



Brief Eclectic Psychotherapy Traumatic Grief (BEP-TG)

BEP-TG is an individual therapy designed to help you process the traumatic loss of a loved one, i.e. the death of a loved one in violent circumstances. The term traumatic grief is used if a bereaved person, following the traumatic loss of a loved one, develops persistent symptoms of grief, posttraumatic stress and/or depression.

What happens during treatment?

Treatment consists of these five parts, which are addressed one by one.

- Information and motivation - together with your partner or someone close to you. The first time you will be asked to bring an important person close to you to the therapy session. Your therapist will explain the therapy to you, how it works and how this therapy will reduce your symptoms.
- Grief-focused exposure
In the next sessions you will talk about the traumatic loss experience in as much detail as you can. You will talk about your feelings and thoughts and observe how this affects your emotions, thoughts and body. As you discuss your memories as well as the circumstances in which the event(s) took place in detail, the symptoms that have grown to accompany these memories will gradually lessen. In this way, you, together with your

therapist, will conquer the fears that go with these memories; you will be processing them.

- Writing assignments and mementoes
Your therapist will ask you to bring mementoes, i.e. objects that remind you of your loved one, such as items of clothing, music or photos. In other words, these objects are meant to bring a feel of those days to the present time. Further, your therapist will also discuss with you the possibility of doing writing assignments. Writing assignments are another useful tool for bringing extreme emotions to the surface. Also, you will find how pleasant it is to involve yourself actively in the therapy even outside the sessions.

There are various kinds of writing assignment that your therapist may discuss with you.



ARQ Centrum'45 is the Dutch national centre for specialist diagnostics and treatment of people with complex psychotrauma complaints.
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- Finding meaning and activation
The BEP-TG provides you with the opportunity to give meaning to what happened and discover what you may learn from it. Themes that may be discussed here explicitly include: safety, trust, sense of control, self-esteem, intimacy and bonding. But you will also talk about taking up activities once more and about how you could shape your future, and get on with your life again without your deceased loved one.
- Farewell ritual
The treatment ends with a farewell ritual. This is meant to bring a period to a close and to give the deceased loved one a place in your personal life story. Together with those close to you, you design your own farewell ritual that you find appropriate.

How does it work?

The aim of the therapy is to reduce your symptoms, to help you emotionally process the traumatic loss experience and integrate the event in your own life story.

After the traumatic loss of a loved one, you often feel obliged to stay active and not dwell on your feelings. Feelings about the loss may be so severe that they frighten you. You then cannot and do not want to let go, being alone becomes unbearable, missing the loved person constantly hurts. But keeping a lid on these feelings and trying to control them takes a lot of energy. You are exhausted and forgetful. What you need to do is to allow your grief and sadness, and accept that the loss has occurred.

Is BEP-TG effective?

The parts that make up BEP-TG have been proven to be effective in the treatment of complicated grief, posttraumatic stress disorder and/or depression. If you'd like more information, please see the literature below.

Are there any side effects?

After a treatment session you will often find that the memories you talked about during the therapy will bother you more for a few days. This is a sign that you are processing these memories. Discuss with your therapist what you could do to deal with these reactions in the best way.

How long does the treatment take?

In total, treatment takes about 16 sessions of 45 to 60 minutes each.

Any questions?

Feel free to address all your questions to your BEP-TG therapist or your primary therapist.

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Gersons, B. P. R., Meewisse, M. L., & Nijdam, M. J. (2015). Brief eclectic psychotherapy for PTSD. In U. Schnyder & M. Cloitre (Eds.), *Evidence Based Treatments for Trauma-Related Psychological Disorders* (pp. 255-276). Cham etc.: Springer.

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