Tony’s Story:
A theory-building case study of delayed grief

John Wilson¹ & ², Lynne Gabriel² & Hazel James²
¹Saint Catherine’s Hospice, Scarborough, ²York St John University

Tony (a pseudonym) had chronic symptoms of stress and depression hypothesised to be due to an unresolved childhood bereavement. He completed 40 sessions of person-centred bereavement counselling (Wilson 2014).

Sessions were recorded and transcribed. Grief resolution was charted by identifying moments of assimilation. (Varvin and Stiles 1999).

The client reported significant gains in his emotional wellbeing; typified by a series of plateaus and sudden improvements which matched the moments of assimilation identified in the session recordings.

This is one of ten theory-building case studies (Stiles, 2007, McLeod 2010) working towards a theory of grief as an active process of assimilation and accommodation of the life changes presented by loss. This project may have important implications for bereavement counselling practice, including the development of an outcomes measure based on the clients’ observed process of psychological change.

REFERENCES

