

Abstract

"When we are unable to express our grief emotionally, the body often speaks for us through physical symptoms" (Van der Kolk, 2014).

This dissertation explores how grief is experienced and expressed through the body, drawing on the therapist's personal experience of the somatisation of grief. The inquiry was prompted by my own long-term experience of bereavement and a growing curiosity about why grief often manifested physically, even when my mind seemed at peace. This question was further explored during my training at the Sherwood Psychotherapy Training Institute, where I learned about how the body expresses and holds emotional pain. The dissertation is structured in three main parts. First, the rationale for practice outlines my humanistic and integrative philosophical and theoretical orientation, shaped by personal experience and clinical practice in a bereavement service. Next, the literature review examines the embodied impact of grief. Ultimately, the case study exemplifies my therapeutic work with a bereaved client, integrating theory with practical clinical experience. Reflections on personal and professional learning are woven throughout.

"Grief is a force of energy that cannot be controlled or predicted. It comes and goes on its own schedule" (Gilbert, 2020).