

# SUPPORTING FAMILIES AFTER LOSS

## *UNDERSTANDING CHILDHOOD GRIEF*

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# *Today's Objectives*



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## **Good Grief Program**

- Highlight the different types of loss the children and youth can experience.
- Consider how the COVID-19 pandemic has amplified grief and loss for children and youth.
- Identify a framework for conceptualizing the grieving process.
- Explore guiding principles for supporting grieving children and their families.



**BOSTON**  
**MEDICAL**

**Good Grief Program**



**BOSTON**  
**MEDICAL**

**Good Grief Program**

# *Cumulative Disadvantage of Disproportionate Loss*



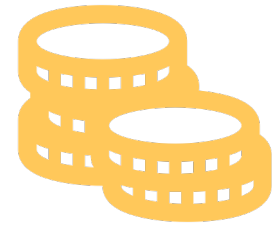
Increased  
emotional and  
mental stress



Loss of social  
connectedness

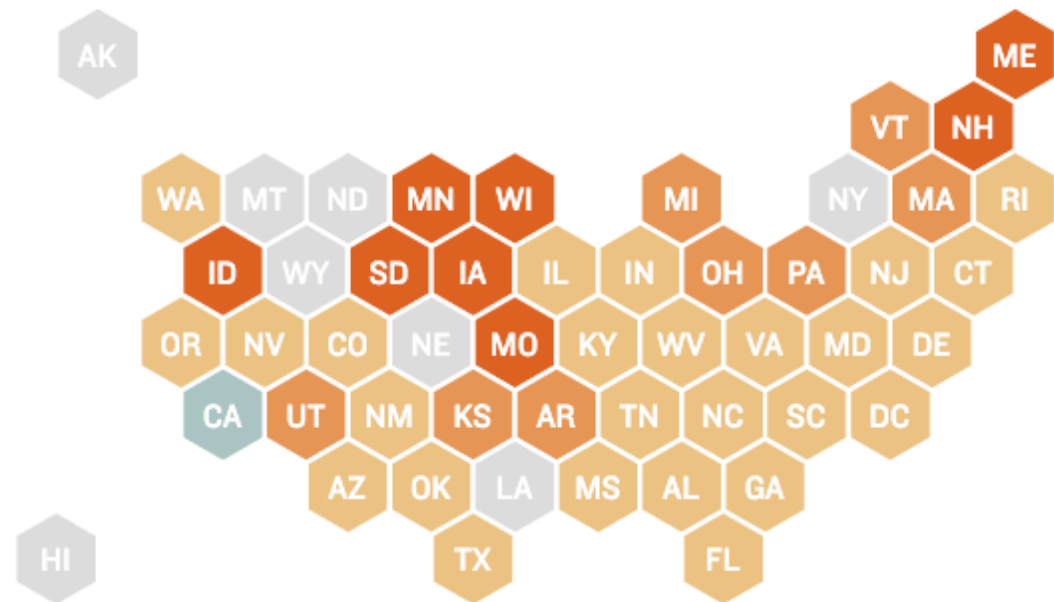


Undermines  
physical health



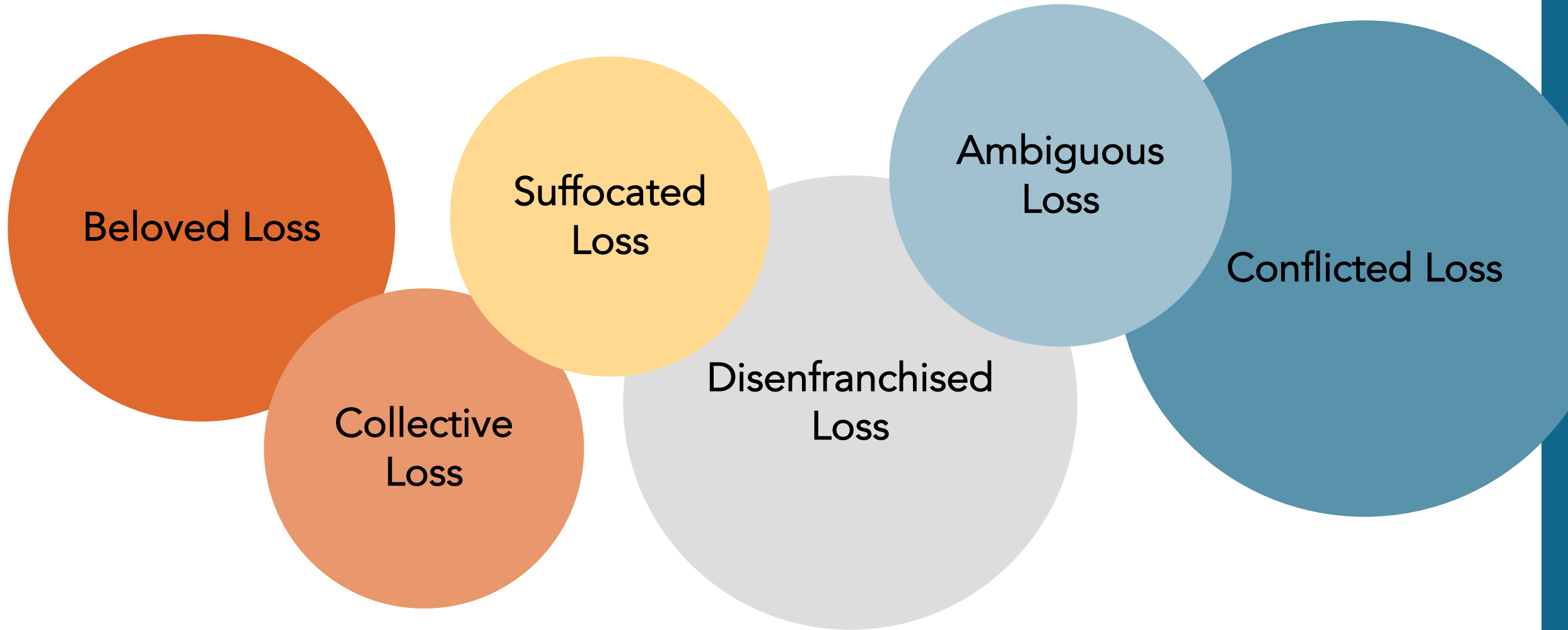
Lack of  
socioeconomic  
transmission

PERCENTAGE DIFFERENCE IN SHARE OF DEATHS/CASES, COMPARED WITH  
AFRICAN AMERICANS' SHARE OF THE POPULATION

