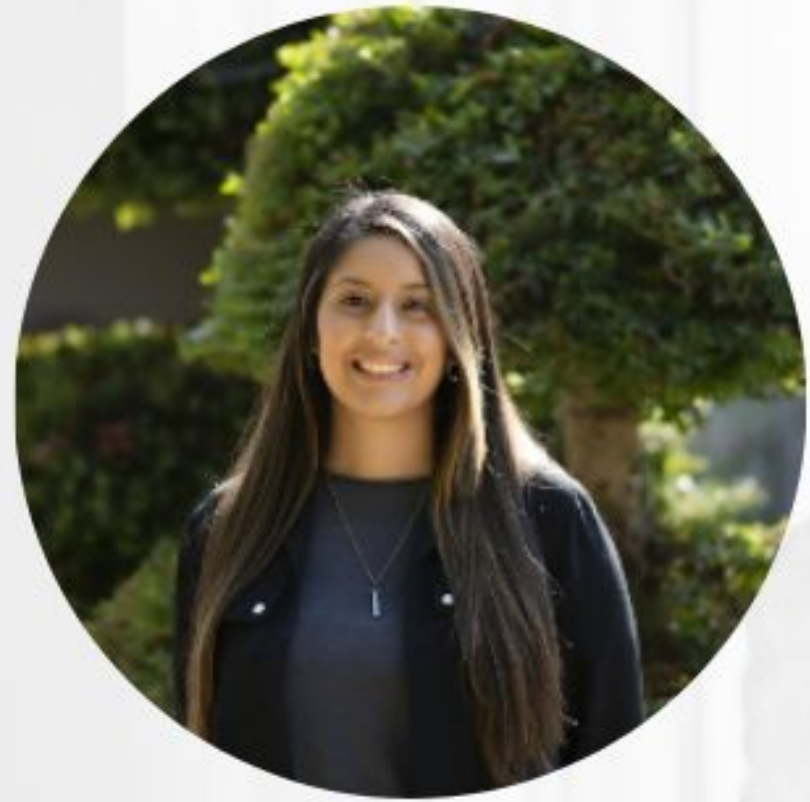




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GRIEF IS RESILIENCE

How Just Climate
Work Starts with
Recognizing Loss



INTENTION-SETTING



- To create a space for softening, slowing, sharing, and learning
- To check in with ourselves amidst the last day of a busy conference
- To acknowledge ways loss has come up for participants at CAF 2023
- To illuminate the role grief & loss play in our work and the strategic need to address them through our work
- To help you leave with a sense of how we can integrate grief and loss-informed approaches into our work





MINDFULNESS

PAIR & SHARE

**What's one way loss comes up
in your workplace or in the work
you do in the climate arena?**

Grief
AT WORK
with Ari Simon

ari@ari.fyi

Founded in 2021, **Grief at Work** offers skill-building, culture-setting, coaching, and consulting for integrating skills and strategies to:

- better respond to loss & grief with our teams, clients, and constituents,
- and spur wellbeing & resilience within ourselves and at our workplaces.

GRIEF AT WORK'S *OFFERINGS*

ONE TIME ENGAGEMENTS

Lunch & learns, conference sessions, and one-off presentations

- Intros to loss/grief definitions
- How loss affects work and work affects ability to process loss
- Turning the taboo of talking about loss into an opportunity for engagement and connection
- Introducing the Grief ARCH and other tools for transforming barriers into pathways towards resilience

SESSIONS & TRAININGS

Staff training, multi-session programs, and as part of retreats & team-building practices

- Co-developed with your particular workforce in mind
- Group sessions for teams and leadership
- Learning modules on grief & loss
- Exploration of particular challenges your workforce/workplace faces and ways the work intersects with grief and loss
- Demonstration of unique tools and practices for resilience
- Team-specific takeaways
- Activity to spur self-regulation, mindfulness, and wellbeing

