

**"The deepest wound: healing and hope
in the midst of hurt: grief and
bereavement in a pandemic age."**

Dr Donald Macaskill
CEO, Scottish Care

- **‘broken-heartedness’**
- **‘the aloneness of silence’**
- **‘rage is eating up my love’**
- **‘the deepest wound’**
- **‘the sweat and dirt of mourning’**
- **‘the tide of tomorrow.’**
- **‘blossoming of hope’**

Firstly - pre-pandemic Scotland was largely failing in the breadth and extent of bereavement support.

Secondly - pandemic grieving is now different – reality of ‘Covid grief’.

Thirdly - need to use trauma of the pandemic as a springboard to necessary action and change.



‘broken-heartedness’

Image: Piotr Krzeslak / Shutterstock.com

24th November 2021

“ I was initially very frightened about the virus, but I wanted to be with John. The staff supported me so much and made sure I was wearing the right protection... I know it was not ideal... but I was at least there... I am so grateful for them... even though I was wearing gloves I held his hand as he passed... that was so important ... I felt the touch of his heart through my fingers.”

‘broken-heartedness’

“...His death certificate said he died of his dementia, but I wanted them to write in it that he died of a broken heart, but they wouldn't. **He died of a broken heart. I just know it.**”

‘broken-heartedness’



‘the aloneness of silence’

24th November 2021



'rage is eating up my love'

24th November 2021



‘the deepest wound’

24th November 2021

“It is like having a wound which never heals. Every time it feels as if it is getting covered, when ‘normality’ seems to start... I hear a voice that reminds me of Jimmy, or someone gives me a look just like Tina used to, and I am back there in the battlefield because that’s what it was like... and the wound is open. I cannot seem to find anything or anyone who can patch it up and close it from hurting. **It is my deepest wound. It is now me.**”

‘the deepest wound’

‘a pervasive yearning for the deceased or a persistent preoccupation, accompanied by intense emotional pain. In addition, individuals with PGD have difficulties enjoying social activities, experience a reduced capacity to feel positivity and possess a general inability to accept the death of a loved one.’

World Health Organisation

‘the deepest wound’

- experiencing more than one death within a short period of time;
- a strong dependency on the person who died;
- the death was shocking, premature and unexpected;
- the death could be perceived as preventable;
- witnessing the death, or suffering alongside the deceased person if they died following a protracted illness;
- previous history of mental illness, especially post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or depression.

Lise Johns, Pippa Blackburn, Donna McAuliffe : COVID-19, Prolonged Grief Disorder and the role of social work., July 2020.

‘the deepest wound’



‘the tide of tomorrow’

24th November 2021

“Every time I sit there now all I see is the sea coming and coming and coming. The **tide of tomorrow** just keeps arriving on my shore and I sit there like Canute trying to stop it coming in because I don’t want to be in my today never mind my tomorrow. And do you know what makes it worse? It’s everyone else being excited about their futures, planning and scheduling, commissioning and creating... I cannot put a brush to canvas because I feel it would betray everything.”

‘the tide of tomorrow’

“Disenfranchised grief is **when your grieving doesn't fit in with your larger society's attitude about dealing with death and loss.** The lack of support you get during your grieving process can prolong emotional pain.”

(WebMD)

‘the tide of tomorrow’

- The loss happened at least 6 months ago
- Intense, distracting feelings of longing and loneliness
- Feeling that life isn't worth living after the loss
- Constantly feeling in shock or numb
- Excessively avoiding or seeking places, objects, or other things that remind you of the loss
- Obsession with the cause or circumstances of a death.

'the tide of tomorrow'



‘the sweat and dirt of mourning’

24th November 2021

- **accept the loss,**
- **acknowledge the pain of the loss,**
- **adjust to a new environment and**
- **reinvest in the reality of a new life.**

Grief Counselling and Grief Therapy, J. William Worden

‘the sweat and dirt of mourning’



‘the blossoming of hope’

24th November 2021



'the blossoming of hope'

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Bereavement Charter FOR SCOTLAND

<https://www.scottishcare.org/bereavement/>
<https://www.sad.scot.nhs.uk/bereavement-charter/>

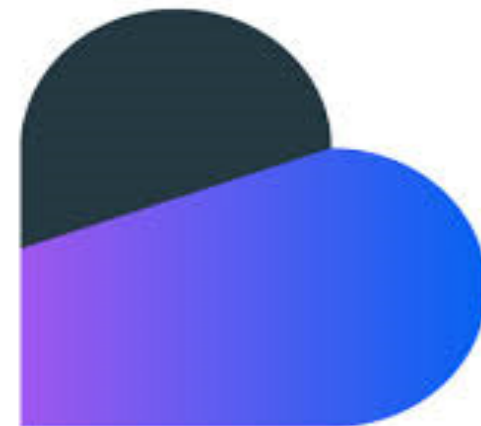
‘the blossoming of hope’

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Let's start a conversation
about bereavement
tell us your grief story



The UK Commission on
Bereavement



<https://bereavementcommission.org.uk>

‘the blossoming of hope’

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*'And when great souls die,
after a period peace blooms,
slowly and always
irregularly. Spaces fill
with a kind of
soothing electric vibration.
Our senses, restored, never
to be the same, whisper to
us.
They existed. They existed.
We can be. Be and be
better. For they existed.'*

Maya Angelou





‘the hope of grief’

24th November 2021