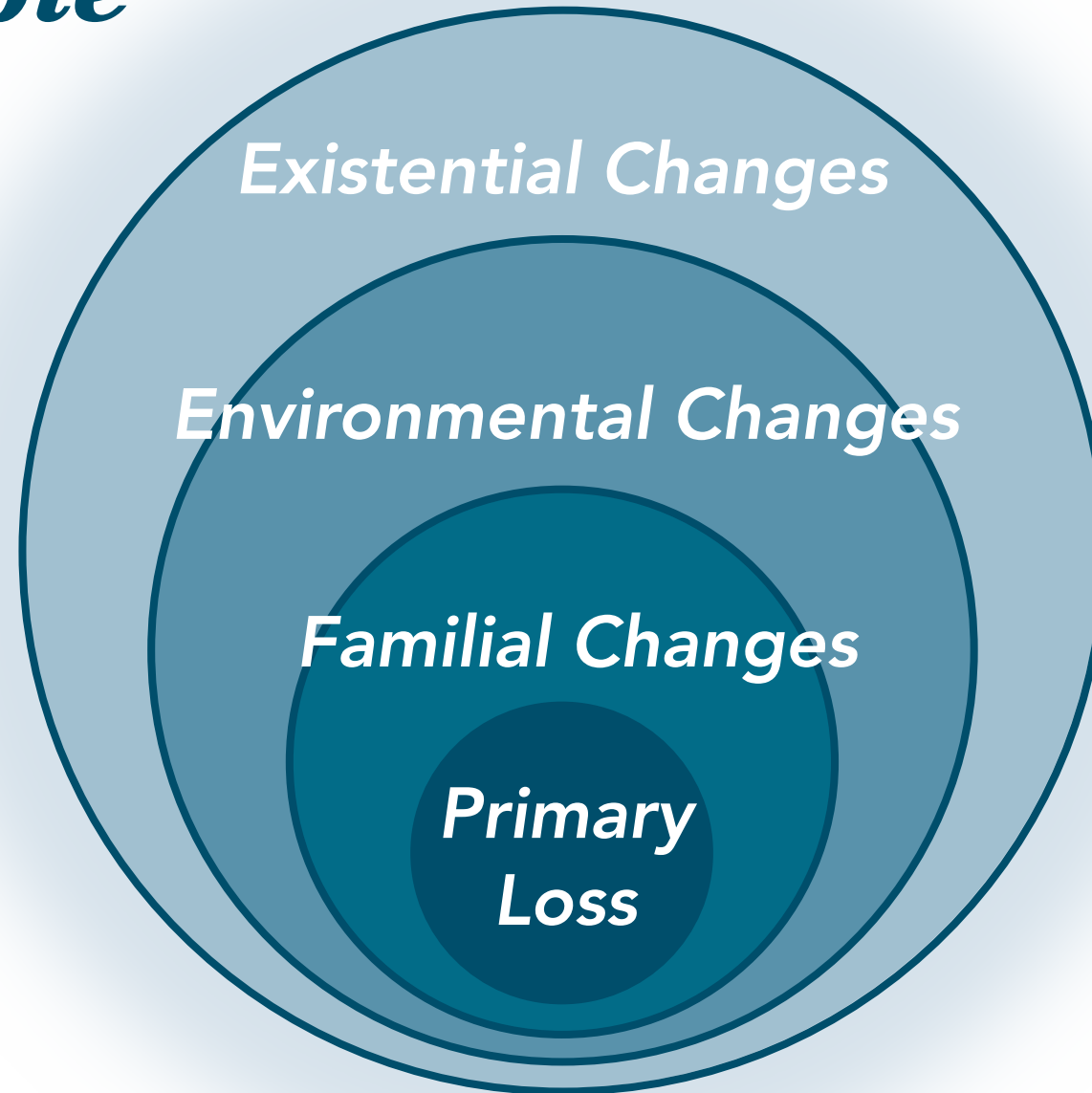


Credit: Daniel Wood and Connie Hanzhang Jin/NPR

# *Types of Loss*



# *Grief Ripple*



# *Self-Reflection & Grief*

## Explore:

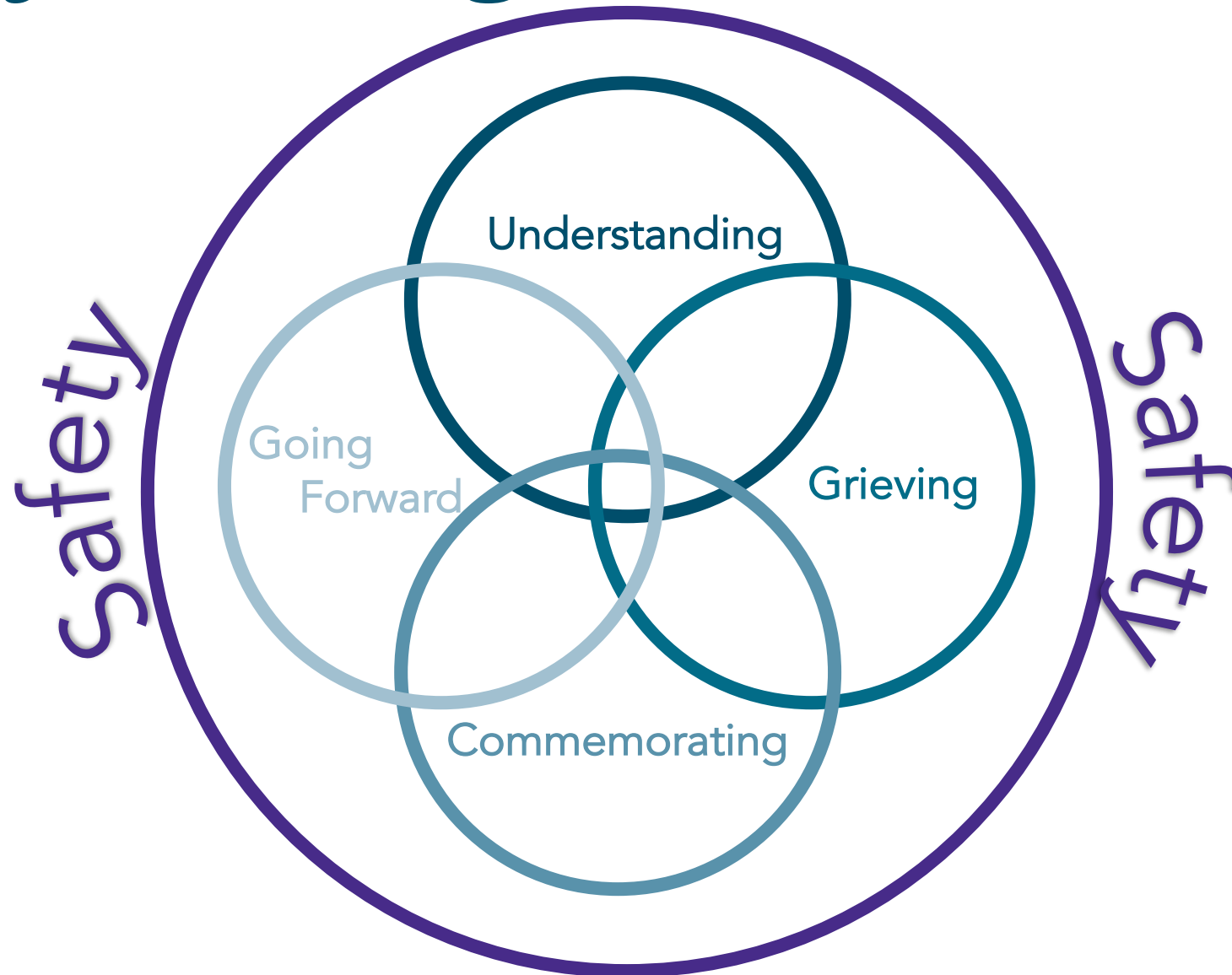
- Your influencing social forces.
- Your core assumptions.
- Your biases.
- Your values.
- Your beliefs.
- Your lived experiences.



