

# GRIEF AND SPIRITUAL CARE

SPARTANBURG REGIONAL HOSPITAL SYSTEM

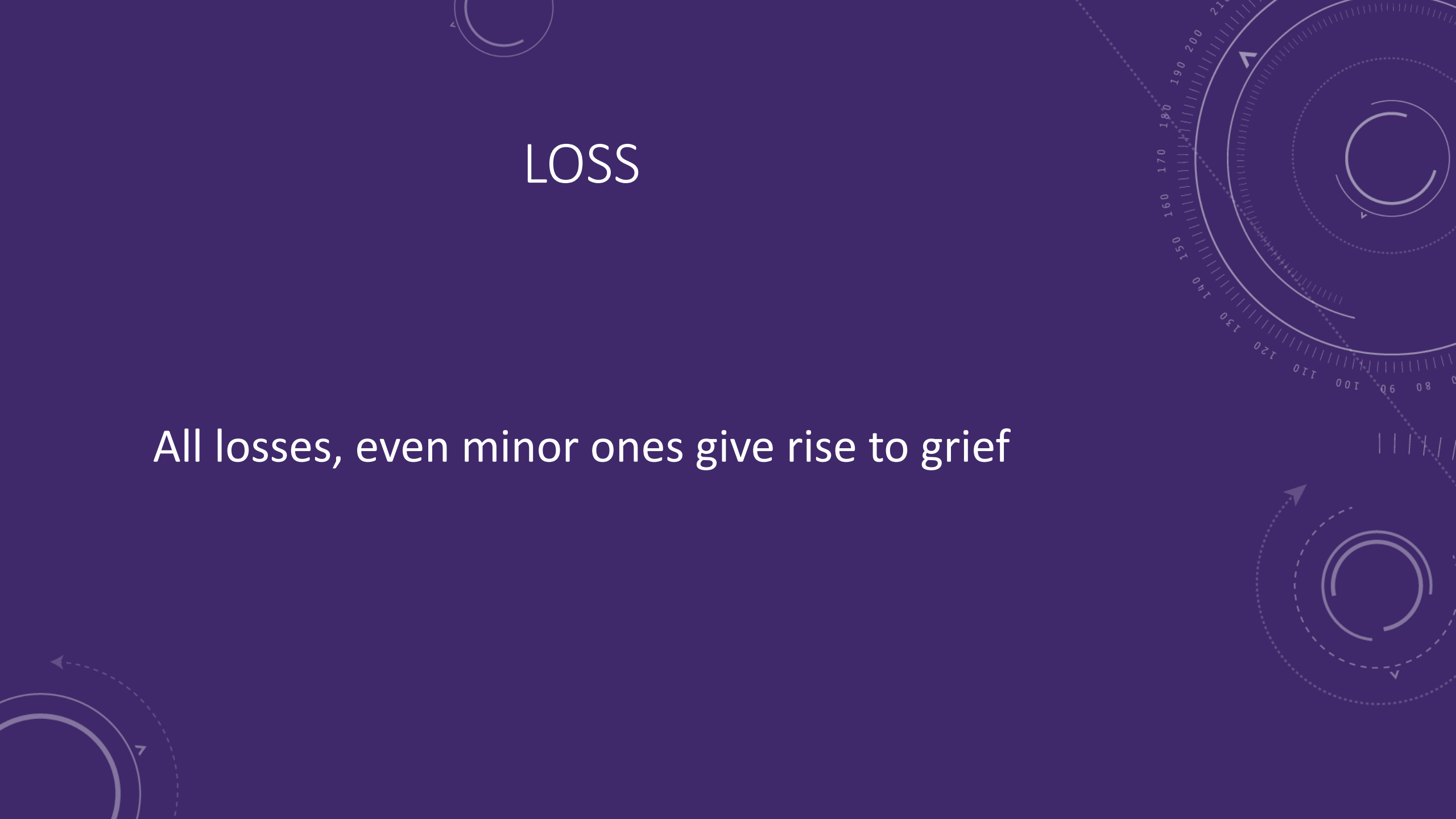
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# GRIEF DEFINED

Grief is the normal and bewildering cluster of ordinary human emotions arising in response to a significant loss, intensified and complicated by the relationship to the person or object lost.

