

Don't fear the griever
by Hélène Arja E. Falstad & Andreea Tecusan



This book pertains to a diploma project that forms part of a master's thesis in Design, addressing taboos within Norwegian grief culture.

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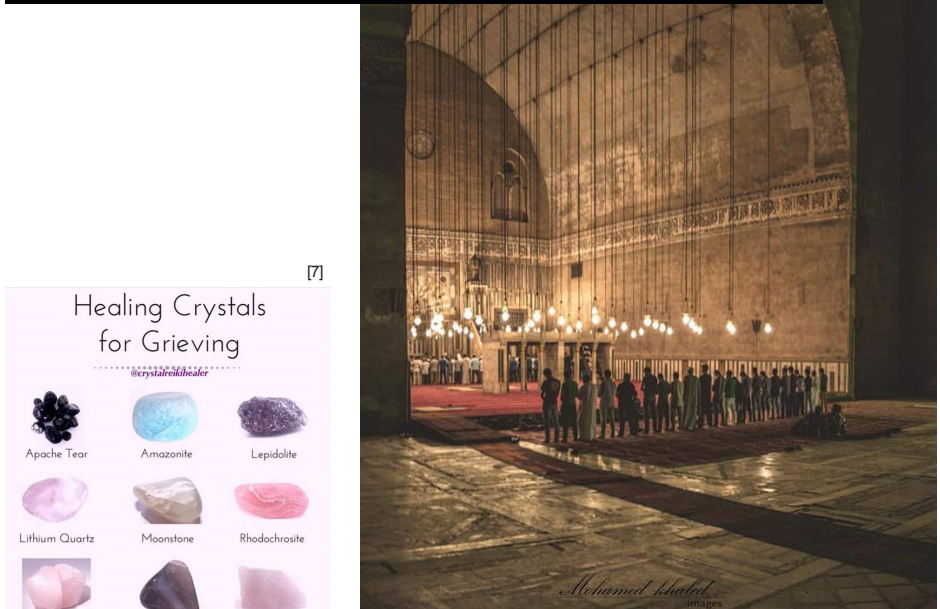
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Scenekunst



TEATER MUSIKK DANS POLITIKK

Nyheter Debatt Kritikk Intervju

[9]

Forståelse og respekt for Liv og død

Aftenpostens dansekritiker mener at Norges første stipendiat i koreografi, Per Roar Thorsnes, fullfører sin trilogi om liv og død med en engasjerende og respektfull iscenesettelse av kollektiv sorg. Les flere anmeldelser her!

ARTIKKEL | 3.10.2006

[Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#)

[Red.](#)

[10]









Søk og kategorier
Direkte
TV-guide
Logg inn

Nyste episoder



*Shinjis oske vil få plass i denne
høgreiste, høgteknologiske gravplassen.*

Utrulege ritual

Frå fødsel til død

Utrulege ritual · Aldersgrense 9 år · 50 min

Ein eldgamal kinesisk kjærleiksfestival, eit tuareg-bryllaup i ørkenen og omfattande gravferder i Indonesia er berre nokre døme på korleis folk markerer store hendingar i livet.



[13]



[14]



Til minne om Six Feet Under

Publisert 05.12.11, kl 10.45. / Oppdatert 05.12.11, kl 14.10.



[15]

Tidenes beste TV-serie er for lengst gravlagt, men minnene lever videre



Nordland

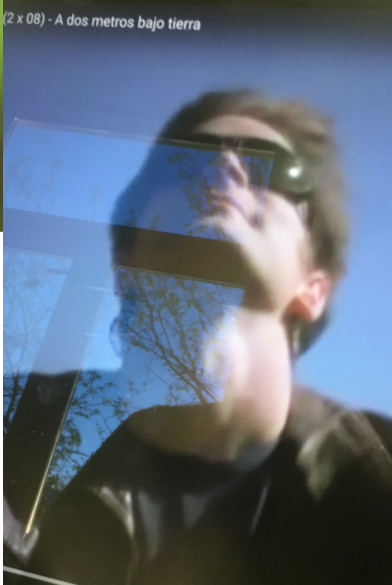
Snakk med oss Fordypning TV Radio

Monterte russeadresser i bussen for å hedre døde kompiser

På Fauske er årets russefeiring spesiell. Den ene russegruppa mistet to kompiser i ei tragisk trafikkulykke i vinter. – Vi har lært at vi må ta godt vare på hverandre, sier russepresidenten.



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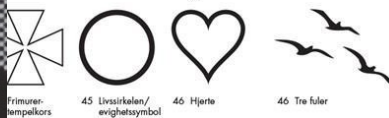
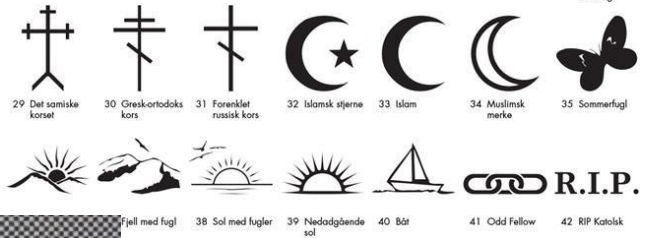
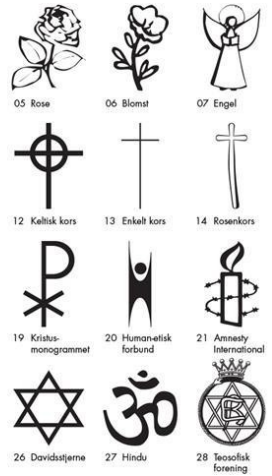
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Illustration by Dheeraj D

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[28]



[29]

Oj! En död
humla!

[30]

#NKVO

naa_koser_vi_oss

...

Kondolerer

4 t Liker Svar

4 t Liker Svar

Kondolerer!