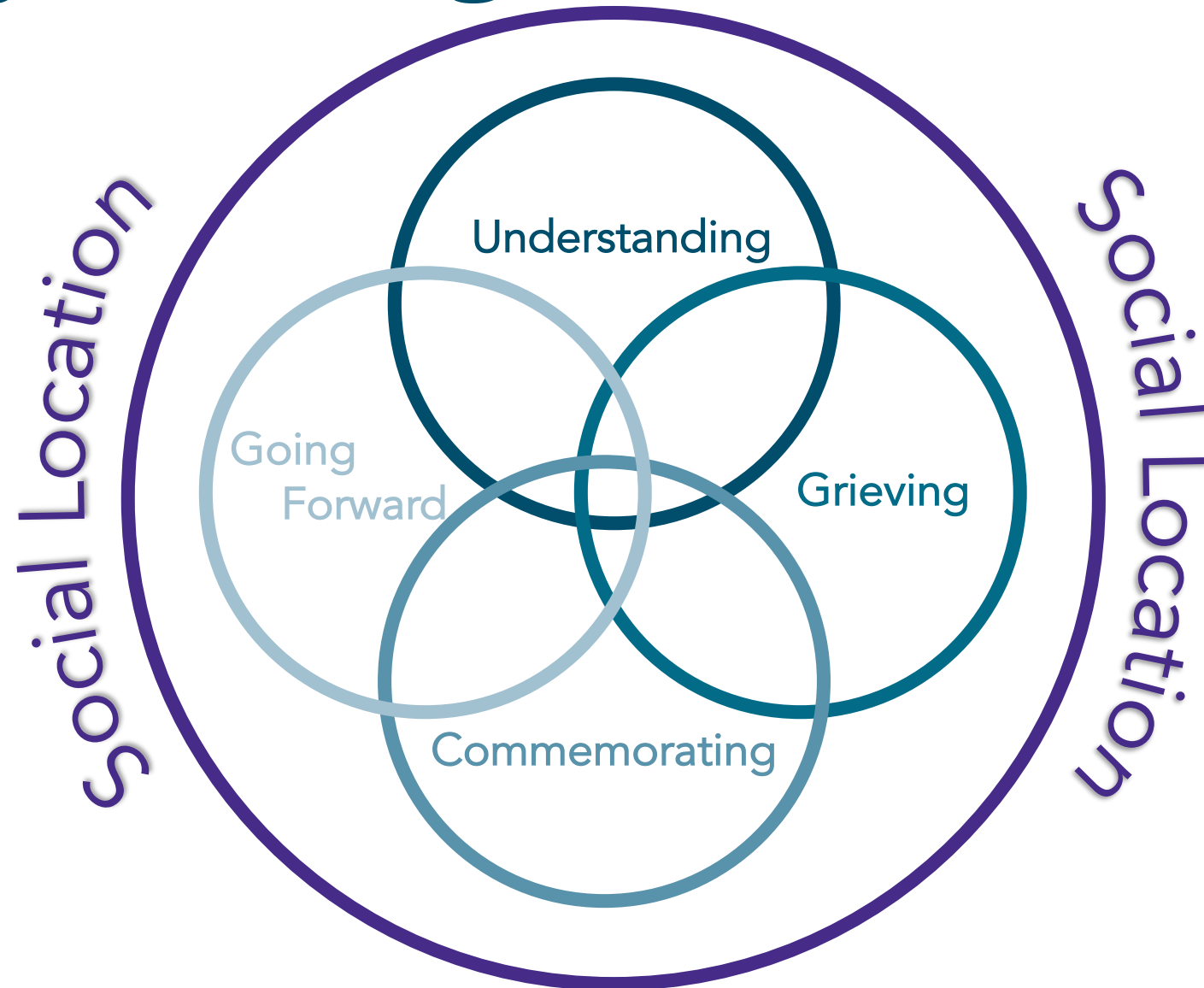
## Seek to Understand:

- Their influencing social forces.
- Their core assumptions.
- Their biases.
- Their values.
- Their beliefs.
- Their lived experiences.

# *Tasks of Grieving Framework*



# *Tasks of Grieving Framework*



## Understanding



- Accept the reality of the loss.
- Understand the permanency of death.
- Recognize that death is irreversible.
- Understand that death has a cause.

- Experience the emotions associated with the loss.
- Process the pain (mental, emotional, and physical).
- Cope with loss reminders, “pangs” of grief.



## Commemorating



- Recall memories of the deceased.
- Make meaning of the loss.
- Develop routines and rituals to connect to the deceased.