# LOSS

All losses, even minor ones give rise to grief



# SIX MAJOR TYPES OF LOSS

MATERIAL

RELATIONAL

INTRAPSYCHIC

FUNCTIONAL

ROLL

SYSTEMIC

# MATERIAL LOSS

Material loss occurs with the loss of familiar objects or surroundings to which one has ascribed important attachment or meaning.

# RELATIONAL LOSS

Relational loss is the ending of opportunities to relate oneself or to talk and share experiences with another person. To be in the emotional or physical presence of another person.

# INTRAPSYCHIC LOSS

Intrapsychic loss is the experience of losing and emotionally important image of oneself, losing possibilities of what might have been, letting go of plans of a particular future, or the dying of a dream.

# FUNCTIONAL LOSS

The loss of muscular or neurological functions of the body can evoke powerful grief



# Role Loss

Role loss is losing one's specific social role or one's accustomed place in the family, social network or the world.

# SYSTEMIC LOSS

We are all part of systems in which interactional behavior patterns develop over time. Systemic loss occurs when the system is disrupted.

With almost any specific loss, more than one type of loss will most likely be present.

# ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS OF LOSS

Avoidable and  
unavoidable  
loss

Temporary and  
permanent loss

Anticipated and  
unanticipated  
loss

Actual and  
imagined loss

Leaving and  
being left.

# Avoidable and Unavoidable loss

While some losses are unavoidable, some losses could have been avoided with different choices or lifestyles.

# Temporary and Permanent loss

While some losses are temporary, the focus may be strongly directed to the loss which impacts functioning in daily life.

# Anticipated and Unanticipated Loss

A sudden death impacts a person quite differently than a death after a long illness.

# Actual and Imagined loss

Imagined loss involves “writing stories”



# Leaving and Being Left

For both the one leaving and the one being left have different experiences of loss

# Grief Dynamics

The background features a gradient from red at the top to blue at the bottom, with a field of small white stars. On the right side, there are several technical diagrams: a large circular gauge with a scale from 80 to 210 and a needle pointing to approximately 190; a smaller circular diagram with a central circle and an arrow; and another circular diagram with a dashed outer ring and a solid inner ring, also with an arrow. In the bottom left corner, there are faint circular lines and an arrow pointing left.

Grief work helps the griever adjust to the experience of being in a foreign place

# GRIEF IS NORMAL

GRIEF IS THE NORMAL  
RESPONSE TO LOSS

# Anticipated Loss and Anticipatory Grief

In the case of a prolonged illness, anticipated loss and anticipatory grief are different for the one dying and the survivors.

# Dying Grief

The prolonged grieving process of a final loss is common for the dying person who is leaving all the people and place which carry meaning for her/him

# Survivor's Anticipatory Grief

The overarching effect of anticipatory grief is increasing feelings of isolation and loneliness.

COMMON  
ELEMENTS OF  
GRIEF

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Numbness

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Emptiness, Loneliness, Isolation

