers and I would be made to feel less than a human being, yet again. I believe many Aboriginal individuals would stay away from many of these services rather than risk experiencing racially motivated comments or behaviours, further to this I believe these grief fears is what has become the cause of major social and health challenges!

With 22 years experience this is what I believe I know about humanity, holistic loss and grief and mental illnesses. I say this from first hand experiences and of course not from formal empirical research as a back up to the following statement:

Humanity:

- There is not a race of people who have not experienced some form of an invasion/colonization.
- Most if not all who invaded another's culture call it a 'settlement' and or 'colonization' as a part of psychological 'warfare'.
- The 'invaders' use the word settlement/colonization as it's more acceptable psychologically to the invaders and I believe it has the potential to suppress their grief guilt and for some the grief guilt can 'turn' into grief anger, rage and for some, sometimes violence.
- Growing up bi-culturally I'm unable to name a race of people on this planet that has fully healed major social and health challenges holistically as a contemporary race of people.
- As well as humanity, loss and grief is experience by all living creatures, plant life and even Mother Earth has an ability to 'grieve'.
- Humanities suppressed unresolved grief has stimulated inhumane grief behaviours whereby we take it out on ourselves; each other; property; animal and plant life and mother earth.

Holistic Approaches to Loss and Grief:

- Being Aboriginal and growing up around racially motivated behaviours from mainstream society, I have not totally reclaimed back my sense of safety whereby I can 'see, feel and hear' that I am totally safe in my own country; I need to believe that's yet to come.
- My fears are a derivative of Australian history that has been past across and down the generations of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal families via story telling. As a consequence to Australian history, my personal grief fears came from living through the psychological warfare of policies and practices.
- It's important to acknowledge that not all grief is toxic. When a person experiences healthy grief, they have become conscious that loss and grief is a natural part of being a human being's everyday life

experiences and they can participate in grieving processes because they have healed their toxic grief and they know the difference.

- It would be in the best interest of health services and providers and the patient/client to develop and implement a holistic approach to grieving programs that's accessible and that's culturally appropriate and or just appropriate for a human being.
- Public, systemic and workplace grief 'racism' has been and can be perpetrated by an individual; a family; a community; an institution; a race of people; a nation.
- The true meaning to racism is grief fear.
- My research on 'racist' beliefs; concepts; understandings and practices began by exploring ancient European culture. The 'racist' beliefs; concepts; understandings and practices has become inter-generation suppressed unresolved grief fear of multiple losses and the individual, family etc becomes fearful of feeling any form of grief emotions. This leads them to take their grief fear out on a minority group to avoid experiencing some form of grief emotions.
- The word 'racist' or 'racism' may not have been spoken in every day languages across ancient European cultures but the beliefs concepts, understandings and practices of racism had been experienced across Europe for thousand of centuries: amongst the invading Roman Empire and Christianity participated in it..
- But it's interesting that the word found its way into contemporary western society's vocabulary. Australian's have come a long way since 1788 but these beliefs, concepts, understandings and practices had been and some would say still are being used against an Aboriginal individual; a family; a community; as a race of people; a nation and their organisations. It could be said it is practiced to obstruct the majority of minorities away from all forms of health and wealth of a nation. Keeping in mind that genocide was a systemic practice across Australia after 1788 arrived.
- But when major loss experiences occurred for the individual, family, contemporary community, a race of people all or some of their Seven Humanities can rupture and depending on the loss experiences they can be severely ruptured leading to becoming severed from the IHI if the grieving process is suppressed and remains unresolved long term. So, due to ancient western culture suppressing their grief as a culture (as an individual, as families, a society, a race of people, a nation) for hundreds of generations and passing SUG across and down the generations it has given me the impression that their Seven Humanities had been severely ruptured that lead to all of them being severed from their IHI as Individuals; Families; Society which caused them to externalize their grief anger, rage and violence upon themselves, others and property. It was just a matter of time because they then took their SUG out on traditional Aboriginal people and their culture.
- In addition to bringing our ancient European and Australian history into our present as outlined above, my research conceptualized and defined another layer of what I refer to as holistic approaches to healing the human suppressed unresolved grief. I've identified that we as human beings consist of ¹⁴Seven Humanities: we have mental (thought) processes; we have the ability to experience emotions; we're physical beings, spiritual beings, sexual beings, cultural and social beings and when in a conscious and healthy state of honouring grief the Seven Humanities remain aligned to what I refer to as our Innate Human Instincts (IHI). Reclaiming our IHI is what I believe can return us to and sustain our holistic wellbeing (or resilience) because our Ancestors 'lived' their daily lives in touch with their IHI. I believe these daily lifestyles are what sustained them holistically for generations and for thousands of years before western sciences 'arrived' in 1788.