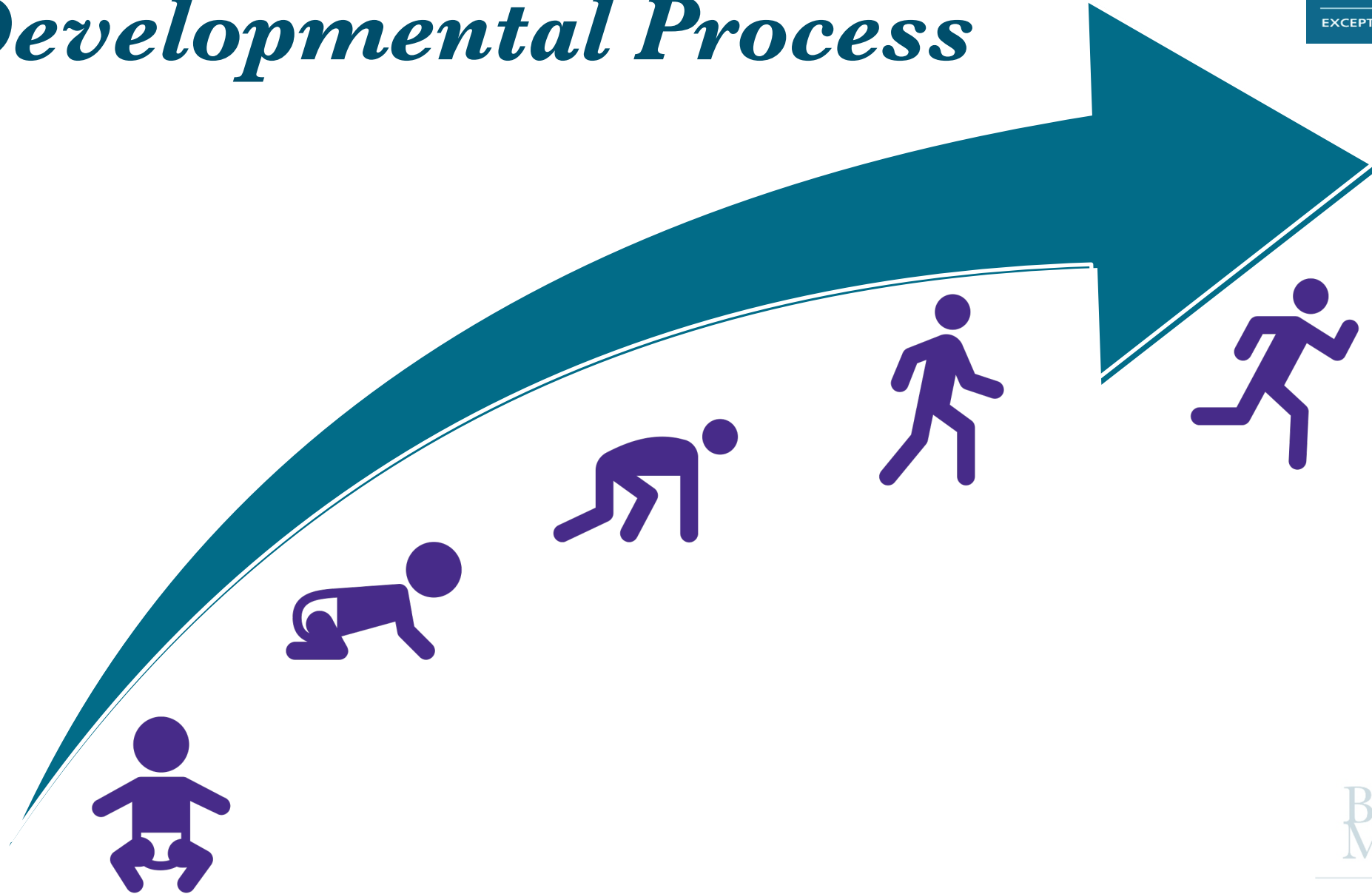
- Return to a normative developmental trajectory.
- Find ways to continue a bond with the deceased.
- Invest in new relationships.
- Hold an internalized representation of the deceased.