GRIEF AT WORK'S *OFFERINGS*

STRATEGY & POLICY CONSULTING

Strategy and development for integrating program, policies, and support systems

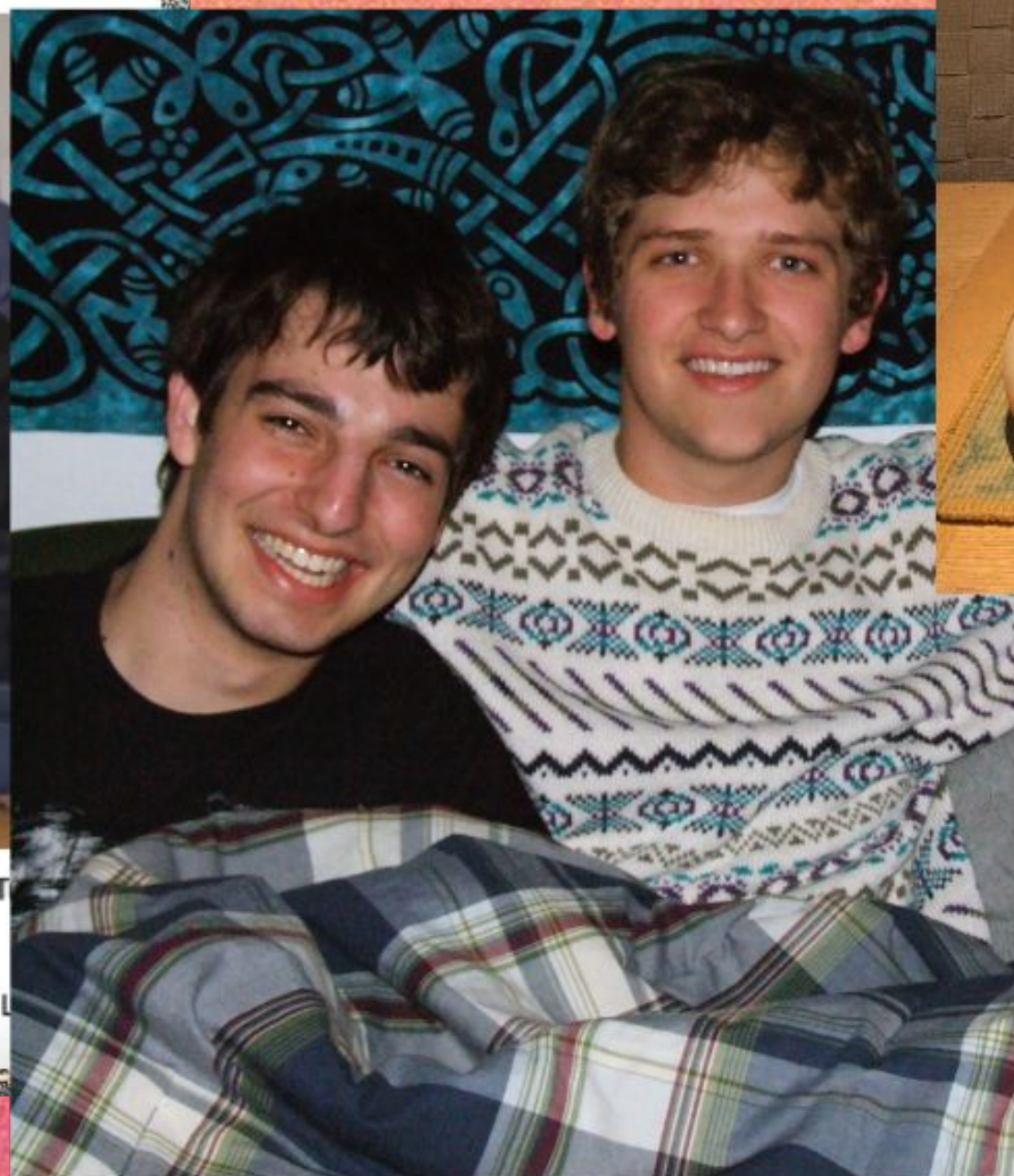
- Co-creating programs and policies to integrate better grief & loss-focused support within the workplace
- Listening sessions with staff to understand level of need
- Working closely with HR & leadership to build programs that support teams
- Developing toolkits, guides, and best practice manuals
- Redesigning policies & offerings such as bereavement leave and EAP to be more efficient, ethical, and supportive
- Embedded tools and programs that spur greater wellbeing, resilience, and workplace effectiveness

LEADERSHIP COACHING

Best suited for individual leaders, particularly those who have people-facing roles

- One-on-one grief care and leadership growth coaching
- Guided practice where personal processing informs larger-scale transformation
- One's own healing yields increased competence in supporting others through loss

“I’ve been through something and it’s changed me.”



A BRIEF GRIEF AND LOSS 101

Grieving is the wide range of emotional, mental, and physical experiences that result from coping with loss.

A primary purpose of grieving is to restore our ability to be in connection with ourselves and others.

Experiencing loss, by design, ruptures our capacity for engagement and productivity. Grief therefore arises as natural and necessary psychological (of the mind) and somatic (of the body) process to cope with and heal from loss.