Mental Illness/s:

From all the years of researching loss and grief I don't say this without due consideration because I have a responsibility to be true to my 'findings' based on my experiences – personally and professionally: I don't believe we should continue calling toxic suppressed unresolved grief by the name of mental illness! Such a diagnosis is maintaining the western cultural beliefs, concepts, understanding and practices that something is wrong with the individual' and unfortunately the belief that 'something is wrong' has been past across and

¹⁴ Wanganeen, R. (2009) Using Loss & Grief for Bi-Cultural Awareness Training Program: *Western Civilization Dissecting the Human Being*

down the generations in the field of academia for centuries and throughout the general population. The human being was never meant to be 'dissected' as it has been throughout western civilization when originally 'designed' by Ancient Greek philosophers. The 'design' to dissect the human being began inadvertently forming ancient western civilization's silo systems that has found its way into contemporary western civilization. The following is a diagram that I explain where an individual is 'forced' to seek assistance when in a grief stricken state, when all that is 'wrong' with them, is they are experiencing their major grief reaction:

Seven Humanities	Dissected Western System	Broad Terms Health Issue
Mental	Psychiatry: is the study of medicine which deals with the diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders	Mental illness diagnoses
Physical	Medicine: The study of diseases and ways of maintaining and restoring health	Physical ailments and diseases
Emotion	Psychology: The branch of science which studies consciousness and behaviours	Emotional behaviours deriving from anger, rage, violence; depression, suicidal thoughts, successful suicide
Sexual	Psychiatry; Psychology; Medicine	Physical, mental and emotional challenges relating to all things sexual: singles; couples; crime
Spiritual	Theology: The study of divinity or religious doctrines, such as the characteristics of a god or gods in relation to man and the universe.	Seeing, feeling and hearing the paranormal Excessive God/Devil contact
Cultural	Anthropology: the study of origins and development of mankind	
Social	Sociology: the study of social behaviours especially in relation to the development or changing of societies and social institutions.	

- Mental illnesses by any other name is suppressed unresolved grief and I believe an individual experiencing mental illnesses is more likely to have their health restored when using an holistic approach to loss and grief as it has more potential to restore and realign their seven humanities, thereby healing the whole person as outlined above.
- Traditional Aboriginal culture already had forms of what western culture refer to as 'psychology' for example in the Kurna traditional culture the word used is Tanka Manninendi meaning 'to alter the mind for the better'. So we must ask: if western civilization across Europe had all forms of mental illnesses, severe to mild, throughout all classes of their society before, during and after 1788 and on arrival of the First Fleets there is no record of 'mental illness' as they knew of that was recorded about traditional Aboriginal people!
- In ¹⁵Introduction to Psychology there are 9 different definitions of psychology dating back to 1890 which seems to indicate to me that the 'well educated' new generations of psychologist felt the need to adjust the meaning of the beliefs, concepts, understandings and practices of psychology as each new generations aspired to eminence. What I find concerning is it is possible that each new generation since may have become 'guinea pigs' as describe by a psychologist colleague. It's been acknowledged that psychology has not produced a society that is socially and emotionally well – could it be said in 119 years

¹⁵ Atkinson, Rita, L.; et al. 1987 Introduction to Psychology 9th Edition. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich (p13)

such a model since before, during and after 1890 has caused humanity to regress 'psychologically' but obviously progressed materialistically?

