



# NAVIGATING GRIEF

A Guided Journal





This journal belongs to:

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# INTRODUCTION

At Isaksimagit Inuusirmi Katujjiqatigiit Embrace Life Council we are working on a number of different programs and initiatives to assist with mental wellness, suicide prevention and the impact of multiple loss in the Territory. Isaksimagit Inuusirmi Katujjiqatigiit Embrace Life Council strives to assist in the grief and recovery journey in the Territory through developing and promoting mental wellness and social inclusion programs and services.

The journey of grief can be extremely hard and there are many different aspects to it. It is a multidimensional process. Beyond feelings, our reactions to loss has physical, psychological, behavioral, physiological, spiritual, social, and cultural impacts. It can affect each domain to different degrees and intensities across our lifespan and for each loss we suffer.

In Nunavut, multiple losses affect almost every resident irrespective of whether community members are related or not. When suicide occurs in one community, other communities are affected as well. There is a strong sense of connection among Nunavummiut. Many communities don't have a chance to fully heal from the trauma associated with suicide due to multiple losses. Often, there is limited time for people to grieve or recover from the loss of the previous death. Some people may not recognize that their healing journey from previous suicides has not started or completed.

The grief and recovery journey for communities, families and individuals must continually reflect the impact of multiple losses which can result in feelings of complex grief and trauma, burnout, anger, depressed mood, self-destructive behaviors, decrease in health, survivors guilt, despair, increase in conflict, loss of feelings of safety and belonging, and isolation.

This journal is a guide to help process grief and begin your own healing journey of resiliency. Talking about grief may not be something you've done much and might make you uncomfortable to consider. To support the process, this journal includes a variety of writing prompts, mindfulness activities and exercises, quotes, and affirmations.

As you make your way through this journal, try to remember to pace yourself. Know that some days are more challenging than others. Try and be open to what engages you in the moment. Give yourself permission to start and stop as needed. Know that this journal is meant to provide hope and encouragement as you navigate your own grief journey.

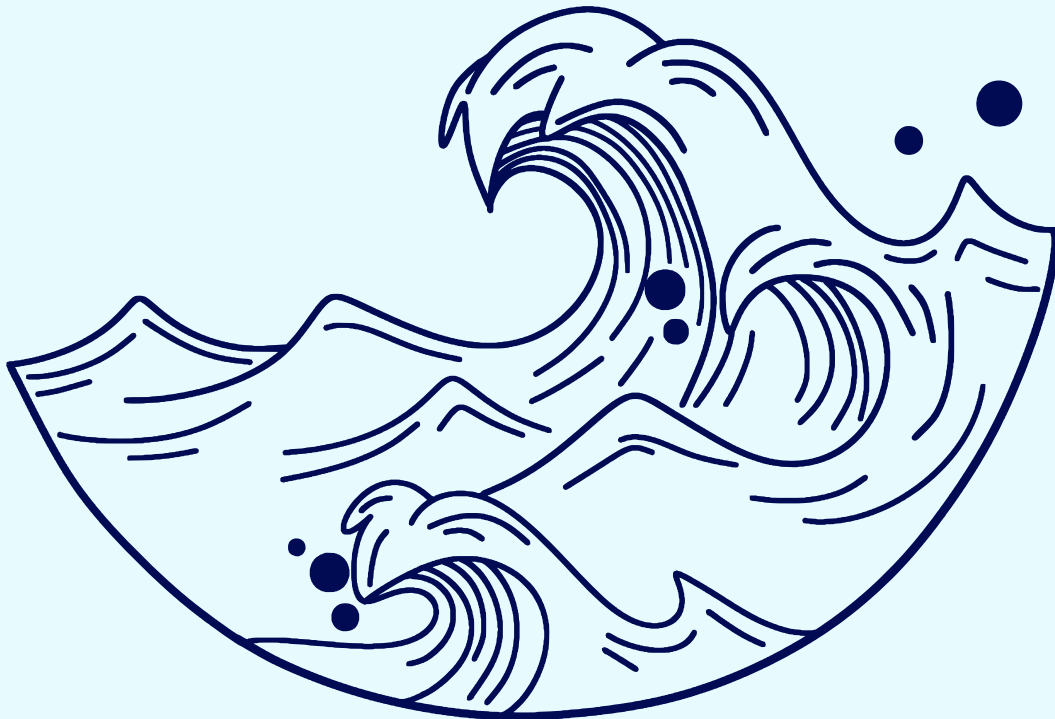
This book is not a replacement for a therapist, medication or medical treatment. Mourning the death of someone who died by suicide usually requires the support of others. Grief is more complicated when a death is sudden. There is no chance to say goodbye. Surround yourself with loved ones for support. Everyone is different, and everyone reacts differently. Often times, after a suicide grief can have a prolonged impact. It is not unusual for some people to become depressed following a suicide, and may themselves experience thoughts of suicide.