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Fear, Anxiety

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Guilt, Shame

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Anger

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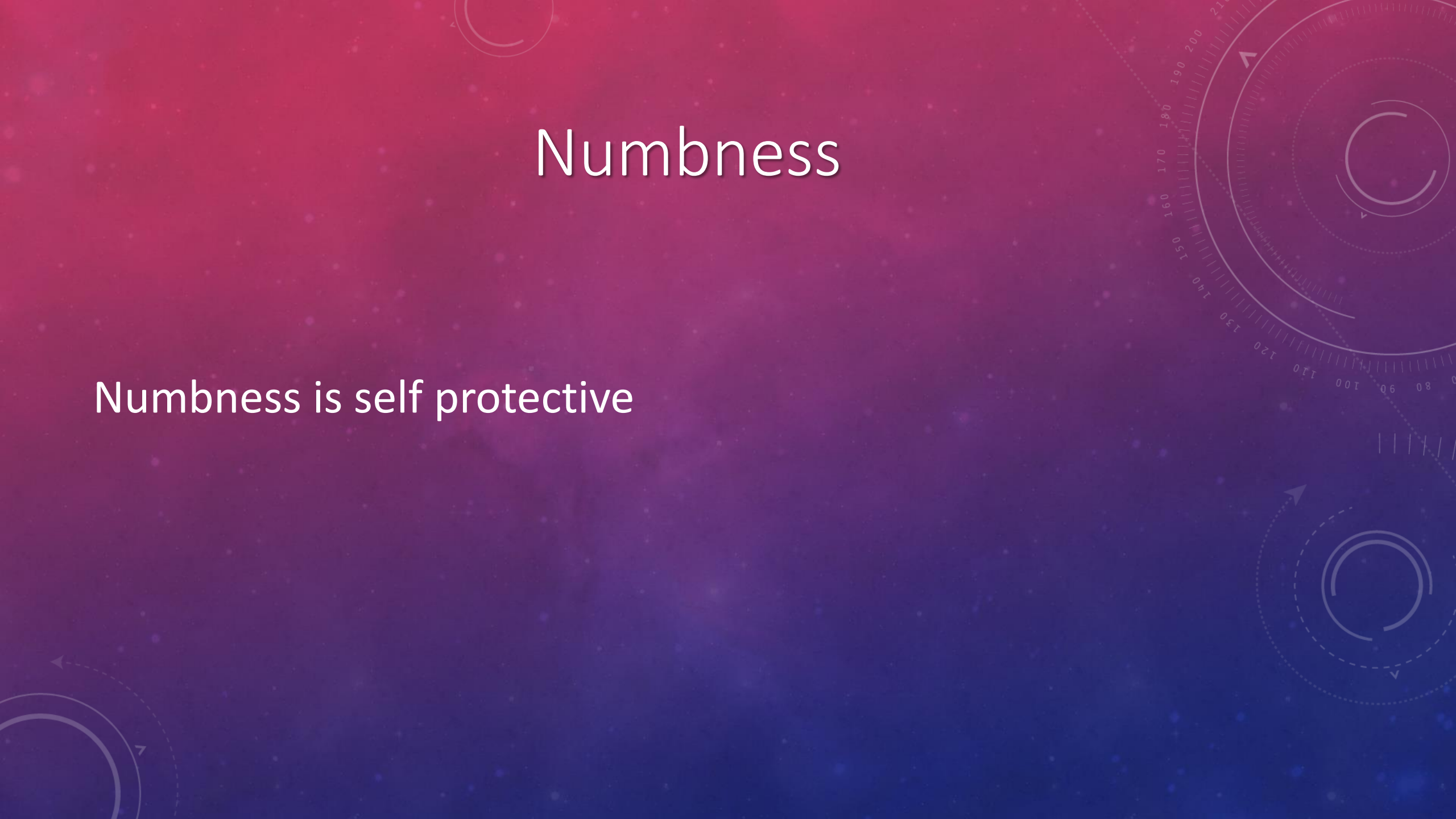
Sadness, Despair

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Somatization

# Numbness

Numbness is self protective





# Emptiness, Loneliness, Isolation

- Emptiness is a feeling of being diminished from within
- Loneliness is a feeling one's surroundings are devoid of those who care
- Isolation is the feelings of being separated from others through invisible boundaries

# Fear, Anxiety

Fear and anxiety are experienced in two ways. Anxiety of separation and fear of what the future looks like.

# Guilt and Shame

Guilt is a master component of grief

Shame often results from feelings of being a griever

# Anger

Anger is a secondary emotion which protects us from pain

# Sadness and Despair

- Sadness is a normal healthy response to loss
- Despair is when sadness is tethered to fear and futility about the future

# Somatization

Physical component to grief



# UNIQUENESS OF GRIEF

- Grief is unique to the griever
- A function of intensity of attachment
- A function of the complexity of attachment
- Grief is unpredictable.

# Grieving Characteristics

- Searching for the lost loved one or object
- Immoderation
- Grieving is spiral as opposed to linear
- Time is distorted
- Grieving is self-oriented
- Grieving never completely ends