- By working with the whole seven intelligences as apposed to just emotional intelligence to interpret and recognise experiences as cultural beliefs, concepts, understanding and practices this holistic approach could enable many Aboriginal people to not fear seeing, feeling and hearing the voices and visitations of the paranormal. This is imperative that the service providers also not fear them because the Aboriginal individual could possible 'just' be reconnecting to their ancestors and if it's not them the health professional supports them through the process without panicking and without any fear of favour.

Summary:

- Critical to teach the next generations how to work with and through major social and health issues using loss and grief to heal and restore one's humanity as an individual, a family; a community; a race of people; a nation.
- And for humanity, use loss and grief to better understand where humanity – know where humanity has come from to know why we can be capable of 'committing' inhuman grief behaviours upon our selves; each other and one's own property and or other's property.
- There is no 'mental illness' just inter-generational suppressed unresolved grief that's compounded and complicated contemporary Aboriginal Australian societies!
- There is no 'mental illness' just inter-generational suppressed unresolved grief (suppressed unresolved grief) that's compounded and complicated contemporary non-Aboriginal Australian societies!
- For much of humanity there are 4 categories of loss:
 - Traditional Culture
 - Contemporary losses
 - Recognised Losses - that can be "seen"
 - Unrecognised losses - that cannot be "seen with"
- Loss & Grief impacts upon but heals relationships with Individuals; Families; Communities; Race; Nations; Humanity; Mother Earth
- Healthy or Toxic grief when left suppressed and unresolved generates dangerously high levels of 'live energy'. Toxic grief becomes a pressure cooker over the heat with a 'blocked' spout – it's dangerous & will explode. Toxic grief is experienced by an individual; a family; a community; a nation; a race of people; humanity!
 - ¹⁶*Families grieve as individuals
 - *Men grieve differently from women
 - *Women grieve differently from men
 - *Children grieve differently from adults and from other children
- ***10 Common Grief Emotions:**
 - *Anger
In my opinion when this person's anger remains suppressed it evolves into bullying then rage and still unresolved they evolve into violence – from statistics could this be where the male perpetrators of all forms of abuses and violence be born from observing the male care giver throughout childhood?
 - *Shock
In my opinion this can cause the persons soul to 'split' from the physical body to 'protect' the mind and emotions from 'spinning' out of control
 - *Panic
In my opinion panic for this person can have run away but running away from grief can be disguised
 - *Apathy
In my opinion this person can commit long term unhealthy submissive aggressive behaviours – statistically could this be where the female victims of abuses and violence are born from observing the female care giver throughout childhood?

¹⁶ * Jones, H. 1994 Bereavement Educational Services Model

*Depression

In my opinion this person can display self harm which can move into more serious suicidal thoughts still unresolved can attempt and/or successful suicide;

*Guilt

*Physically Illness

In my opinion grief pressurises the physical body which can lead to mild to a severe diseased body leading to death. I also believe there are many different ways a human being can commit suicide

*Emotional release

*Hope & Readjustment

- **Inner children's interpretation:** To make sense of major losses in a child's life they will give their experiences an interpretation and the interpretation will be developed could very well become in the negative: there's something wrong with me or I caused this family loss tragedy etc.
- **Victim to Perpetrator/Perpetrator to Victim:** Until healing is completely processed a grief stricken human being can oscillate between being a victim one day and a perpetrator the next – its like observing two people doing a waltz with each other: they have a propensity to seek each other out because their 'inner children' recognise the victim and or perpetrator characteristics from experiencing their parents 'waltzing' around with each other as they inflicted family violence upon themselves and their children
- **Reactive Triggers:** This is an indicator that the grief emotions is still suppressed and unresolved in relation to a particular major loss, it triggers memories and the triggers can be 'ignited' by the following occurrences: Sight; Smell; Taste; Hear; Touch; Feel; Dreams
 - Inter-generational addictive triggers can have an individual seeking out alcohol, gambling.
 - Compounded & complicated contemporary addictive triggers can have an individual seeking out alcohol, gambling etc.

This form of trigger should be understood as an exciting pathway to ascertaining what the multiple major loss/es are and where the grief is still suppressed and unresolved in relation to these loss/es.

