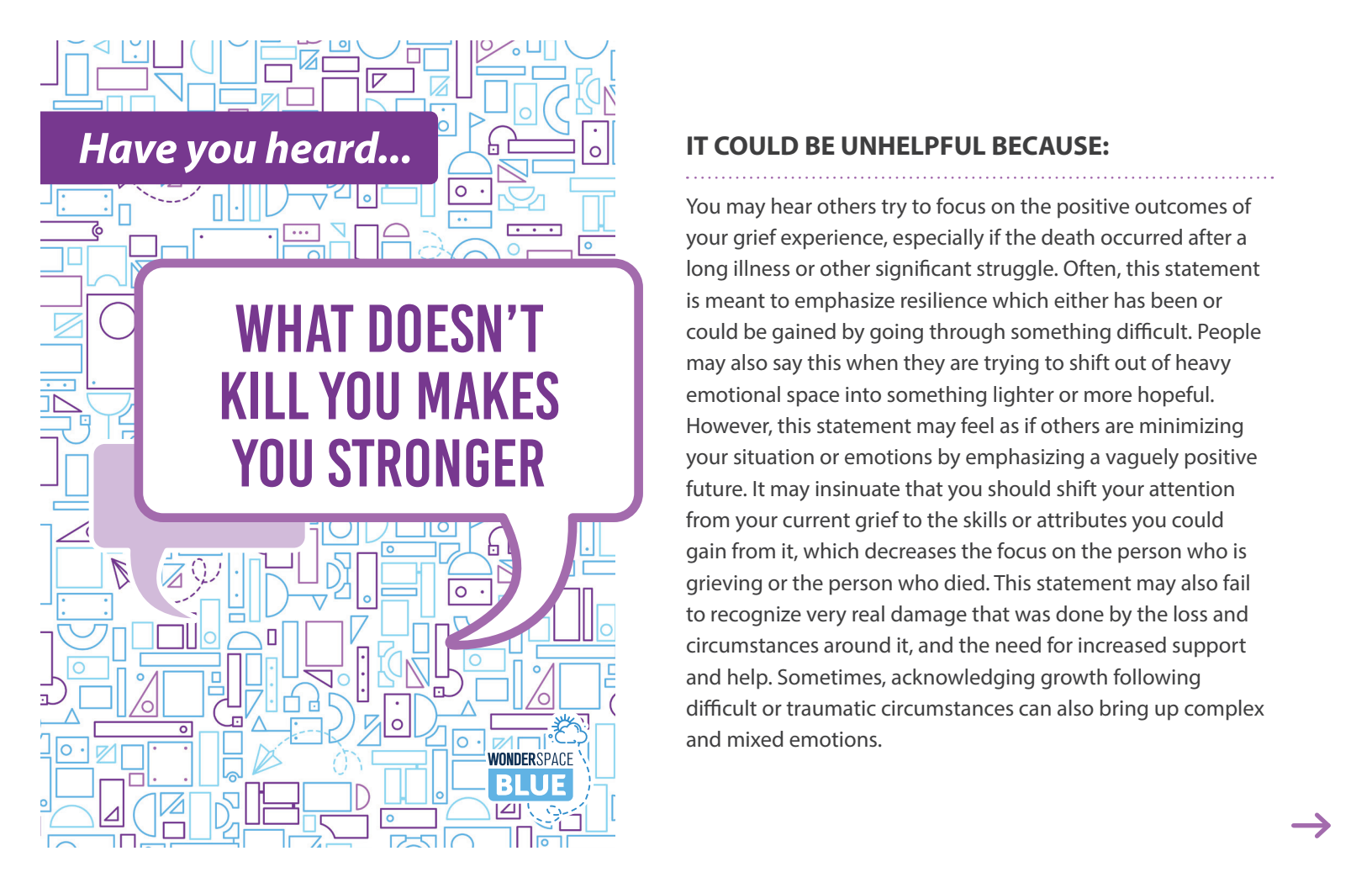




Have you heard...

**WHAT DOESN'T
KILL YOU MAKES
YOU STRONGER**

WONDERSPACE
BLUE

IT COULD BE UNHELPFUL BECAUSE:

You may hear others try to focus on the positive outcomes of your grief experience, especially if the death occurred after a long illness or other significant struggle. Often, this statement is meant to emphasize resilience which either has been or could be gained by going through something difficult. People may also say this when they are trying to shift out of heavy emotional space into something lighter or more hopeful. However, this statement may feel as if others are minimizing your situation or emotions by emphasizing a vaguely positive future. It may insinuate that you should shift your attention from your current grief to the skills or attributes you could gain from it, which decreases the focus on the person who is grieving or the person who died. This statement may also fail to recognize very real damage that was done by the loss and circumstances around it, and the need for increased support and help. Sometimes, acknowledging growth following difficult or traumatic circumstances can also bring up complex and mixed emotions.





HERE'S THE TRUTH:

Just as your relationship with the person you died changed you, your grief process will change you as a person as well. Some of this change may be positive, such as increased compassion for others, a greater understanding of your own capacity, or new depths in relationships. Some of this change may be negative, such as increased fearfulness, difficulty relating to others, long-term exhaustion or other effects of intense emotional and physical stress. Like your emotions, your understanding of how grief has affected you will change and shift over time. It's okay to recognize that some changes that result from stress and trauma are difficult and sometimes destructive, even if everyone did their best to manage the situation.

Even though people who are grieving often feel pressured to see the positive outcomes of the situation, it can also be difficult to recognize and tolerate these changes when they occur. You might wonder if the changes in yourself, your family, or your worldview are "worth" the loss that you went through. The positives and negatives don't have to even out, and it's likely that the negative will outweigh the positive even as important growth occurs. You can simultaneously be glad for your experiences of growth and positive change while still wishing that the loss had never happened.

You could say:

- **"Grief might change how you feel, think and act, for a short time or a long time."** Because our person was important, their death and our feelings around it affect a lot of areas of our lives. You might notice that you react to certain situations differently than you used to, have closer relationships with some people and less close relationships with other people, or want or need different things than before our person died. For example, some people feel more grown up after a person dies, because they understand the world differently, and some people feel more scared, or more aware of bad things that can happen. What has changed for you since our person died? Are these changes you like, don't like, or have mixed feelings about?
- **"You might notice ways you have grown since your person died, and have mixed feelings about that."** Many people see that experiencing grief changes their perspective, or helps them learn things about themselves and others. It can be hard to think about anything good happening as a result of our person dying. It's okay to be glad about good changes that have happened since their death, and sad or angry that they died at the same time.