EXAMPLES OF TYPES OF LOSS

Bereavement: suffering the death of a loved one

Sudden loss & Predictable loss

Individual loss & Collective loss

Anticipatory grief & Delayed grief

Relationship /
companionship loss

Eco-anxiety

Deaths we're
connected to

Climate disaster trauma

Heartbreak

Ecological loss

Ancestral trauma

Duty/role/obligation failure

Environmental injustice

Identity loss

Job loss

Violence and harm caused
and experienced

Aging and
physical ability loss

Economic/resource loss

Memory loss

Healthy grieving is a natural and necessary process for

- 1) coping with loss,
- 2) regaining connection to ourselves and with others, and
- 3) moving forward in life with resilience, possibility, and positive transformation

Unprocessed loss, or a lack of ability to healthily grieve, often becomes stored in the body as trauma.

Loss left unprocessed -> dissociation, disengagement, burnout*

*Check out Dr. Christina Maslach's work on the three aspects of burnout

“Pain is inevitable; suffering is optional.” – Buddhist adage



Grief is often avoided because **grieving is an encounter with innately subtractive aspects of life**

- that which we no longer have (present), never got to have (past), or we expect never will have (future),
- that which we no longer are (present), never got to be (past), or we expect never will get to be (future)
- that which no longer is (present), never really was (past), or we expect never will be (future).

