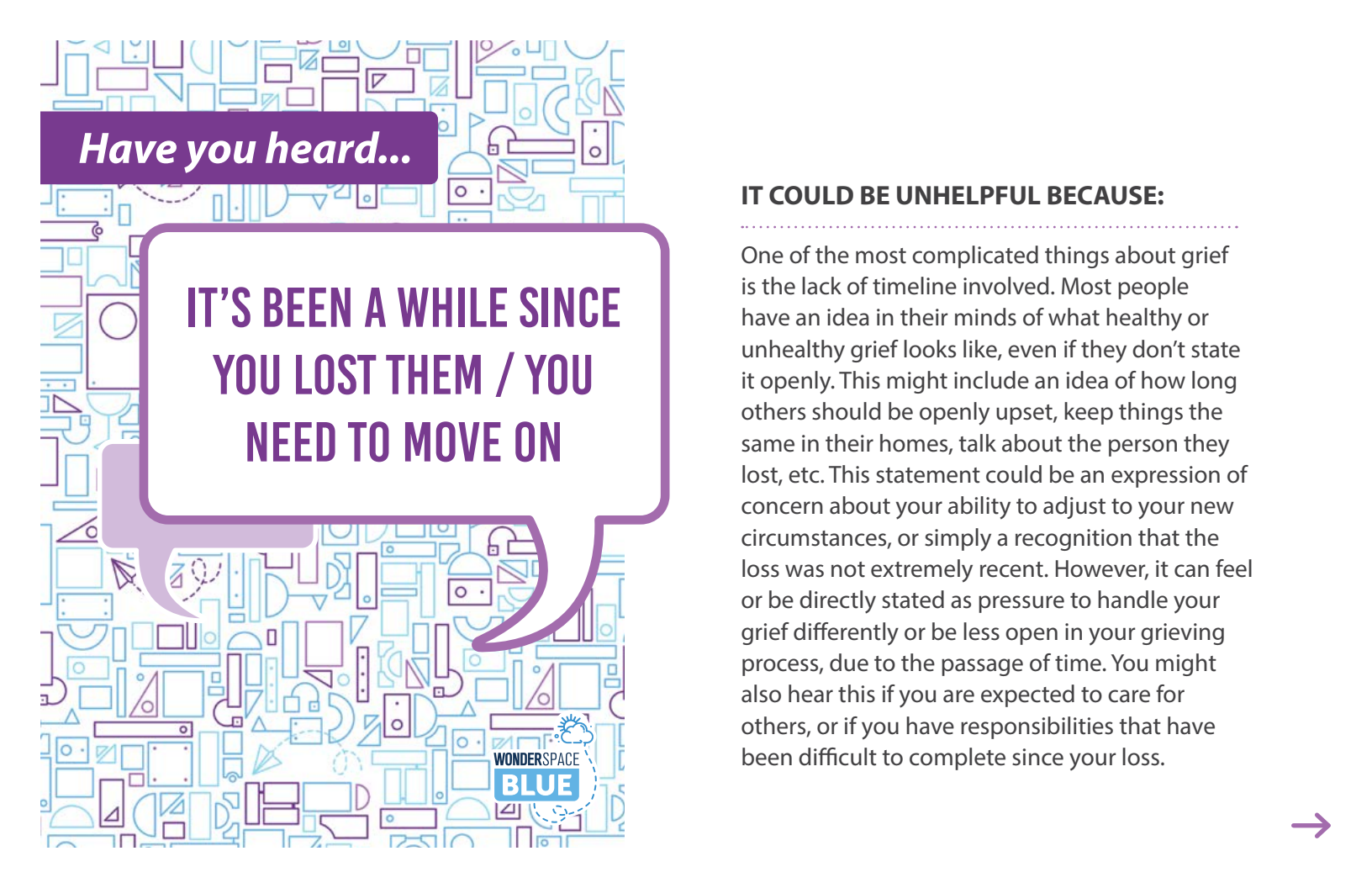




Have you heard...

**IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE
YOU LOST THEM / YOU
NEED TO MOVE ON**

WONDERSPACE
BLUE

IT COULD BE UNHELPFUL BECAUSE:

One of the most complicated things about grief is the lack of timeline involved. Most people have an idea in their minds of what healthy or unhealthy grief looks like, even if they don't state it openly. This might include an idea of how long others should be openly upset, keep things the same in their homes, talk about the person they lost, etc. This statement could be an expression of concern about your ability to adjust to your new circumstances, or simply a recognition that the loss was not extremely recent. However, it can feel or be directly stated as pressure to handle your grief differently or be less open in your grieving process, due to the passage of time. You might also hear this if you are expected to care for others, or if you have responsibilities that have been difficult to complete since your loss.





HERE'S THE TRUTH:

Because loss involves very significant change, it is impossible to process the entire experience when you first hear the news. You may initially feel numb or disconnected, especially if the loss was sudden, violent, or quicker or different than you anticipated. You may also understand different elements of loss and grief gradually over time. It is common for people to notice renewed intensity around grief at specific times such as holidays, anniversaries, or important events that your person is not present for. However, reminders of grief are as unique as you or the person you lost, and can feel random and unexpected as you notice aspects of your loss you may not have recognized before, or experience differently now. Because grief involves processing many smaller losses as well as the overall loss of the person who died, there is no specific amount of time that the grief process takes. It is healthy for your grief to ebb and flow, and to change even years after a loss.

It is also important to realize that your child's understanding of death, grief, and their relationship and specific losses related to the person who died will change over time, due to normal development. If a loss occurred early in your child's life, he or she will need to renegotiate their understanding of that loss and its impact multiple times, as their understanding of death, milestones in their life, and other circumstances change. Even if the death occurred a long time ago, your child may be experiencing certain aspects of it as brand new.

You could say:

- **“Grief doesn’t have a timeline we have to follow.”** People have many different emotions as they try to work through grief, and these emotions can take time to sort out. Sometimes, it feels like the emotions slow down for a while, then get strong again. There might be reasons that we understand, or it might feel random. Even if you don’t understand why you feel more sad, angry, etc., right now, your feelings are still valid and we can pay attention to them, talk about them, and find healthy ways to let them out.
- **“As we get older and our brains grow, we understand big, important events differently.”** No one can handle thinking about every single change that happens after a death all at once, and the way we think about big changes shifts as we get older. You might feel more upset about a certain part of how we lost our person than you used to, or might notice that they are missing a part of your life you didn’t know about when they died. What do you understand or know now that you didn’t then? Is there anything you miss differently, or wish they knew now?