4 t Liker Svar

kondomeriet så mye ❤️

4 t Liker Svar



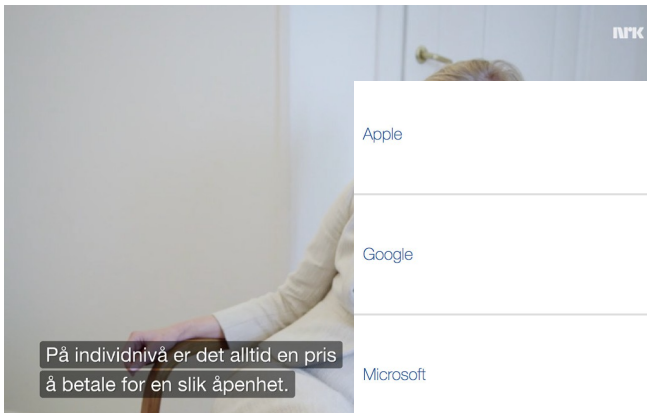
Likt av gardehesten og 16 751 andre



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Apple	
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Facebook	

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Because of a lack of words, action and tools, the people around a griever tend to disappear.

In Norway, grief is often an individual and lonely experience. Approaching grieverers can feel risky and intimidating; the fear of making things worse tends to push people away.

We have created an alternative present that shows new ways of approaching people in mourning. In order to illustrate what this might look like, we have designed a fictitious chain of events, in Norwegian society, that spans from 2011 to today. Through this project, we want to contribute to a broader conversation about how we cope with grief, and explore new ways of using design to discuss what this discipline can offer.

Our main ambition for this project is to visualize and reflect on the implications design has on social and cultural relations.

In your hands, you have the result of our five months of exploration on the topic grief.

We have been interested in the social and cultural implications of designing for such a topic. There are two main things that has been driving us in this diploma project.

Firstly, we want to contribute to a broader conversation about grief and how we handle our own and other people's grief in society. By grief we mean the grief over a loss of someone you knew. We have always been drawn to working with what is taboo and difficult for people to handle. In previous projects, both individually and together, we have worked with themes of loneliness, sharing taboos with others, contact between strangers and inclusiveness in a city - all subjects that bring up interesting social and cultural situations.

Secondly, we want to contribute to the design field by exploring ways of using design to look at what design can be. We are passionate about our field, and aim to continuously push the specter of what design is, what our knowledge is and how it can be used. We see that design is becoming more and more a part of people's everyday lives, especially through interaction and service design.

*As designers, we are subjective.
We have a responsibility to look at the
ethical implications and the power we
have at our disposal.*

Designers have a great ability to empathize with others, and are optimistically predisposed to see opportunities, instead of threats. When we are designing for new ways of behaving, and in a sense creating new social norms, we think it's important to be mindful of the

possible consequences of our designs, as well as the possibilities.

The diploma was an opportunity to talk to many different people with different backgrounds and professions. To get a new perspective of our profession, we talked to a movie director, a psychologist, a fashion historian, and a writer amongst others.

We have talked to many bereaved about their experiences, and many friends of bereaved about theirs. We have systematically, and organically, talked, discussed and reflected our way through the process. And it has been a wonderful journey. It has given us a broad new knowledge about grief, and about our discipline, design.

In order to imagine what could be, we have created a fictitious chain of events in Norwegian society that spans from 2011 to today. We have imagined cultural, commercial and governmental phenomena, happenings and inventions, and what kind of reactions they produced.

You will now enter this alternative present. Everything you will read is fictional.

We don't need your money

As a response to the lasting emotional impact of July 22nd, the government introduces a pilot program to help the griever.

The incentive gets criticized by a hip hop duo in a new song – sparking a cultural debate about the Norwegian social values.

In the aftermath of July 22nd, Norwegians shared a collective grief - everyone knew someone who was affected by the terrorist attacks. The sudden presence of extremism made us kinder and more open towards one another.

Our understanding of grief developed as time went by. Every anniversary the media revisited the griever. One year later, two years later, five years later. How were they doing now? What traumas and challenges were they struggling with?

In 2016 the health minister Bent Høie proposed a new incentive to help grievors; "SVO - Sorgvergeordningen" ('GGS - Grief Guardian System') was launched as a two year pilot project.

People who volunteered to become a "Sorgverge" - a sort of guardian for the bereaved - would get a tax refund. They were obligated to spend 10 hours a week with the bereaved and do certain chores for them. This was helpful for many and an effective way to create awareness for grievors needing help over time. But sadly, the system was also exploited by people claiming to be grievors so that their friends could benefit from the program.

Another unforeseen event was that many people reacted negatively to the name "Sorgverge". The grievors felt that instead of allowing for natural, open

Economical motivation

[37]

RF-1030 Skattemelding for formues- og inntektsskatt – lønntakere og pensjonister mv. 2017

Skattemelding for formues- og inntektsskatt – lønntakere og pensjonister mv. [Vedlegg](#)

3.3/4.8 Renter, gjeld, andre kapitalkostnader og fradrag

Post	Inntekt/Fradrag		Formue/Gjeld		Handlinger
	Opprinnelig verdi	Rettet til	Opprinnelig verdi	Rettet til	
3.3.1/4.8.1 Renter og gjeld, Norges Bank	-45 000		-2 500 000		Endre Slett
3.3.7 Gave til frivillige organisasjoner, Frivillighetssentralen	-6 250				Endre Slett
3.3.5 Individuell pensjonssparing (ny IPS) i Norge	-40 000				Endre Slett

Legg til i listen ovenfor

< Velg post >

< Velg post >

3.3.1/4.8.1 Renter og gjeld

3.3.2/4.8.3 Renter og gjeld i utlandet

3.3.10 Sum tap ved salg av aksjer mv. (RF-1059)

3.3.10 Tap ved salg av obligasjoner

3.3.8 Tap ved salg av aksjer mv. fra Aksjeoppgaven (RF-1088)

3.3.8 Tap salg aksjesparekonto

3.3.13 Tap andre finansprodukter

3.3.7 Årsavgift VPS-konto

3.3.7 Gave til frivillige organisasjoner

3.3.7 Gaver gitt til organisasjoner i utlandet

3.3.7 10% standardfradrag for midlertidig opphold i Norge

3.3.7 Tilskudd til vitenskapelig forskning

3.3.7 **Sorgverge**

3.3.9 Tap salg verdipapirfond aksjedel

3.3.9 Tap salg verdipapirfond rentedel

3.3.9 Tap salg verdipapirfond aksjedel kombifond

3.3.9 Tap salg verdipapirfond rentedel kombifond

3.3.7 Særskilt inntektsfradrag

4.8.1 Skyldig restskatt

3

3.3.7 10% standardfradrag for midlerti

3.3.7 Tilskudd til vitenskapelig forsknir

3.3.7 **Sorgverge**

3.3.9 Tap salg verdipapirfond aksjedel

3.3.9 Tap salg verdipapirfond rentedel

3.3.9 Tap salg verdipapirfond aksjedel

3.3.9 Tap salg verdipapirfond rentedel

3.3.7 Særskilt inntektsfradrag

4.8.1 Skyldig restskatt

interactions with others, the term had a stigmatizing effect. Many friends of the bereaved felt awkward sending in an application where they would be paid for being a good friend.