Going Forward

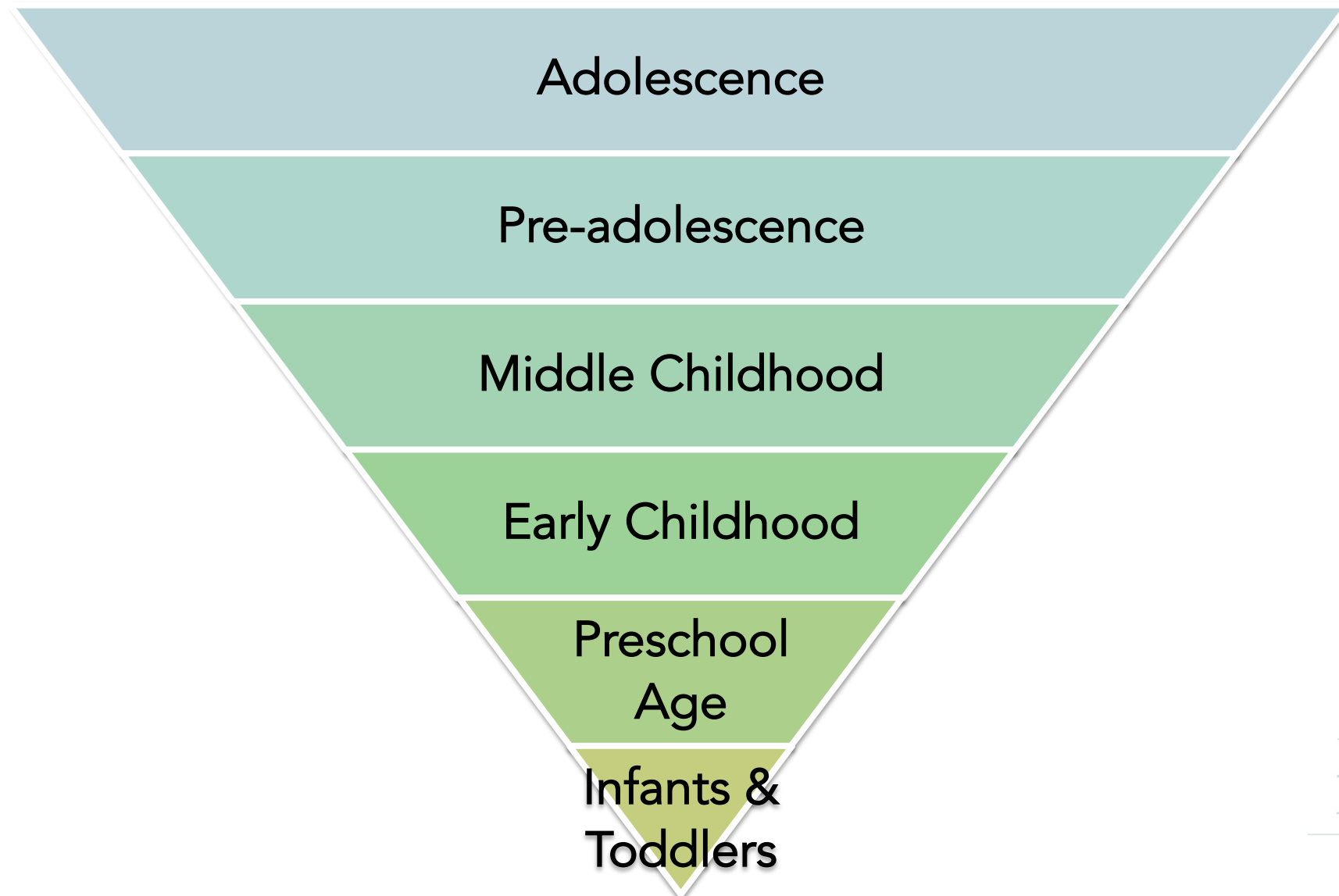


# DEVELOPMENT & GRIEF

# *A Developmental Process*



# *A Developmental Perspective*



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SUPPORTING GRIEVING CHILDREN & YOUTH

*Share clear, direct, and honest  
information about the loss.*

*Check their comprehension by asking  
what they know and understand.*

*Pay attention to your own feelings.*

*Consider the child's other losses.*

*Address children's worries, anxieties, or misconceptions.*

*Support their feelings.*

*Find ways to commemorate their loss.*

*Maintain consistency and routine as much as possible.*

*Seek to know their perspective.*

*Support children's meaning making.*

*Recognize children's strengths and abilities.*

*Remember that you don't have to have all  
the answers.*

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