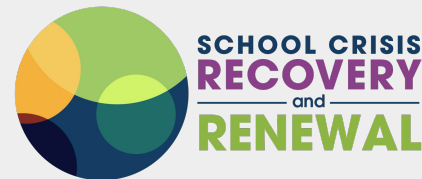


MOURNING IS THE WORK

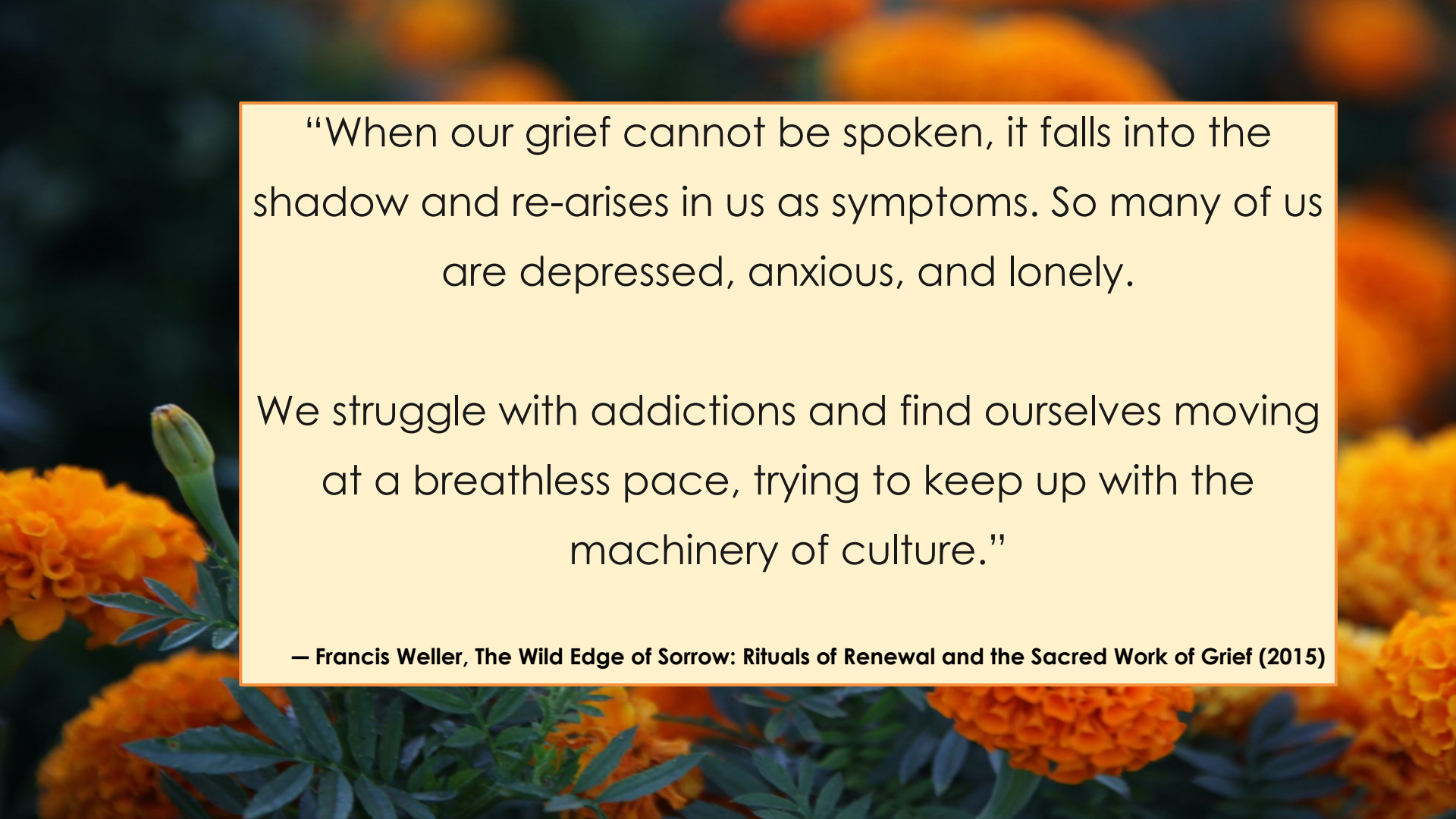
Art and Ritual-Based Practices for Educators to
Metabolize Grief

Oriana Ides, MA. APCC. PPS





Practice: Talking Circles



“When our grief cannot be spoken, it falls into the shadow and re-arises in us as symptoms. So many of us are depressed, anxious, and lonely.

We struggle with addictions and find ourselves moving at a breathless pace, trying to keep up with the machinery of culture.”

— Francis Weller, *The Wild Edge of Sorrow: Rituals of Renewal and the Sacred Work of Grief* (2015)

Gate of Grief: THE PLACES THAT HAVE NOT KNOWN LOVE

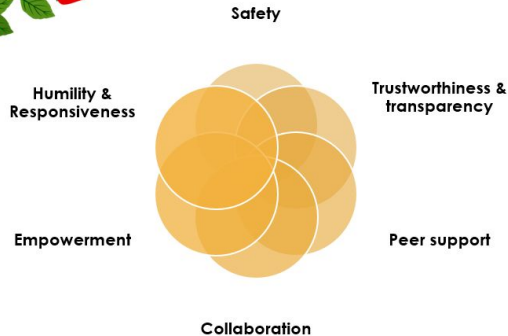
- Places in ourselves never touched by love
- Places wrapped in shame and banished
- Places lived outside of compassion, warmth and welcome
- Parts that we hate in ourselves and hold in contempt, that we deny the healing salve of community
- Outcast portions of our soul appearing as addictions, depression, anxiety and other symptoms calling for our attention



Taking Self & Collective Inventory

Checking in with myself:

- Do I have the internal and external resources to talk about my grief right now?
- Who or what might I lean on for support after this circle, if needed?
- Who might I refer students to if their need is beyond my capacity?



Checking in with the circle:

- What of these Trauma Informed ways of being feel most important to you as we steady ourselves for this circle?
- What more might we need to feel present and open to this process?

Circle Questions

- What thoughts, feeling or memories does this specific gate of grief bring up in you?
- How does this gate articulate the grief you are carrying in this moment?
- What are the parts of yourself—past or present—that you've felt pressure to hide or silence in your role as an educator?
- What might it look or feel like to extend compassion to a part of yourself you've kept outside the circle of care?



— Debriefing Our Circle

- What came up for you as you listened to others or shared your own experience of grief?
- How did it feel to name or sit with your grief in community today?
- What might you need—individually or collectively—as you continue to carry or tend to your grief moving forward?





Art by Lexx Valdez

You are a miracle walking
I greet you with wonder
In a world which works to own
Your joy and imagination
You have chosen to be free,
Every day, as a practice.
I can never know the struggles you went through to get here,
But i know you have swum upstream
And at times it can be lonely

I want you to know
I honor the choices you made in solitude
And I honor the work you have done to belong
I honor your commitment to that which is larger than yourself
And your journey
To the particular container of life that is you

You are enough
Your work is enough
You are needed
Your work is sacred
You are here
And i am grateful

-adrienne marie brown