The discussions peaked when the hip hop group Karpe wrote these lyrics:

Sorgverge
Jeg sverger
trenger ingen verge
Wergeland
Mitt lille land

Hvor er poesien?

Jeg sier
nei takk
Bent Høie
nei takk

Bjørnetjeneste
Gi meg en ekte venn
en æresvenn

Ære være hun
som er der fordi hun vil
Fordi hun er snill
Sorgverge
Jeg sverger
trenger ingen verge

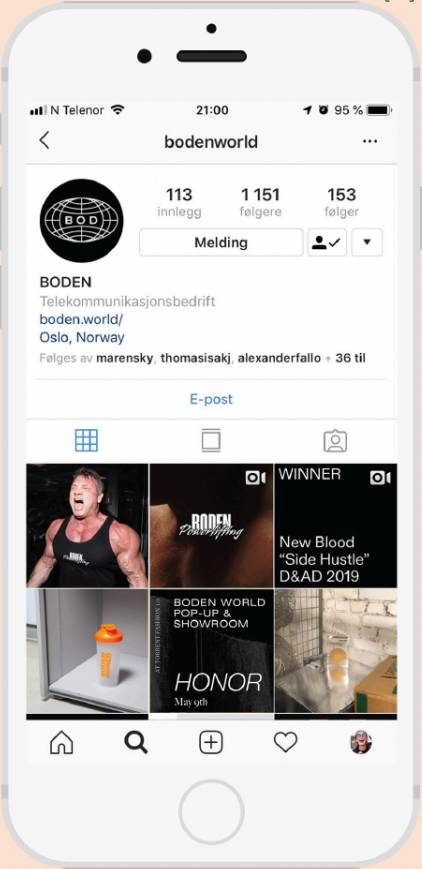


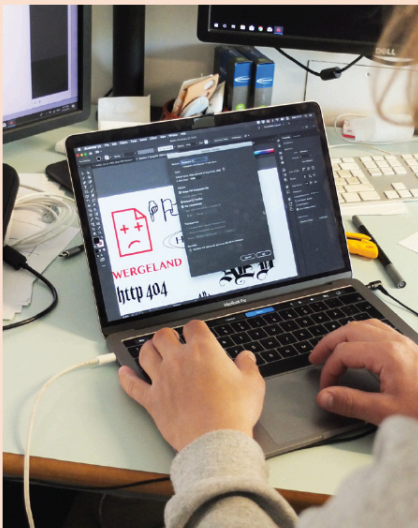
A reaction on Facebook to the critique of Grief guardians; "I would like to stand up for every x-grief guardian that feel they have to defend themselves. In all the critique, the essence is forgotten - the importance of distributing the responsibility and taking care of each other."

The song criticizes the program, asking «Where is the poetry? No thanks, Bent Høie. Give me a real friend, a friend of honor».

“SORG OVER VERGEN / ÆRE VÆRE” became a hit and people started using “æresvenn” (“honorary friend”) to refer to their friends that supported them through grief. Suddenly, grievors and their friends together against what felt like a coldhearted system.

In 2018 the SVO/GGS pilot test ended and the government discontinued the program as a result of the reactions and misuse. Today, we see manifestations of the honorary friend in fashion and in social media. People are hashtagging their honorary friends and wearing clothes and accessories to show their support and honorary status.









[41]

Just give it some time

“When everyone is responsible to protect the other before themselves, everyone is cared for”

The old idea of having each others backs is modernized as the government takes a second attempt at helping grieverers in their everyday lives, one hour at the time.

When the Grief Guardian System was discontinued last year, a new program for grief support was initiated by the government. With pressure from the Christian Democratic Party, they wanted to emphasize the solidarity and humanity that was lacking in the former incentive.

A group of economists, social scientists, philosophers, interaction designers and programmers formed a project group at NAV (the Norwegian Labour

and Welfare Administration) to respond to this brief:

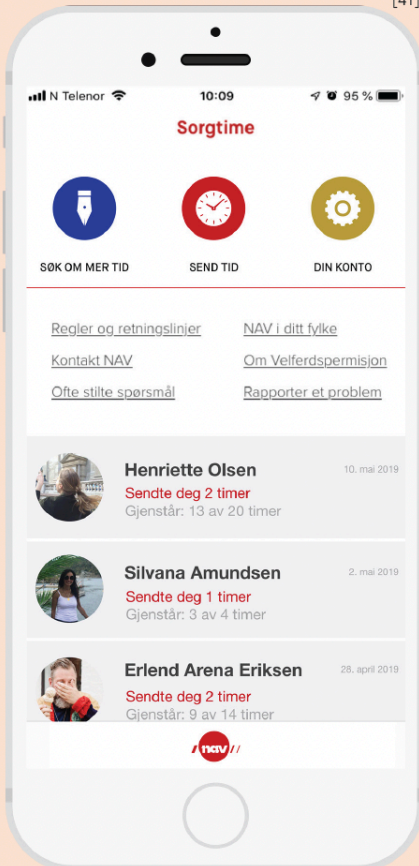
“How can we enable people to take care of their fellow humans in times of grief, on an everyday basis, over a longer period of time?”

With “Prolonged Grief Disorder” becoming an official diagnosis in November 2018, the health minister Bent Høie launched this new program as a part of “Velferdspermisjonen” - The welfare leave.