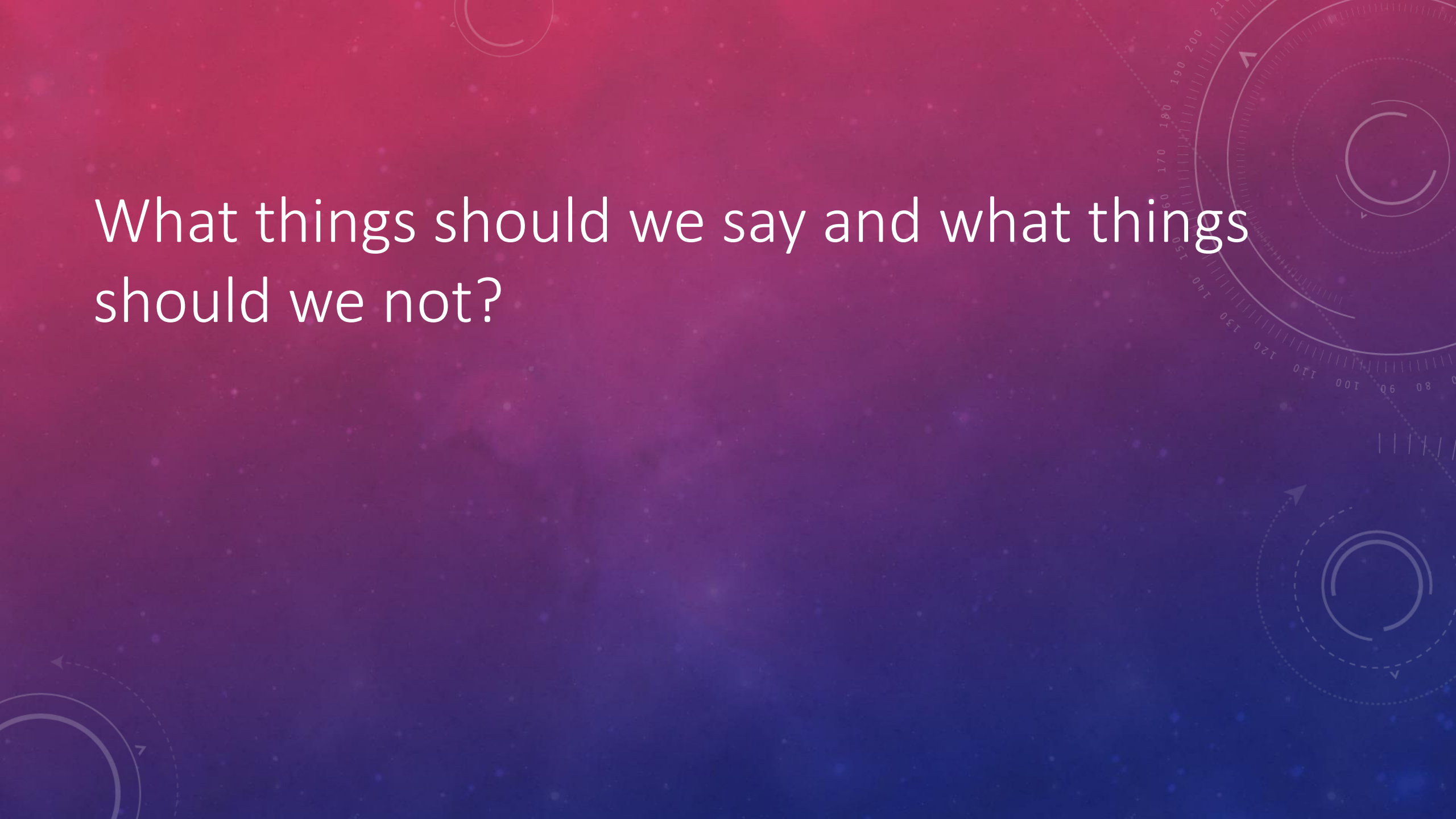
# Goals of Grieving

- To discover and express pain, guilt, anger, and other feelings
- To admit the reality of loss and live without constant reference
- To be able to make new attachments and investments in others
- Restoration of a belief system which has been challenged by loss

# Spiritual Care Responses to Grief

- ❖ Intervention
- ❖ Recognition of feelings
- ❖ Danger of premature comfort
- ❖ The need to remember
- ❖ Trust them in the process

What things should we say and what things should we not?

The background features a gradient from red at the top to blue at the bottom, overlaid with a field of small white stars. On the right side, there are several technical diagrams: a large circular scale with degree markings (0, 90, 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 170, 180, 190, 200, 210) and arrows, and two circular flow diagrams with arrows indicating clockwise and counter-clockwise directions.

# References

- Carrie Doehring, *The Practice of Pastoral Care*
- Kenneth R. Mitchel, Herbert Anderson: *All our Losses, All our Griefs*

Questions?