Responsive Triggers: This is an indicator that the loss/es don't cause the reactive trigger to 'ignite' which means the grief is resolving or resolved.
- **All in the Timing:** Healing as an individual; a family; a community; an institution; a race of people and a nation is all in the timing.
- **Toxic Grief:** Toxic grief distorts the past, the present and the future similarly healthy grief inspires one to use their past and their present to help themselves to find their true purpose
- **Healthy Grief** can support humanity to restore our relationship to each other, to Mother Earth, the animal life and fauna and flora each other.
- **Gender grief** – it's been my observation that more males are conditioned to adopt grief bullying, anger, rage and violence and some women are conditioned to adopt grief apathy. I believe this is why the community statistically experience male perpetrators (grief anger to rage to violence) when in family violence and the females can take on the role of victim (grief apathy) and develop bullying, submissive aggressive behaviours that could also be seen as aggressive, rage and violent.

In my opinion because males have 'learnt' to suppress their grief emotions they experience the 'cooker pressure grief' – when they are forced by society to contain their now toxic grief anger it evolves into grief bullying, rage and violence as a means of 'getting it out' of their physical body as it's been accumulating under pressure from the last time they 'exploded'. I would be confident that there would be a 'pattern' to this level of suppressed unresolved grief anger.

I would also suggest that males predominately 'use' sex as a means of expressing their 'build up' of their toxic or healthy grief energy.
- ***Discounting:** Discount the self – "I can't do it" - Discount others – "what would they know?" - Discount situations – "well it happen 200 years go" or "they died 30 years ago". Either way: "get over it".
- **Forgiveness:** Loss and grief as a model must reclaim back Forgiveness! Forgiveness is at the END of the grieving processes and NOT the immediate SOLUTION. To acquire and sustain life long health & wealth 'organically' and **holistically, forgiveness will always be available at the end of grieving – 'it's all in the Timing! When one is ready, forgiveness is a choice to forgive the self, others & or nature, inter-

generational & contemporaries! Realigning the seven humanities enables forgiveness to reach its full potential.

Forgiveness is an important part of resolving Grief and moving on in healing... May people get stuck in anger because of an unwillingness to forgive – to let go. Forgiveness is to cancel all demands, expectations and conditions ...if we continue to hang on to anger and not forgive we tend to become bitter and we are the losers. We are the one that suffers, not the person we chose not to forgive. Quite often the person that we are angry at does not know of our anger or they are dead. Forgiveness does not excuse the behaviour, does not negate the wrong, it is an acknowledgement of what has happened, a choice has been made, forgiveness does not mean forgetting.(Bereavement Educational Services).

Phase Six and Seven – Loss and Grief Healing Centre’s

Again, with 22 years experiences and successful in reclaiming my sense of IHI too become who I am today I have a responsibility to advocate for clearly identifiable Loss and Grief Healing Centre’s that specialize in holistic approaches as a model. Such a model works with major social and health challenges and in particular the whole spectrum of grief depression in the context of this submission. Below I’ve outlined what I experienced as my processes to healing my grief over a five year period and it’s the same process that I adapt according to where the client is on their spectrum of either their healthy or toxic grief emotions.

A.I.R.R.F.I. – 6 Stages to Healing Grief in a Counselling Role

Stage 1 – Consciously Aware – Becoming consciously aware that I was unconscious of my losses and suppressed unresolved grief and fused together they evolved into a state of what I refer to as ‘grief fear’. This awareness helped me to understand how my unconscious grief fear had control over my emotional legacies only to have my emotional legacies dominate and manipulate my adolescent years, throughout my early adulthood. I lived powerless by ‘seeing, feeling and hearing’ life as unsafe and that I was worthless; I lacked trust & faith in myself & others; lacked in confidence; lacked emotional control; lacked pride in self etc.

Question to self: “Why do I always seem to be frightened and why does grief anger and deep sadness seem to dominate my life and I always seem to feel powerless and unsafe to stand up for my rights (powerless & unsafe=emotional legacy)?” This question was developing during and after the woman’s shelter.