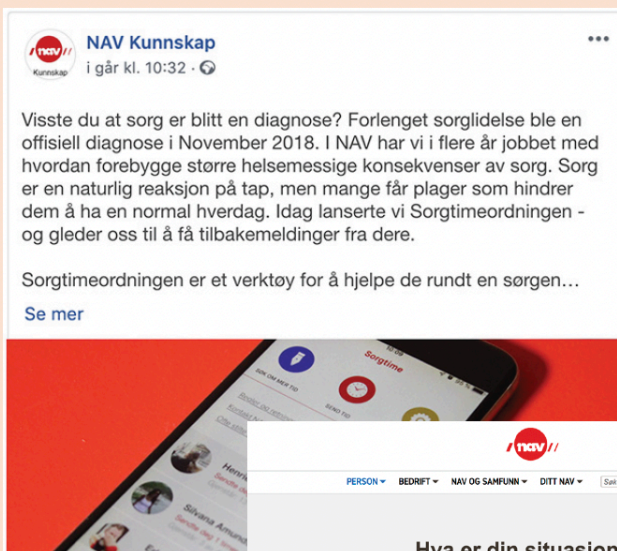
In his speech at Høyres (The Conservative Party) annual meeting (landsmøte) March 15 - 17th. He said:

"We need to work proactively with grief. And one way is to ensure that everyone around a griever can help with something. We need to strengthen the network around grievers, and give people tools to help and support grievers in everyday life. We know that grief takes time, and that it can affect you at any given point, when you least expect it. Maybe you are in a meeting, at a party or giving a speech as I am now. With the Sorgtimeordningen - STO (The Grieftime Program - GTP) you can give out time to grievers without their needing to provide any further explanation or justification. We want to legitimize the need to take a break at the moment you need it the most, so that grievers will not push themselves to fatigue and depression. And sometimes the people around you can better evaluate when you need to take a break."

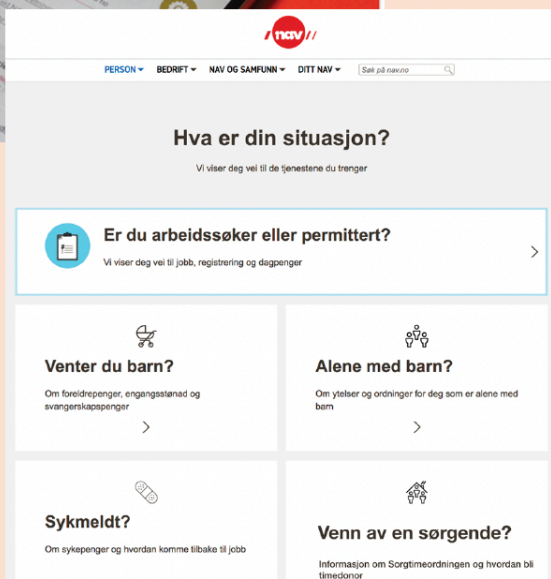
[41]



NAV's app for Grietime. Here you can apply for more time, send time and keep an overview of your hours. The app makes the system secure by using Bank-ID to identify users.



NAV functions as an educator about grief by spreading awareness with their new system.



What is it?

The GriefTime Program is a Norwegian welfare system enabling the network around the bereaved to give free time to the bereaved in order to cope with their grief

How does it work?

When someone registers as bereaved, they are automatically given 100 hours that they can use in the next 2 years. They can re-apply after 2 years.

Is it a vacation?

No, the hours can only be spent for a maximum of 2 hours a day.

Can I ask my best friend to be my time

donor?

Yes and no. You need a minimum of 3 to a maximum of 10 other people to activate the system. If your friend is also registered as bereaved over the same loss, you cannot be each other's time donors. The only exception to this is a married couple.

How do I get time donors?

As a griever you can invite people to become time donors, but people can also apply. For example: you may not think of one of your colleagues as a time donor, but she has always had a good eye for the social culture at work, and sends in an application when she learns that you are a griever. You will be notified of her application and can accept or decline.



Par kritiserer Sorgtimeordningen - å miste et barn er værre enn å miste en bestemor

Trine og Else mistet sønnen sin Balder i fjor. Nå reagerer de på Sorgtimesystemet som gir like mange timer til sorg, uavhengig av dødsårsak eller relasjon.



FOTO: Øyvind Tvetter

«Vi føler oss veldig urettferdig behandlet. At vi skal få like mange sorgtimer som andre med en mindre alvorlig sorg, virker helt absurd. Virker ikke som de har lært noe av Sorgvergeordningen» sier Trine Asbjørnsen (t.v.), med kona Else Shuyers (t.h.)

A-magasinet

16 timer siden ↻ en time siden



A couple critiques the new Grietime Program, saying "losing a child is worse than losing a grandmother". They are dissapointed for not getting more hours than beareved with a less serious grief.

The Norwegian Instagram account @naa_koser_vi_oss" (NKVO*) shares a screenshot from a conversation between two friends. One asks the other for a grief hour because she is hungover.

**NKVO is a typical norwegian thing to say when you are having a good time - or ironically about a questionable situation.*



Shit shit shit, what do I write?

A design studio hits a nerve in the debate about grief when they design a messaging plugin to help friends communicate with the griever.

By reinterpreting the old voicemail, they loosen the responsibility of the writer and remove the possibility of self-censorship.

With the GSS and honorary friend, grief has become political, and something people openly discuss. But it hasn't changed the fact that we are at a loss for words when people tell us about someone passing.

Oslo based design studio KOBE/ KJELSÅS wanted to do something about this, and explored how we could express an honest and heartfelt message to someone mourning a loss.

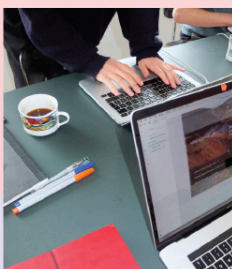


right: KOBE/KJELSÅS' website
left: logo of honest.txt

We started as a collective living together at Kjelsås.