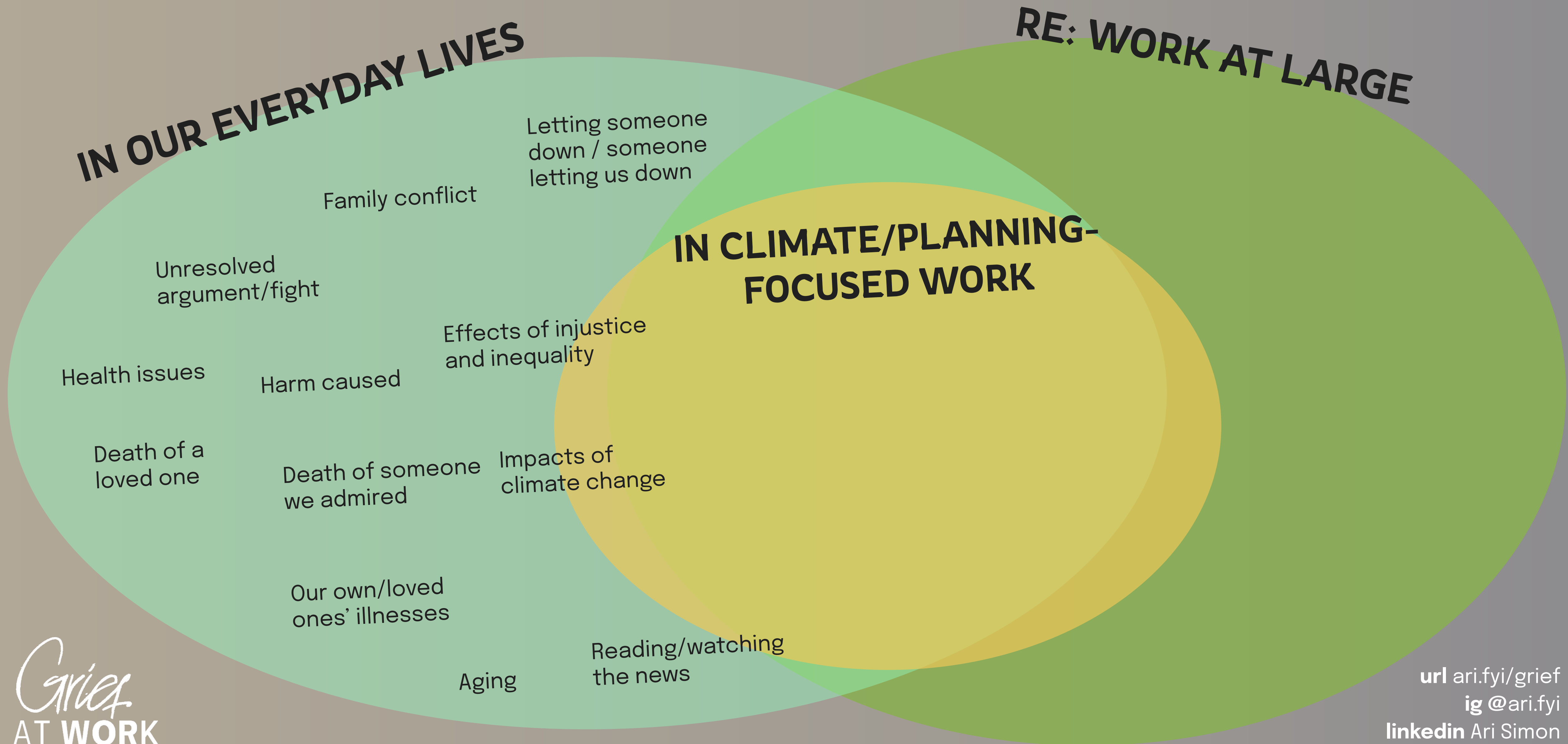
Eco-anxiety

Climate disaster trauma

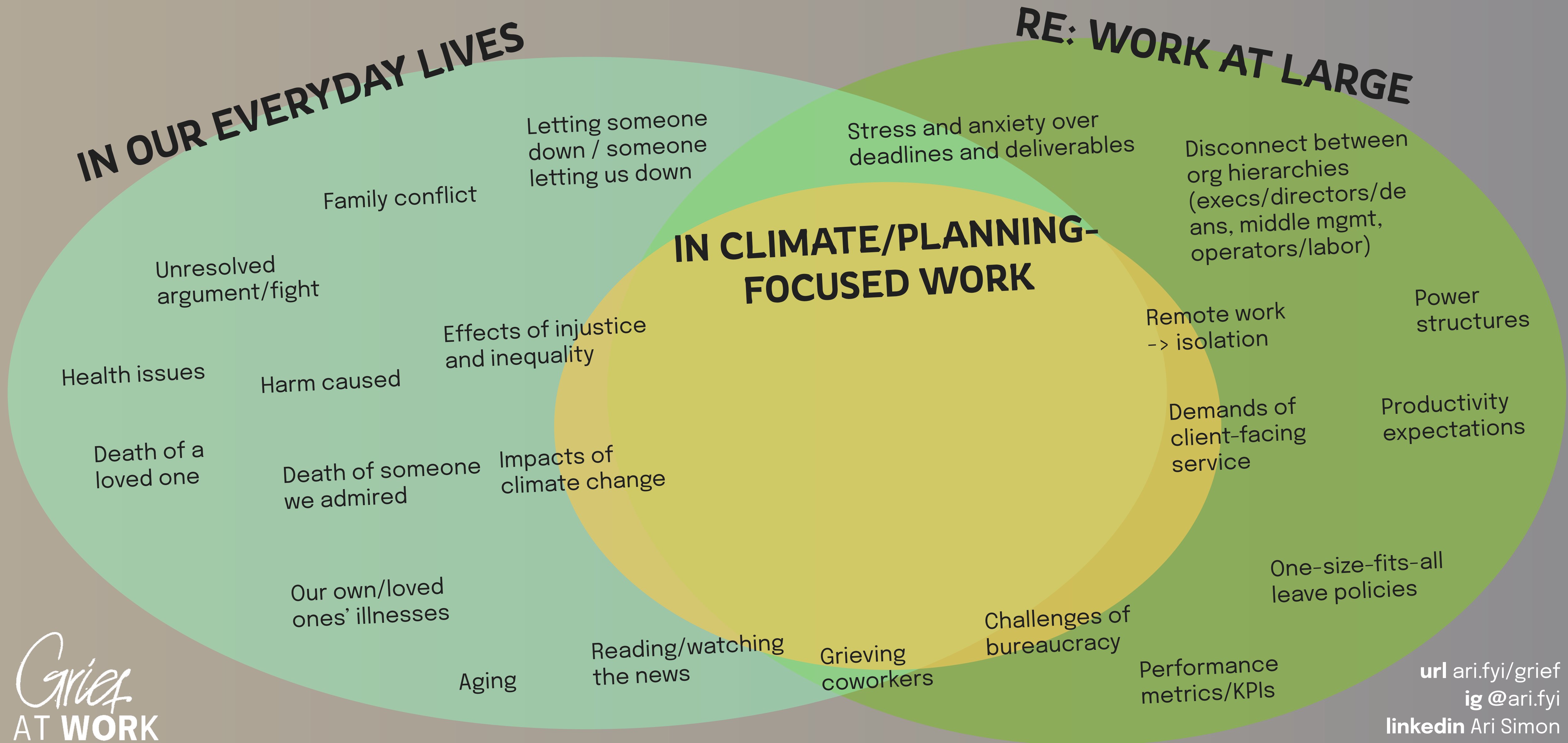
Ecological loss

Environmental injustice

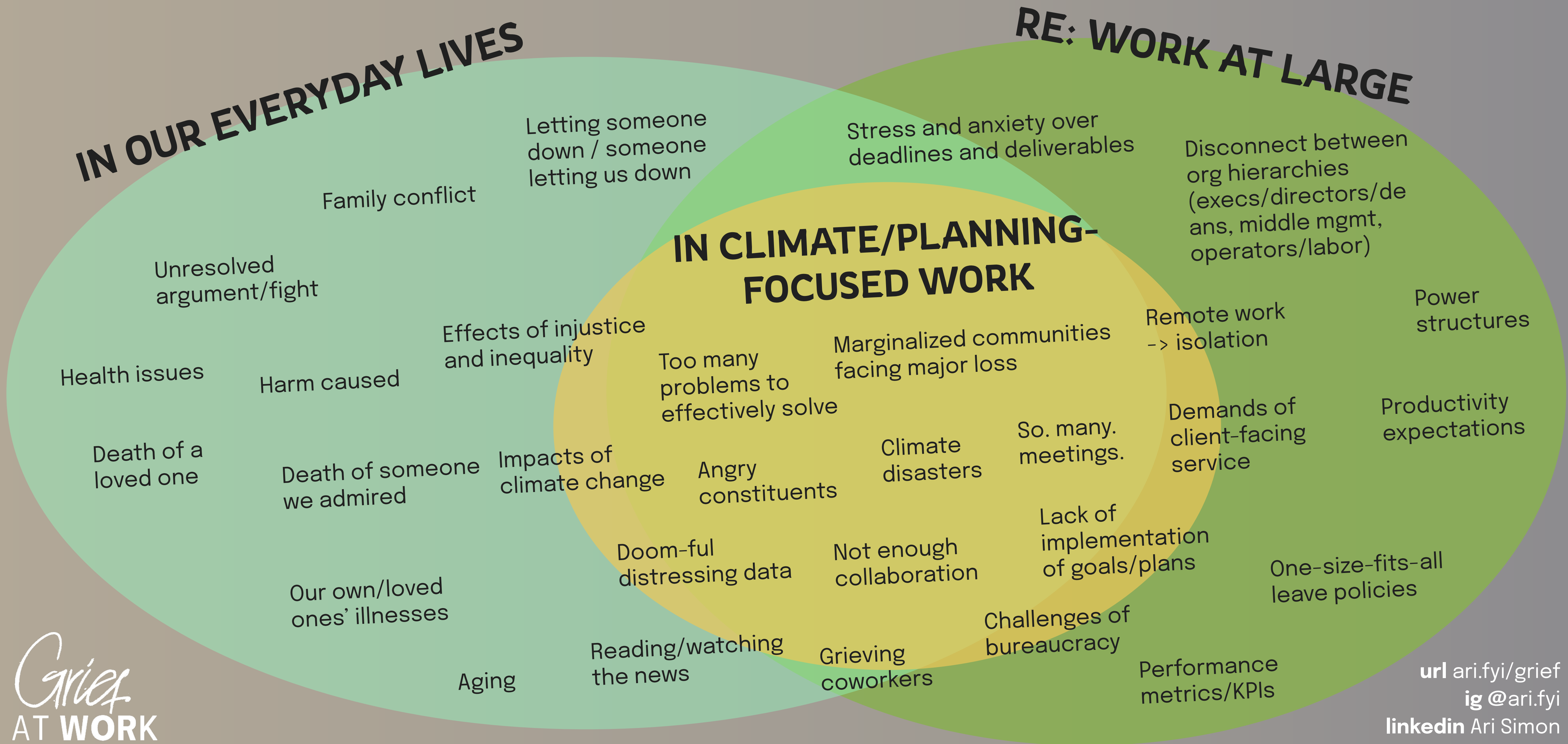
Mapping loss



Mapping loss



Mapping loss



When climate catastrophe and collapse feels utterly terrifying...

IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES

**IN CLIMATE/PLANNING-
FOCUSED WORK**

RE: WORK AT LARGE

When we're working in a difficult or toxic work environment...

IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES

RE: WORK AT LARGE

AT CLIMATE/POLICY-
FOCUSED WORKPLACE

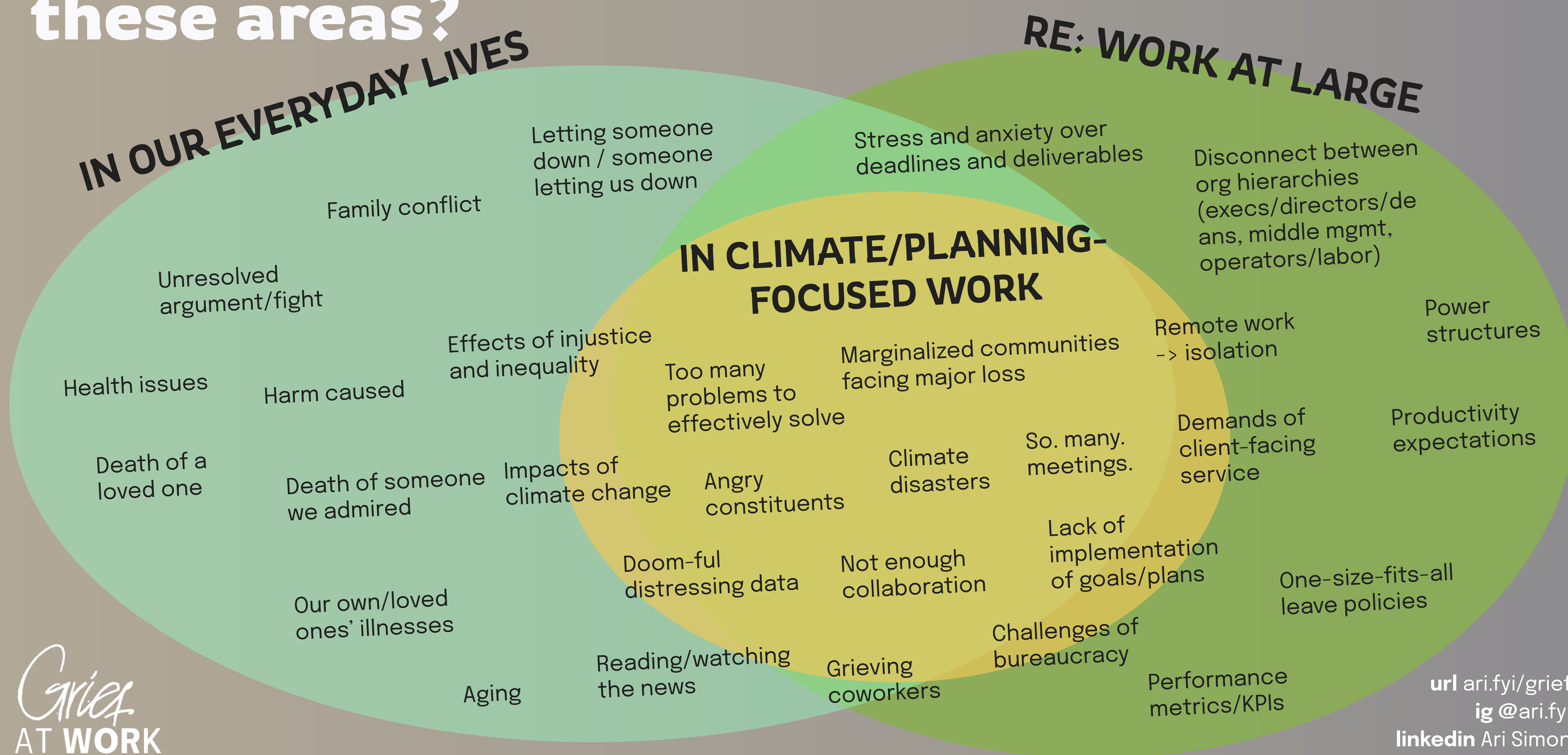
**When we're going through difficult
times personally...**

IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES

**AT
CLIMATE/POLICY-
FOCUSED
WORKPLACE**

**RE: WORK
AT LARGE**

How does loss impact you in these areas?



**MOVING TOWARDS
INTEGRATION &
IMPLEMENTATION...**

Every single person faces death and loss in their lives...

And, the system we live in perpetuates more death and loss for certain people over others.

We need to recognize there will be different sets of experiences, and therefore specific needs for those of us:

- facing injustice (economic, racial, environmental, etc.)
- born into lineages that have experienced oppression
- living in a body that experiences disability

And recognize there is a randomness to loss that any of us may experience.

Every single person faces death and loss in their lives...

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KEY POINT

Distributing resources and care around grief should happen **equitably** rather than a one-size-fits-all model

And recognize there is a randomness to loss that any of us may experience.

Every single person faces death and loss in their lives...

And, when people avoid grieving, don't express any felt connection to loss, and/or perpetuate loss without recognition, that aversion itself often a deep-seeded trauma response.

This means that *everyone* is deserving of support around grief & loss.

And rather than pathologize people who express sadness, pain, and emotion as the ones who are weak or suffering, we should recognize avoidance and aversion as a maladaptive response that may signal a need for help and support.

Every single person faces death and loss in their lives...

And, when people avoid grieving, don't express any felt connection to loss, and/or perpetuate loss without recognition, that aversion itself often a deep-seeded trauma response.

This means that *everyone* is deserving of support and recognition for their loss.

And rather than pathologize people who express sadness as the ones who are weak or suffering, we should recognize aversion as a maladaptive response that may signify a need for support.

KEY POINT

Be mindful of biases that can make us avoid checking in or caring for our less emotionally expressive colleagues

Climate adaptation work is, by design, in response to loss – aiming to implement physical and social infrastructure to help us acknowledge, adapt, and thrive amidst climate change (aka loss).

