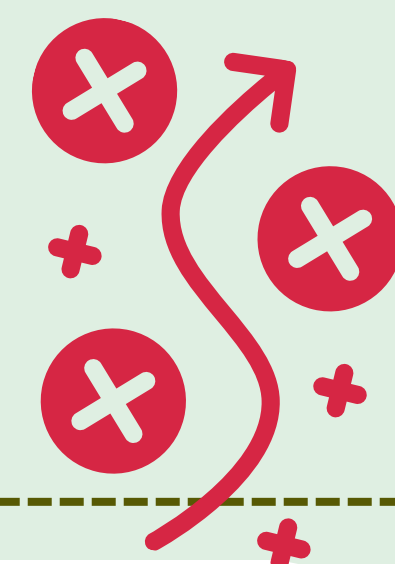


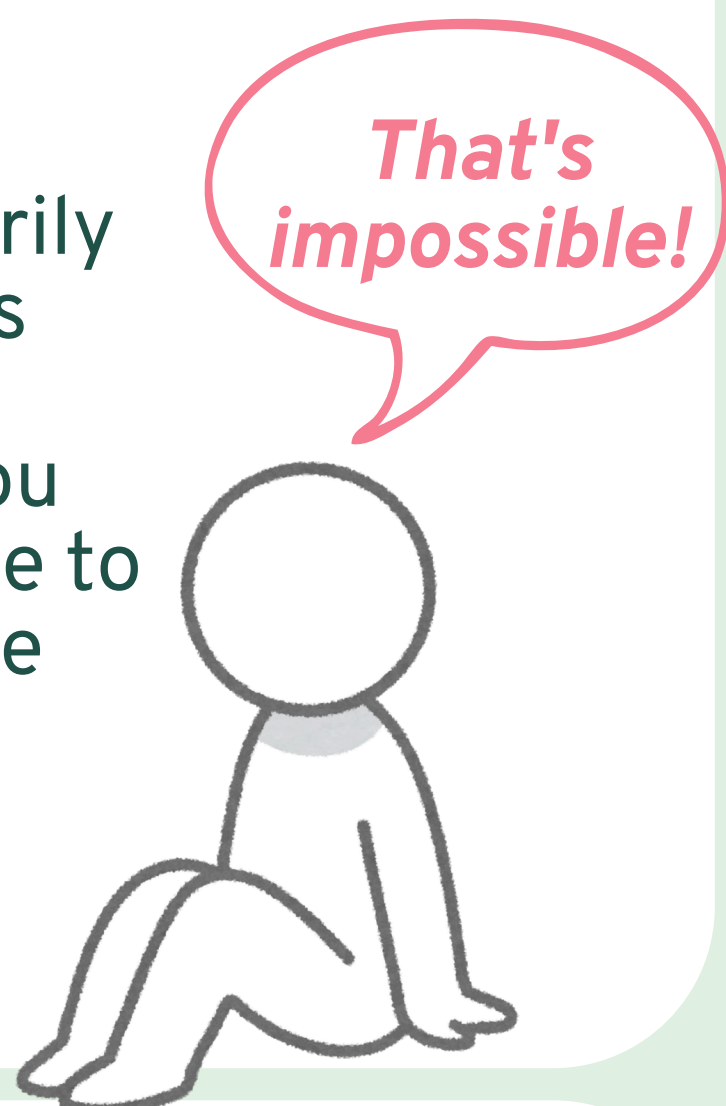
As caregivers, we often find ourselves grieving several losses, such as the loss of our dream retirement, the ideal child, or even our spouse as we once knew them. Not to mention the losses experienced by our loved ones (loss of independence, memory loss, loss of social connections, etc.).

Whatever the cause, grief can be defined as a process of adapting to the pain we feel when faced with a loss, whether it be something or someone. Here is a description of the stages of grief, regardless of the type of loss.



1. Numbness

This is a normal and healthy stage, which allows you to temporarily block out the emotions that the loss brings. It gives you the space you need to gradually come to terms with and manage your emotions. At this stage, the dominant emotion is denial.



2. Protest

The initial shock begins to subside and protest emerges. The permanence of the loss is not yet accepted. This stage is marked by intense reactions, both emotional and physical. The dominant feelings are anger and guilt, and there are many questions.



3. Disorganization

At this stage, there is a recognition that the situation is irreversible. The loss is strongly felt, and feelings of sadness and melancholy appear. It is a period of withdrawal and isolation, where one mourns the permanence of the loss.



4. Reorganization

This is the gradual return to a balanced life. We begin to face the new reality and adapt to it. For example, this may involve reorganizing daily tasks or considering a move. Although adaptation is underway, emotions related to the loss may persist.



Every grief is unique and is experienced according to our values, our experiences, our perception of grief, and the society in which we live. We are all unique, and each grief brings out different emotions.

The multiplicity of grief in caregiving

Experiencing grief is one of life's major milestones. We face it during challenges, transitions, endings, failures, etc. Grief does not only affect the emotional sphere, it also affects the psychological sphere (intrusive thoughts, compulsive behaviors) and the physical sphere (sleep, appetite).

Human beings need time to adapt gradually. Here are some strategies to help you through this process:

- **Don't underestimate your grief :** *« it was just a travel plan. »*
- **Dare to talk about it :** *« Julie I need to talk a little, are you available? »*
- **Seek help :** *discuss it with a professional.*
- **Express your needs and be kind to yourself :** *« I won't be going tonight... I'm feeling tired. »*
- **Give yourself time :** *Grief takes as long as it needs to take.*
- **Embrace your emotions :** *Allow yourself to cry, to be angry, impatient, or frustrated.*
- **Nurture hope :** *Remember that suffering is temporary.*
- **Adapt at your own pace :** *take one step at a time.*

Beware of comparisons

Every situation is different and generates unique emotions. Comparing your experience of grief with that of others could lead to the exchange of “miracle cures” such as: "In your situation, what helped me was eating Lipton soup and watching a soap opera!"

Grief is a healing process. Just like a physical wound, a scar may remain visible, but the pain fades with time.