Eirin, Matea and Bettan



With a passion for everything
digital and beautiful



Today we are an office of six, in the center of Oslo

Send us an email



sås, Oslo 59° 57' 46.9368" N 10° 47' 12.3864" E Kjelsås, Oslo 59° 57' 46.9368" N 10°

KOBE/KJELSÅS



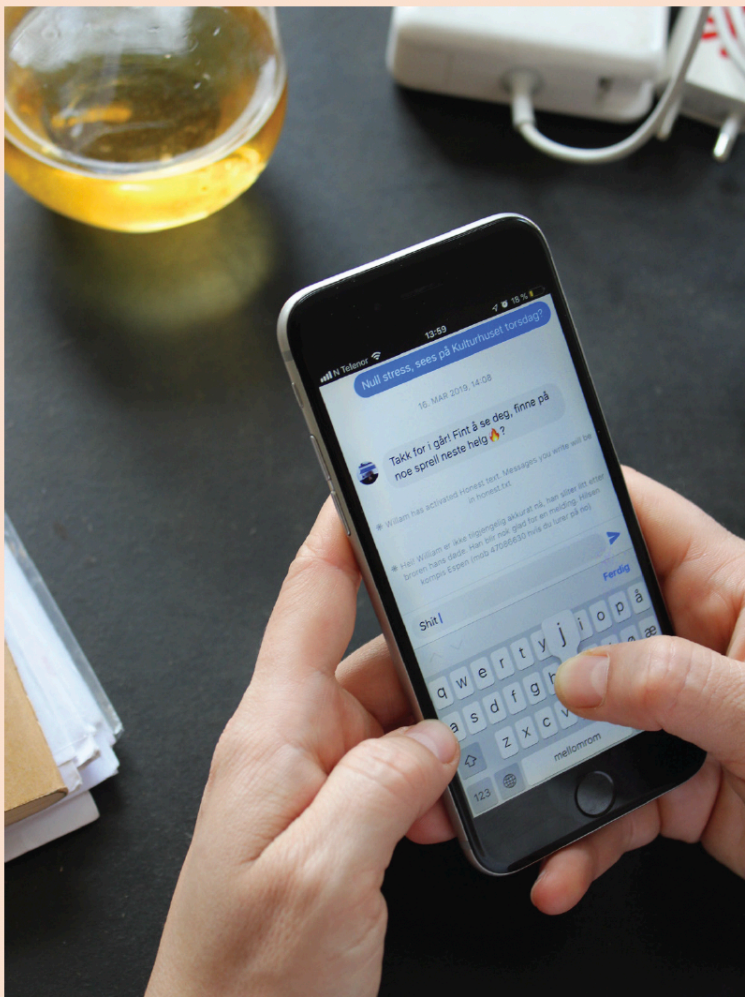
[Latest project honest.txt](#) —>

NEWS! Facebook buys Honest text© —>

59° 47' 12.3864" E Kjelsås, Oslo 59° 57' 46.9368" N 10° 47' 12.3864" E Kjelsås, Oslo 5

Design office in Oslo challenging the status quo, one day at the time

Contact



sås, Oslo 59° 57' 46.9368" N 10° 47' 12.3864" E Kjelsås, Oslo 59° 57' 46.9368" N 10° 47' 12.3864" E Kjelsås, Oslo 59° 57' 46.9368" N 10° 47' 12.3864" E Kjelsås, Oslo 5



We started as a
collective living
together at Kjelsås.



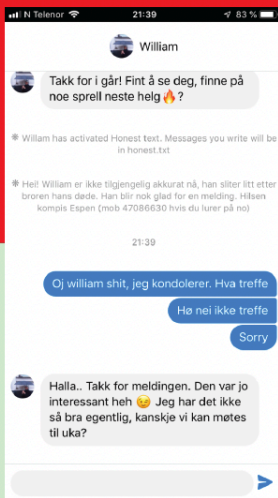
Eirin, Matea and Bettan

In 2015 they made “Honest text” - a concept based on the old voicemail. They saw potential in the awkward voicemails they used to send back in the early 2000s. On their website they explain:



honest.txt©

Changing the way we text
to a more honest,
uncensored experience



Everyone over the age of 30 remembers how it was to call someone, suddenly get the machine, start talking and wishing you hadn't. You start to explain and try to fix your awkward formulations, and suddenly "BEEEP" – the message is automatically sent.

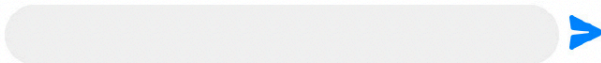
We see that many grievors feel lonely because people censor themselves when trying to make contact. We wanted to do something about this, and drew inspiration from the voicemail.

The automated message from Messenger when a person has activated honest.txt. The second paragraph is from a friend that writes a message on the bereaved's behalf. Here it says:

"Hi! William is not available atm, he is struggling a bit since his brother died. He will be happy to get a message. Best, his buddy Espen (mobile 47086630 if you have any questions)"

* Willam has activated Honest text. Messages you write will be in honest.txt

* Hei! William er ikke tilgjengelig akkurat nå, han sliter litt etter broren hans døde. Han blir nok glad for en melding. Hilsen kompis Espen (mob 47086630 hvis du lurer på no)



Examples of honest text's

 William

Null stress, sees på Kulturhuset torsdag?

16. MAR 2019, 14:08

 Takk for i går! Fint å se deg, finne på noe sprell neste helg 🔥?

* William has activated Honest text. Messages you write will be in honest.txt

* Hei! William er ikke tilgjengelig akkurat nå, han sliter litt etter broren hans døde. Han blir nok glad for en melding. Hilsen kompis Espen (mob 47086630 hvis du lurar på no)

13:54

rot hei ark treg hvordan går det??,

 William

in honest.txt

* Hei! William er ikke tilgjengelig akkurat nå, han sliter litt etter broren hans døde. Han blir nok glad for en melding. Hilsen kompis Espen (mob 47086630 hvis du lurar på no)

13:54

bjørnetjeneste ææ shit hvordan har du det, ring meg

Halo

haste scene ups

 Halla.. Takk for meldingen. Den var jo interessant heh 😊 Jeg har det ikke så bra egentlig, kanskje vi kan møtes til uka?



Test it yourself at

>>> ***honest-text.iff.ninja***

Instagram account
@omgjustdont sharing an
unfortunate outcome of honest.
txt. The words 'train' and 'angel'
are randomly chosen - whereas
the writer gets stressed
because the bereaved lost
someone in a train accident.



KOBE/KJELSÅS won the prestigious price Best Digital Design 2016, at the Grafill Visuelt contest. Their design, "Honest text" got international recognition, when they also won GOLD at the European Design Awards later that same year.