If you or someone you know is experiencing thoughts of suicide, call the Kamatsiaqtut helpline (1-867-979-3333 / 1-800-265-3333), Canada Suicide Crisis helpline 9-8-8, or contact your local Mental Health team. There are trained and caring counselors there who can and want to help you. Remember that time, sharing and support can move us to hope and healing and make us stronger.

We are all on our own healing journey and there is a lot to learn during times of loss. How we grieve and what we grieve will continue to be part of who we are and we can incorporate what we learn into our lives with grace and patience. Grief is like throwing a stone into a lake, it will have a ripple effect into every aspect of our lives. Be kind to yourself as you navigate the stormy seas of grief. You are not alone!

Inuit believe everything evolves. This idea is fundamental to Inuit philosophy, with belonging to a family as the center part of a circle, radiating to encompass the world. Family and kinship link a person to a certain group of people and help determine identity. Inuit see life as an unbroken circle in which everyone and everything has a role. While the life cycle of plants, animals, and humans have a beginning and end, the Inuit believe that all life returns to become part of a new life. This is why Inuit names are significant. Inuit believe the spirit of a person who has died is passed on to the newborn named after them. This transference of a spirit happens to the extent that the namesake's family relationships become the person's, as do many of their skills and personality traits. Naming provides a link between generations, and ties people to other people who are not necessarily related by blood.

1 GNWT (1996) Inuuqatigiit: The Curriculum From the Inuit Perspective, page 37.





# **THE INUIT PRINCIPLES OF HEALING ILISAQSIK OUR LIFE'S JOURNEY**

You are your own healer.

You already know everything you  
need to know to heal well.

You are invited to tell your own  
healing story.

You are not alone in your healing.