Stage 2 – Identify- Childhood/Adolescent - Identify the childhood/adolescent experience/s and the person/people (as ‘perpetrators’) involved in the experience where I **‘lost’** my innate emotion/s: power; safety; worth; trust in myself and others; faith in myself and others; confidence; emotional (self) control. For example: When I was 10 years old, with the sudden death of my mother, I went from ‘seeing, feeling & hearing’ love (love=innate emotion) for my mum and feeling to a certain degree safe (safe=innate emotion) in my family to grief fear now with an inability to love (inability to love=emotional legacy) again. The grief emotion I felt for her ‘dying on me’ was grief anger which I refer as grief emotions and these grief emotions is what I was conditioned to suppress. Childhood interpretations: one of my inner children was my 10 year old who as an ‘inner child’ interpreted that if I love again I might ‘kill’ that person because my 10 year old also believed I must have loved my mum too much which ‘killed her’. For the individual the indicator that the grief is still suppressed and unresolved will generate reactive grief triggers from childhood/adolescent according to the age the loss experience occurred for that child/adolescent. We can have multiple ‘inner children’ trapped inside us even though we grow into adults – this is what I refer to as ‘multiple inner children’ rather than the singular ‘inner child’, they all need individual healing.

Stage 3 - Reclaim – Reclaiming back Innate Human Instincts from Grief Fears is the ultimate goal: As a result of ‘unpacking’ and experiencing stages 1 & 2 the 3rd stage was making a commitment to staying on track to reclaim back my numerous innate emotions ‘lost’ during my childhood and adolescents years from all forms of abuses. The commitment to reclaiming them is to strategically devise appropriate grieving activities that come under the following headings: I wrote my grief emotions out; I physically worked my grief emotions out; I talked my grief emotions out; read appropriate books to deepen intellectual understanding of childhood loss and grief trauma. Expressing my inter-generational (ancestral) suppressed unresolved grief emotions with my now ‘toxic’ suppressed unresolved grief anger (a grief emotion) enabled me to reclaim back the basic human right to my Innate Human Instincts (IHI) that’s now been realigned. This being a 5 year process eventually enabled me to reclaim back all my innate emotion/s, for example trust, faith, confidence, power and happiness; all these and more, I thought was ‘lost’ forever!

Stage 4 – Forgiveness I found the concept of forgiveness confronting! I was nearing the end of my grieving processes and retrospectively it felt like I had ‘hit a brick wall’, and the brick wall became forgiveness! I came

to the realization that grief forgiveness had been misappropriated in my opinion, by organized religions because I was coming to the realization that the beliefs, concepts, understandings and practice of forgiveness actually 'belong' under the umbrella of loss and grief. I believe forgiveness can be offered up to soon when one is in the early stages of a grieving process – particularly from a religious perspective. To acquire IHI to sustain the alignment enabling one to evolve spiritually as a process, forgiveness is a powerful technique – *'but, like rock bottom is all in the timing, so is forgiveness all in the timing'*! The indicator that forgiveness has not reached its full potential will continue producing reactive triggers (p19).

Stage 5 – Inspiration Once I'd completed the grief forgiveness process, I believe an individual who maintains their basic human right to grieve holistically, their IHI will eventually aspire to want to be inspired. In this state of feeling inspired one will soon 'find' their life's purpose. From first hand experience I reclaimed back all my significant innate emotions which led to me becoming more consciously intuitive. I now know arriving at this stage, has potential to sustain long term health and wealth of an individual. This evolves into long term resilience.

Such a specialized healing centre would give an individual a safe environment to honour their grieving processes. I would envision such a centre could provide individuals to live-in; 'out-patients'; using loss and grief to work with addictions; work with families and young people etc. Attend workshops using the Seven Phases; group therapy/discussions.

Conclusion

This submission has proposed the importance to recognise the inter-generational and contemporary suppressed unresolved grief and the pervasive effects of individual and collective loss and grief, and the extent to which this has impacted at so many levels on individuals, through to families and community wellbeing. The submission has drawn on the comprehensive programs and individual counselling models offered through the Institute that explore the major losses and unresolved grief that have been passed down from generation to generation.