In 2018, Facebook bought the concept. When Facebook announced the redesign of Facebook on April 23rd 2019, Mark Zuckerberg said:

"By far, the three fastest-growing areas of online communication are private messaging, groups and Stories"

Honest text is one of these updates.



(THIS PHOTO & EVENT IS REAL)
Mark Zuckerberg interview in the
New York Times ¹

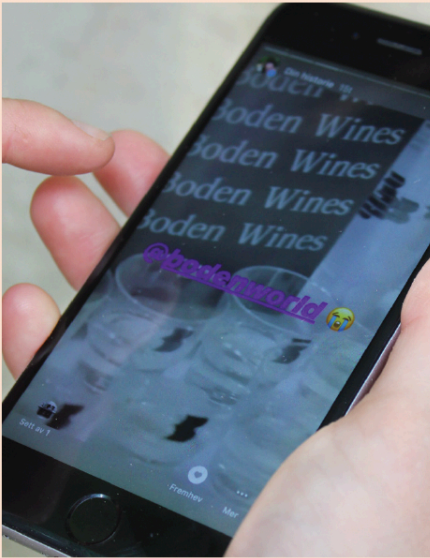


In an interview with Business newspaper DN on April 24th, creative lead in KOBE/KJELSÅS Eirin O. Barre says:

“We are beyond happy with this. We aimed for social innovation with this design, and with the biggest social platform making it a part of their functionality, we feel we have made a difference.”

Experience an alternative present

How do all this play out in real life?

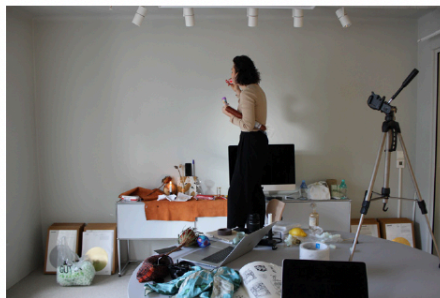


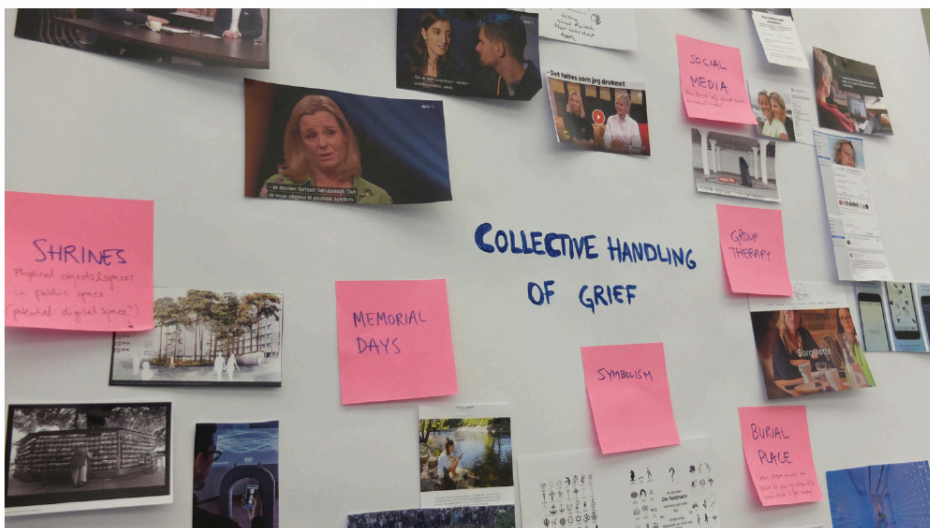
>>>

log on to Instagram
User: dontfearthegriever
Password: sorg201913

We will now show you where these scenarios and designs came from.

In order to make these new concepts possible, plausible and desireable, we needed a deep understanding of grief, how it is handled in Norway, and how social and cultural norms are affecting this.





In this chapter we share our research,
what we found out and what
we took away from our insights.

When we started this project, we looked at grief over death, but also grief over war, lost identity and love. We narrowed it down to grief over the loss of someone you know because we realized that there is a wide spectrum of needs and interesting phenomena within that area alone.

First, we will give an overview of the research we did about grief in Norway, then we will describe our approach - discursive design, and lastly – our reflection about what we have done and learned.



*How do we deal with grief collectively, in
Norway?*

To create an alternative and plausible grief culture, we needed to understand the social structure of grieverers in Norway.

We researched what is offered by the healthcare system, the commercial market and religious arrangements. To better understand ourselves, we also used the opportunity of two pre-planned trips to Thailand in November 2018 (part of a different master course at AHO) and Sri Lanka in January 2019 (vacation) to get a new perspective.



We were lucky to be shown around by two friends, Pear and Nasha, that we got to know during a design workshop week in Bangkok, at Chulalongkorn University.

Everyday rituals brings good karma to those who grieve.

In Thailand we found out that there is a wide range of Buddhist rituals that help people grieve and show respect to the dead. Thai Buddhists often visit temples, where there is a wide range of things for them to do.



What we found the most interesting when talking to people, was that they go to temple not only to pay their respects, but also to have good karma. We were surprised by how natural this thinking was for them, because we felt this is taboo in Norway – to do an act of good to help yourself. People might do it, and brag about helping others, but they will rarely admit that they do it for their own gain.



Seeing ourselves from the outside



In Sri Lanka we found out that, again, the Buddhist funeral rituals were rich and much more grand than Norwegian rituals. What surprised us the most was that the deceased stayed in the family's home for a week. During that time, the family members take turns watching over the body. Friends and neighbors would visit during this week, and every time they had to stay and have a meal with the bereaved.

Through our observations of grief culture in Sri Lanka, Thailand and places, we found out that in general, Norway lacks grief rituals. Many things that are considered the norm elsewhere are considered weird, strange, offensive or taboo here. We determined that in order to introduce new behavior, we need to relate our concepts to norms we already have, and balance on the edge of "das unheimliche" - the uncanny. You can read more about this in the chapter about discursive design on page 143.

Seeing ourselves from the outside



Religion is no longer the dominant social structure in Norway.

In comparison to other nations, religion plays a significantly smaller social and cultural role. Numbers from Norsk monitor shows that 53% of Norwegians were religious in 1985. This number sunk to 35% in 2017. ² And, many members of the Norwegian church proved to be atheists. ³

We have tried to find what kind of other actors take the role of educating and creating space for grief.