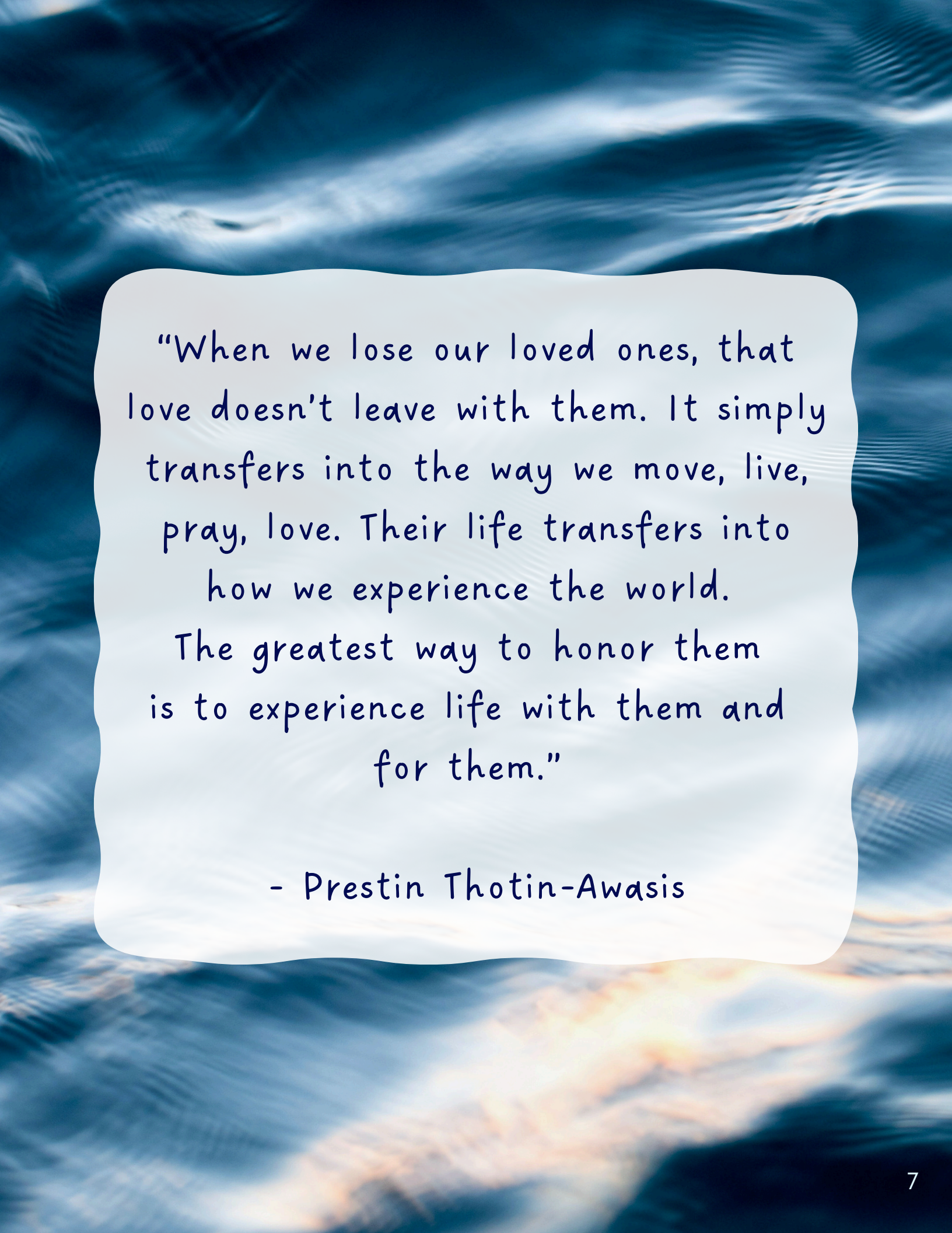




"Resilience is the ability to overcome even the most painful situations that seem to be unbearable. Live your life out till your time is up. You are loved."

- John Pavialok, Cambridge Bay





"When we lose our loved ones, that love doesn't leave with them. It simply transfers into the way we move, live, pray, love. Their life transfers into how we experience the world.

The greatest way to honor them is to experience life with them and for them."

- Prestin Thotin-Awasis





# Section 1:

## **UNDERSTANDING GRIEF**

Grief is a complex process.

The pain of grief can impact many areas of our life: personal identity, relationships, physical health, roles and responsibilities, social interactions, faith, work productivity, and many more. It is a constantly changing wave of feelings and emotions that can flare up when you experience certain memories, dates, people, places and things. It changes in expression, intensity, course and duration and it can have a lasting impact across our life span. It is different for each person and for each loss. Since grief is unique, the journey through it is unique to the person experiencing it. Wherever you are on your healing journey, allow this to be a new starting point. This grief journal offers a chance to acknowledge your grief and tend to your body, mind, and heart in a caring and nurturing way. Take your time as you move through the pages. You are not alone in your journey, but rather you are part of a large community whose members can relate to your feelings and can offer support.