Grieving is the same mechanism – a process to help us acknowledge, adapt, and thrive amidst loss.

Adaptation work therefore requires tools, resources and support for processing losses associated with climate change and environmental injustice – for communities to grieve and therefore progress, for leaders to be moved and motivated by loss, and for teams to support each other through loss-filled work.

GROUP BRAINSTORM - PRESENCING

What do we need in order to allow grief and to process loss?

sense of release

people we trust

space & time

aka bereavement leave & time off

somatic movement & exercise

mindfulness / contemplative practices

music

ritual

laughter & joy

sense of justice & purpose-ness

writing / journaling / documenting

memorializing
sense of connection to people & living things

support groups

mental/emotional care & wellbeing resources

self-care & acts of nourishment

acknowledgement

people to take on roles & responsibilities when we can't

GROUP BRAINSTORM - PRESENCING

What do we need in order to allow grief and to process loss?

space & time

- Bereavement leave that makes space for grief (rather than constricts)
- Invitations / opportunities to mark time
- Schedule / work hour flexibility
- Distinction between critical deadlines versus tasks with less urgency
- Ability to resist multitasking
- Time for breaks and pauses
- Time banks and other time-as-resource sharing strategies
- Paid offerings during the workday to talk about grief & loss

GROUP BRAINSTORM - PRESENCING

What do we need in order to allow grief and to process loss?

acknowledgement

- To give colleagues and community members the chance to say “I've been through something and it's changed me”
- To give colleagues and community members the chance feel seen, validated, and acceptable
- To recognize, reflect, and demonstrate how losses are being addressed
- To be able to share the experience of the loss with others
- To be able to spur connection over mutual experiences
- To be *for* each other even and especially when different people are having different experiences with the same occurrence or stimulus



CivicSpark - National Service Program of CivicWell





CivicSpark, Mental Health Survey, and Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP)

- CivicWell Data Collection for REAP (July 2021)
 - Implemented through surveys and focus groups.
- CivicSpark Mental Health Survey (May 2021)
 - 51% of the Fellows felt that they were not fully aware of the resources available to them.
 - 39% of Fellows said we could better support their ability to take care of their mental health by providing better mental health resources and training.
 - Over half of the respondents would be interested in mindfulness classes (57.4%) and stress reduction workshops (59.6%).





Good Grief Network's 10-Step Program

- Peer-to-peer Support Group for people overwhelmed by eco-anxiety, climate grief, and other experiences of eco-distress.
- 10-Step program aimed at helping build resilient individuals and communities to lean into their painful feelings and shape their lives toward meaningful action.
- Founders are LaUra Schmidt, Aimee Lewis Reau, and Sarah Jornsay-Silverberg.
- 50 programs implemented, 1000 people reached, 200+ facilitation packages.



EXAMPLE: CivicSpark and Good Grief Network

- What are some ways you saw grief & loss affecting your staff and fellows?
- What was CivicSpark's process for deciding to take on grief & loss support for its teams and fellows? What are some ways it has done this?
- How did you find the Good Grief Network and its 10-Step Program?
- What was it like as a program leader to experience training around grief & loss?



54321 Grounding Exercise

Anxiety Busting!

The next time your mind is stuck on anxiety and worry, try the following simple exercise!

Look around you and notice:



5 things you can see: Your hands, the sky, a plant.



4 things you can feel: Feet on the ground, the chair.



3 things you can hear: Birds chirping, your breath.



2 things you can smell: Coffee, your lunch, clothes.



1 thing you can taste: A mint, gum, the fresh air.

FIND YOUR IDEAL THERAPIST ON [ZENCARE.CO](https://www.zencare.co)

 [ZENCARE.CO](https://www.zencare.co)

Social-Ecological Model

Individual

Knowledge, skills, attitude, childhood experiences, biology

Interpersonal

Family, friends, close connections, social networks, social norms

Community

Neighborhood, workplaces, schools, religious groups

Structures

Policies, institutions, power relationships, types and levels of service and systems

