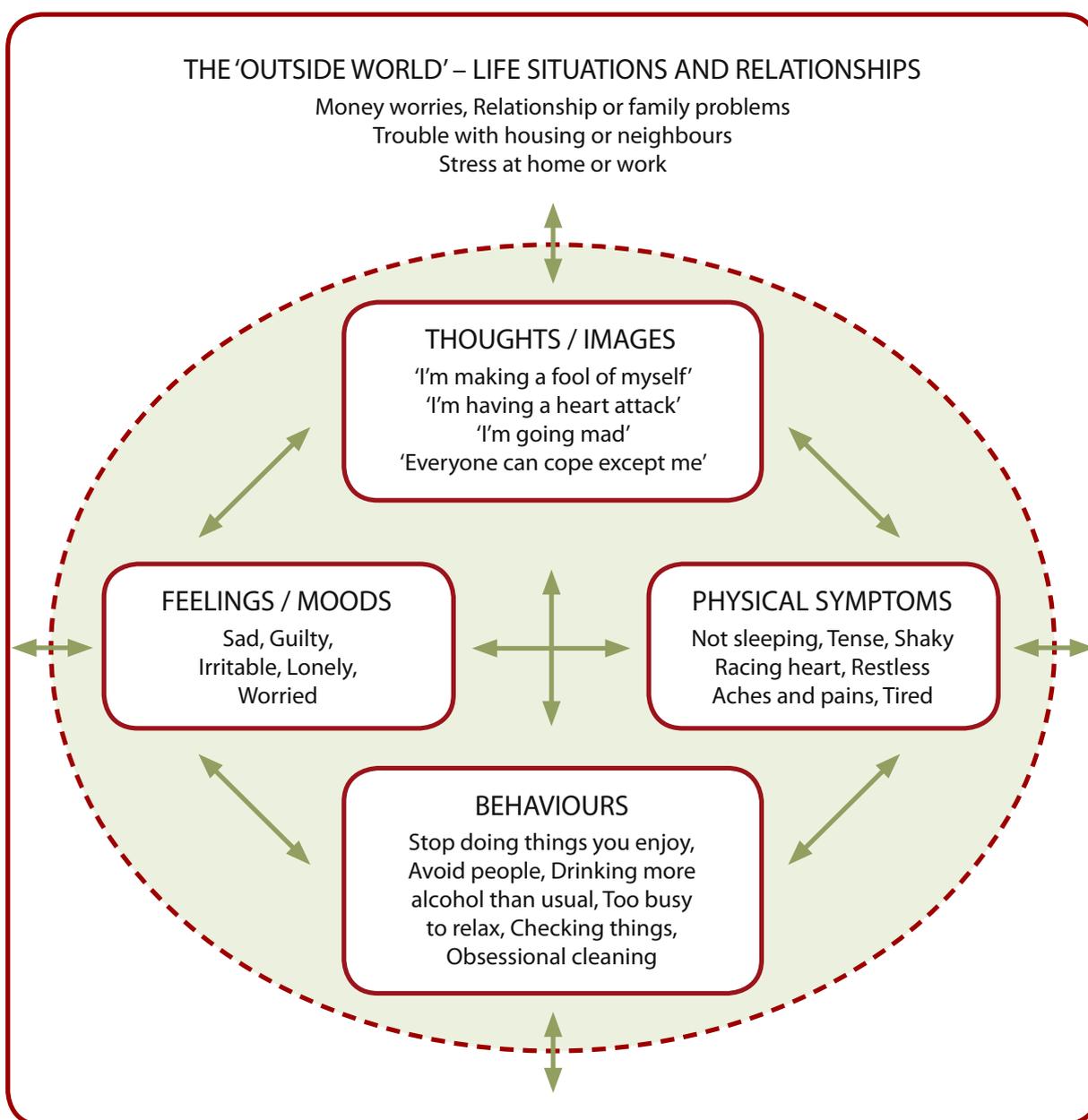


# Coping with Grief and Loss

Grief and loss are not illnesses. They are normal events which occur in everybody's lives, perhaps many times over.

Loss can involve many things: death of a family member, a close friend or a pet. We can feel loss when a relationship ends; when we lose our job or a place to live; and when we experience changes in our lives. Loss can feel worse if it brings back memories of other losses in the past.



## Coping with Grief and Loss

Continued...

Grieving is the process which helps us come to terms with loss. Different people cope with loss and grief in different ways. It is quite normal to experience some or all of the symptoms below

When do people begin to recover from bereavement?

Coming to terms with a death can take some time. People usually find that gradually they can get on with their lives; they can then begin to focus on happy memories of the person who has died. Most people begin to feel this within about one or two years after the death of someone close to them, but it may take longer.

Can tablets help?

Sometimes. Your doctor may offer you tranquillisers to help you get through the early days after a death. Although they can make you feel calmer in the short term, they are not suitable for long term use. Some people find that tranquillisers make them feel numb and stop them feeling grief. Antidepressants can also be helpful if you are very depressed after a death.

Some form of counselling or therapy may help a person who is 'stuck' in his or her grief. You may also want to contact CRUSE, a national organisation which helps people who have been bereaved – your guide can help you find your nearest group, or you can ring 0844 477 9400 to talk to someone.

What can a bereaved person do to help themselves?

- Prepare as far as possible for the death of a person you are close to.  
Say all the things you would want to say.  
Sort out your finances and other practical things.
- Don't make major changes in your life too soon after a major loss.  
Wait till you have had time to adjust to the death before you sell your house, move away, change jobs or make other big changes.
- Look after yourself.  
Eat well and get plenty of rest. You may need vitamin tablets if your appetite is poor.
- Talk about how you feel.  
Don't bottle things up. Your doctor may suggest seeing a counsellor. Ask for help if you need it, don't wait until you feel desperate or until you are in real difficulty with money or other problems.
- Accept that this is a difficult time.  
Don't be hard on yourself if it takes time to readjust to your work and social life.
- Don't feel guilty.  
It is normal to start to recover and rebuild your life after someone close to you has died, and it does not mean that you are being disloyal to them.

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