Commercial actors like private funeral agency Jølstad, are arranging conferences and designing products to handle grief, like 'talking cards' that help you talk about death. We don't see so many other actors doing this other than professional, non commercial, grief support organizations.

But, a relevant actor in shaping our culture is NRK – the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation. Since it's government owned, and funded by an annual mandatory license fee, they have a big public responsibility to educate and create awareness about difficult and taboo subjects. The recent years, many reality shows have been made by NRK that are about anxiety, depression, loneliness and other mental health issues.

The introduction to dialogue, information and tools to handle grief in particular is today normally provided when you enter the health system. This might be the first time you hear someone talk about death and grief. The most important part of what is provided, is facilitated conversations with a hospital priest or group therapy.

The post-religious society

[43]





The next example is more atypical, but quite important in our culture. The way Norwegians handled the terrorist attacks in July 22nd 2011 had a positive collective effect in the sense that people chose to express love and inclusivity, and not hate. We remember that in the weeks that followed, people were kinder, more generous and understanding with one another; everyone had been affected in one way or another.

[45]



snakker ut om angsten



Alle

Bilder

Google Maps

Videoer

Verktøy

Omtrent 1 420 000 resultater (0,36 sekunder)

Omtrent 1 420 000 resultater (0,36 sekunder)

Omtrent 1 420 000 resultater (0,36 sekunder)

Omtrent 1 420 000 resultater (0,36 sekunder)

[46]

Christine Dancke (33) om angsten: – Det føltes som jeg druknet



☆ FØLG

[47]

NRK RADIO

Kategorier



Abonner på RSS

Del på Facebook

Del på Twitter



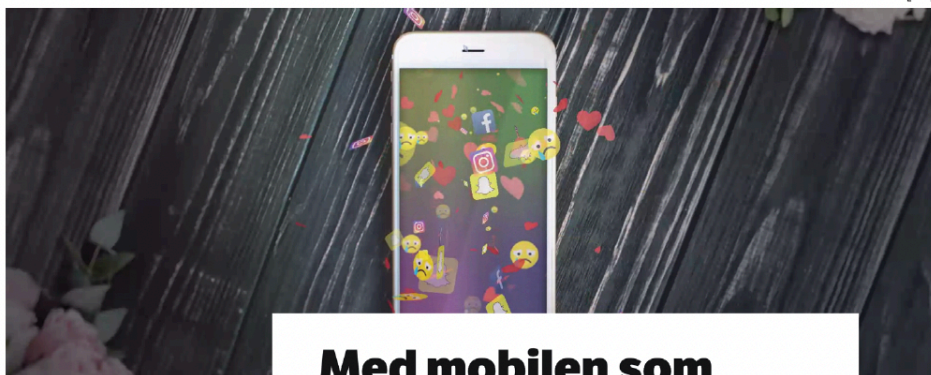
PROGRAMINFORMASJON

Seriebeskrivelse

I podkasten «Hos Peder» møter psykolog utfordringene livet byr på.

Many celebrities are opening up about their mental health issues.

We observed that in the past few years, anxiety and loneliness have gone from being taboo to becoming a very popular subject in media. “Everyone has anxiety” now, and people are discussing if we’re talking too much about anxiety. We drew a parallel to our topic, grief, and have used it to inspire our ideas.



Med mobilen som sørgeplass

I en digital verden kan de døde holdes levende for alltid. Men hva skjer når stadig flere av oss velger å sørge gjennom innlegg, likes og emojis?

The lack of places to express grief is manifesting in the way people embrace digital platforms.

People form digital groups, events and memorial pages, some even continue talking to the deceased on Messenger.

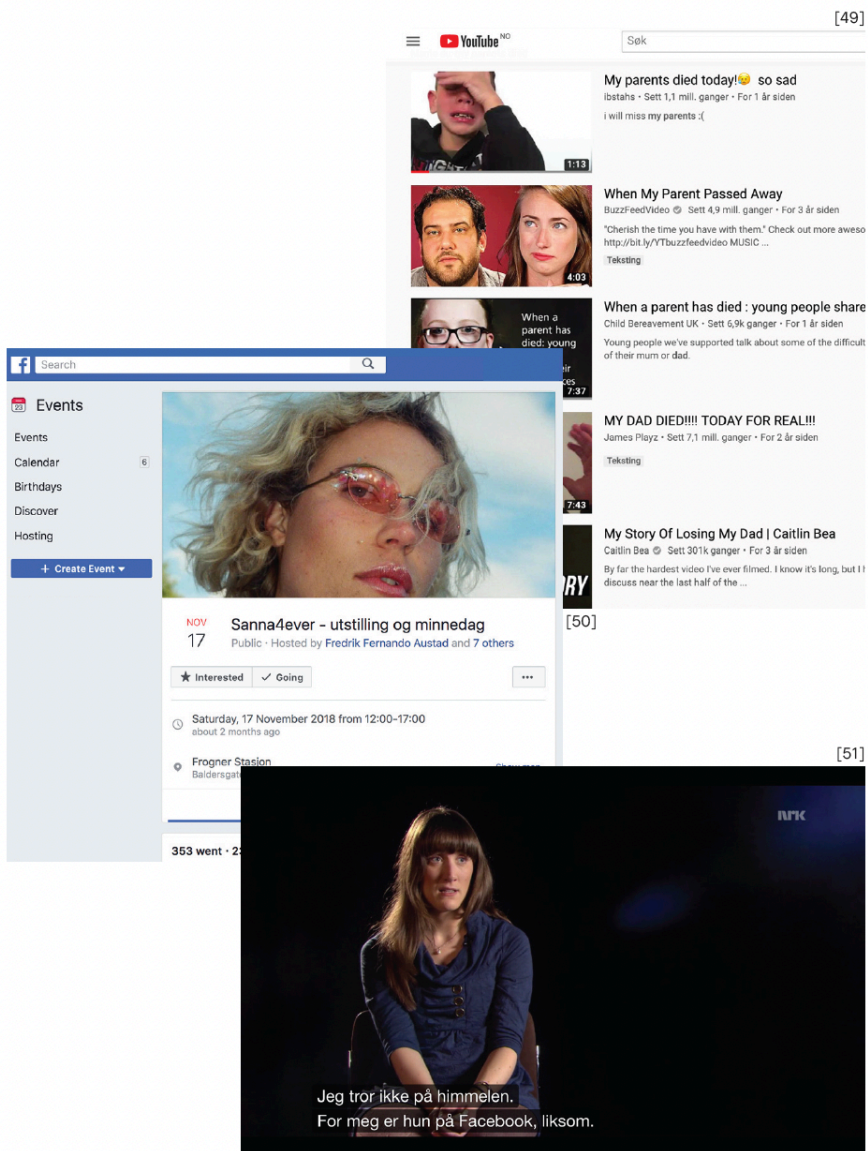
A master's thesis from 2018 ⁴ investigates the ethical discussion of digital grief on Facebook, and points to three main challenges for a griever on social media.