Environmental

Land, water, food, built environment, infrastructure, ecosystems

IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES

RE: WORK AT LARGE

AT WORKPLACE

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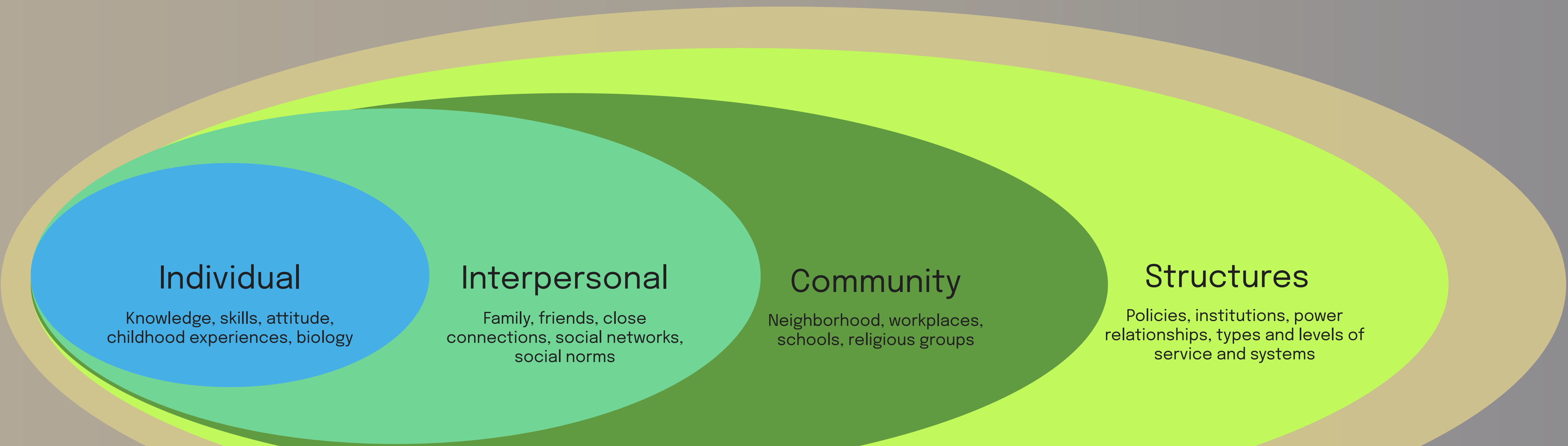
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somatic movement & exercise
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space & time
 aka bereavement leave & time off
 memorializing
 support groups
acknowledgement

sense of justice & purpose-ness
 mental/emotional care & wellbeing resources
acknowledgement

TAKEAWAYS/TOOLS

- Open up space to talk about it
 - Affinity groups, death cafes, lunch meet-up, writing workshops
 - Provide resources inside + outside of work
 - Grief & loss ERG or internal working group
- Unbox bereavement leave
 - Rethinking the who, when, and where of grief
 - Looking to other examples and systems of paid leave / time off
 - Recognize climate crises as a need for giving workers time & space
- Weaving grief & loss competence into planning processes
- Expand flexibility & resource sharing
 - Allowing space for not working/not being “productive”
 - Time banks
- Implement equity by letting go of “one size fits all” models
 - Embracing and adapting to different cultural styles
 - Honoring different experiences merits different responses
- Make transforming shame a top priority
- Communicating with consent

PAIR & SHARE

**What's one thing you're taking
away from this session?**

Bringing teachings, tools, and support structures around grief & loss can help take us from _____ to _____:

- Individualism -> Collectivism
- Overwhelm -> Focus
- Burnout -> Sense of Capability & Possibility
- Resentment -> Satisfaction
- Callousness -> Consideration
- Disengagement & quitting -> Engagement & Retention
- Oppressive culture -> Nurturance culture

MORE RESOURCES

ONLINE + IRL RESOURCES

- Good Grief Network - goodgriefnetwork.org
 - 10-step processing & personal resilience process and other workshops and program
- Grief at Work - ari.fyi/griefatwork
 - trainings, workshops & coaching on grief & loss competency in workplaces and teams
- Climate Mental Health Network - climatementalhealth.net
 - online programs, research, and engagement on mental health impacts of climate change
- Reimagine - letsreimagine.org
 - events and programs around reimagining grief, loss, death & dying
- Betterleave - betterleave.com
 - digital tools and psychosocial support, for managing all aspects of bereavement care

BOOKS

- [Emotional Resiliency in the Era of Climate Change: A Clinician's Guide](#) by Leslie Davenport
- [We Were Made for These Times: Ten Lessons for Moving Through Change, Loss, and Disruption](#) by Kaira Jewel Lingo
- [The Five Invitations: Discovering What Death Can Teach Us About Living Fully](#) by Frank Ostaseski
- [It's Ok That You're Not Ok](#) by Megan Devine

PODCASTS

- [Outrage + Optimism](#) with Christiana Figueres and Paul Dickinson
- [Outside/In](#) on the natural world and how we live in it
- [Philotimo Life](#) - Maria Vassiliou & Ammo Somal's conversation around death, grief, & bereavement
- Redefining HR's ["The Long Goodbye: Living With Grief"](#)

THANK YOU!

**Q&A AND
REFLECTIONS**