Grief is defined by Heinemann Australian Dictionary as 'a deep sorrow or suffering and a natural reaction to losing something or someone precious to us'. While this submission also recognises the shared history of invasion and colonisation experienced by Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people in their own right, it also stresses the diversity of historical influences and geography and the need for programs to be developed in accordance with these diverse needs and circumstances. It proposes a practical alternative way of viewing and dealing with mental illnesses and the need for holistic approaches to loss and grief programs to be available for individuals; families; communities; as a race of people; and as a nation to access without any fear or favour. As long as adults continue suppressing their grief emotions as a 'culture' because it continues to be seen as a 'disturbance' to others and as individuals they have to maintain their 'stiff upper lip' our children and grandchildren will continue to be 'born into grief' of the parents and grandparents. It will continue to be learnt behaviour for them; they'll carry our patterns of suppression and will therefore not have the emotional skills to nurture their child/children through a range of family and workplace major loss situations. Again, growing up bi-culturally it seems to me that western culture and its practices of suppressed unresolved grief seems to have complicated the human being and our daily experiences; I'm confident that loss and grief is actually the missing link to acquiring wellbeing for all of humanity today and for generations to come!

I hope that what I have shared has some value to how we understand suicidal and self-harming behaviour. With my personal and professional experiences all I can do is offer up a model that I know has worked for me and therefore has the potential to work for any other human being. My unique and innovative loss and grief model isn't a complicated model – one of our basic principles knows that every human being comes from a childhood story and rather than focus on the behaviour we focus on their story and like suicide is symptomatic of suppressed unresolved grief, so is behaviour.

I have taken the liberty of giving you my web page as you can download my 5 Day and 14 Day training program that has been mapped to a nationally recognised training package and auspice by Relationships Australia (SA).

Testimonials

Thank you so much for allowing me to participate in your powerful workshop. This program was very powerful and has been an emotional awakening for me. It was delivered with compassion and love for your fellow beings.

As a result of this workshop I have a stronger more informed understanding of Aboriginal issues nationally and within a community setting and of Grief/Loss issues. Thanks for creating such a well thought out and well developed effective programme. Awesome experience.

Ann Marie Garrett - Co-Coordinator - Our Well Being Place - 108 Swanport Rd - Murray Bridge 5253 - Email: Garrett.Ann@saugov.sa.gov.au

It was one of the most engaging and thought provoking presentations I have been to in a while. I very much appreciated being in the presence of your personal integrity which was so heart warming and which helped my own heart to open more fully. The thoughtful historical perspective you offered has opened up new ways to think about the past 220 years of dominant Anglo culture in Australia. I think it also offers a lot of insight into much of the violence in that culture today. Thank you for your generosity and courage in sharing your story to help deepen our understanding of the impact of loss and grief on Aboriginal people. I hope that, for our part, this greater understanding will manifest in our work and living practices.

Helen O'Grady PHD - Sen. Mental Health Project Officer Women's Health Statewide

To whom it concerns

30/05/2009

The original work issues that brought me to the EAP program and Rosemary Wanganeen were an inability to gain clarification of my role as a support worker within Program.

I had a session with Rosemary and began to see a number of personal issues that came from an inability to resolve former painful experiences that had occurred earlier in my life.

When I accessed the EAP program in 2006 I felt that as a middle aged Anglo Celtic Australian man I was vulnerable in a workplace that other than me were clients and staff of Aboriginal decent.

I had previously spoken with both my manager and supervisor about aggression from clients toward me in the workplace and was told that it was a 'part of the job'. I also told management that other staff's inability to follow work procedure was putting me in danger with clients. They said they were aware of this but failed to train staff adequately to resolve this situation.

I have been accessing this program for nearly 3 years now at irregular intervals during which time there have been some turbulent issues in the workplace that are just coming to resolution now.

Rosemary's approach to counseling and particularly her use of the grief and loss model can only be borne from personal experience and evidence based practice. Her integrated grief and loss model had a powerfully transformative effect upon my work and personal development. What I went through at work would have led me to resign or worse had it not been for Rosemary's support.

I needed to stay in contact with Rosemary and EAP in order to work through my personal and workplace issues. Since having accessed the EAP program I am two units from completing a Social Work degree and have recently applied for a position as with I feel I am at a milestone in my career and my life and could probably write a book about the journey, which has yet to be completed.

PK