



Uncomfortable immersion

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Abstract

The uniqueness of grief makes it troublesome for design to facilitate meaningful impacts in the processes of grieving. It's a complicated emotion to consolidate, differing between every person. Western society is not well equipped with the necessary knowledge needed to begin understanding and supporting others in grief (Devine, 2017).

Using service design as a framework for crafting an optimal solution for grief-care, Uncomfortable Immersion has explored some of the design opportunities surrounding grief in the context of adolescents. Clinically complex grief, which requires intervention, is more prevalent in adolescents (Shear, 2012). This is due to adolescents constantly redefining their identities and relationships, making it harder for them and others to determine when they are struggling (Hewlett, 2012).

Service design tools such as perceptual and journey mapping, combined with the philosophies behind Human-Centred Design, yielded insightful research from the interviews conducted. Most people whom had experienced the death of someone close to them during their adolescence, noted that it was their first opportunity to talk about their grief openly.

The book, 'Without Expectations', that I designed is a culmination of both personal and shared narratives. Its themes encourage empathic connections between the griever and their relationships. It discusses the creation of ritual objects as an important tool (Sas, 2016) in introducing purposeful integration of the physical and metaphysical reminders of the

deceased (Green, 2002). One example outlined in the book is a handwritten letter from the deceased, printed onto a scarf that conceals the message until touched for a private ritual of remembrance.

Readers of the book claimed it inspired deeper discussions with their personal network as well as understanding their grief from a different perspective.

Keywords: grief, empathy, connection, tension

References

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