Not everyone reacts to loss or traumatic loss in the same way. The available research indicates that, much as with extreme life events in general, people vary greatly in the duration and severity of their grief reactions. Most people feel anxious, confused and highly distress within the first few days of a major loss. Some bereaved people, usually 10-20-% suffer chronic symptoms of distress and depression for years after the loss. Others experience acute symptoms for several months or longer and then gradually recover and move towards their baseline level of functioning of the course of one or two years of bereavement. However many and sometimes the majority of bereaved people will tend to experiences only brief, short-lived distress reactions and manage to continue function at much the same level during bereavement as they had prior to the loss.

(Bonanno, 2004; Bonanno & Kaltman, 1999)

***The Goal***

* *To gauge how they are adapting, to do no harm, and to provide information to support them in their ongoing healing from their traumatic loss*

***Key aspects***

* *To look for their vulnerabilities, resilience (as seen in the impact of past and present events), and their current level of social support*

***Questions to Ask***

1. *Can you tell me about what happened from your perspective and what you went through that day?* 
   * Listen for avoidance, rumination, reality of death and impact
2. *Can you tell me about what your relationship was like with your loved one?*
   * Highly ambivalent and highly dependent relationships indicate a risk of chronic or complicated grief
3. *What have you been feeling? What have you been doing?* 
   * This can help identify those who are struggling with survival, where they are with the intensity of their feelings and how much they have been able to return to core functioning
4. *What has been happening in your life since?*

* This will reveal ongoing stressors and their impact, such as, support provided in helpful ways or distressing responses from others
* Identify their practical needs and then ask about their own effective strategies they have used in the past

Rynearson, (2006)