One is that they usually share in a state of shock, right after a loss. The second is that the only likes that really matter are from the closest friends, and not everyone else. The average number of friends on Facebook is 500-1000 friends, you can only nurture a relation to about 150 of them, and 50 you consider as close friends. When all of these different people are in the same (digital)

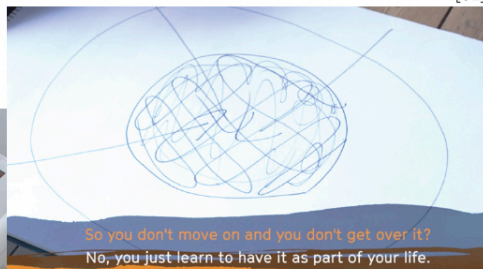
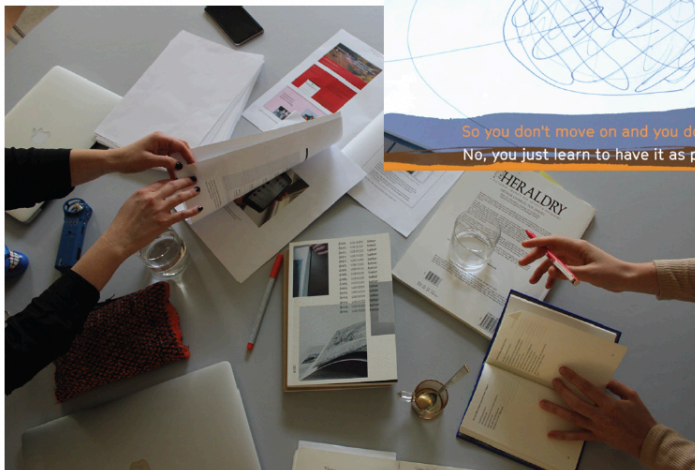
room, the context collapses.

It will be interesting to see how kids today will use social media when in grief. We saw heartbreaking examples of kids posting videos of themselves on Youtube, crying and telling the world that their parents died. This act creates a collective reaction from thousands of strangers.

Digital grief



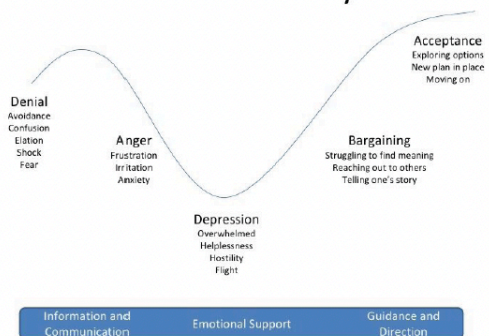
[51]



[54]

[53]

Kübler-Ross Grief Cycle



What is grief?

Is it a feeling? Is it physical? Is it dangerous, or is it healthy?

When we started this project, we didn't know very much about grief other than personal experiences. We had heard of the 5 step model, and we had heard that grief happens in stages until you've "moved on". The model in reference is the Kübler-Ross theory ⁵. It explains the emotional steps the bereaved goes through.

It is widely used because it is a useful tool to understand that experience of grief encompasses many feelings, but it has also been criticized for it's simpleness and linearity. Other concepts of grief present the feeling as a core that will stay with people throughout their lives, instead of a feeling that unfolds in steps ⁶. In these models, grief comes and goes in waves, and changes with you throughout your life.

When grief remains as strong as it is in the beginning, for a longer time than six months, and if you are unable to function in your daily life as a result, you can now be diagnosed with Prolonged Grief Disorder. This became a recognized diagnosis in November 2018, and makes it a societal right to be treated.⁷

What is grief?

[55]

ICD-11 for Mortality and Morbidity Statistics (Version : 04 / 2019)

Search [Advanced Search]

Browse Coding Tool Special Views Info

- ICD-11 - Mortality and Morbidity Statistics
 - 01 Certain infectious or parasitic diseases
 - 02 Neoplasms
 - 03 Diseases of the blood or blood-forming organs
 - 04 Diseases of the immune system
 - 05 Endocrine, nutritional or metabolic diseases
 - 06 Mental, behavioural or neurodevelopmental disorders
 - Neurodevelopmental disorders
 - Schizophrenia or other primary psychotic disorders
 - Catatonia
 - Mood disorders
 - Anxiety or fear-related disorders
 - Obsessive-compulsive or related disorders
 - Disorders specifically associated with stress
 - 6B40 Post traumatic stress disorder
 - 6B41 Complex post traumatic stress disorder
 - 6B42 Prolonged grief disorder
 - 6B43 Adjustment disorder

Foundation id : <http://icd.who.int/icd/entity/1183832314>

6B42 Prolonged grief disorder

Parent

Disorders specifically associated with stress

Show all ancestors

Description

Prolonged grief disorder is a disturbance in which, following the death of a partner, parent, child, or other person close to the bereaved, there is persistent and pervasive grief response characterized by longing for the deceased or persistent preoccupation with the deceased accompanied by intense emotional pain (e.g. sadness, guilt, anger, denial, blame, difficulty accepting the death, feeling one has lost a part of one's self, an inability to experience positive mood, emotional numbness, difficulty in engaging with social or other activities). The grief response has persisted for an atypically long period of time following the loss (more than 6 months at a minimum) and clearly exceeds expected social, cultural or religious norms for the individual's culture and context. Grief reactions that have persisted for longer periods that are within a normative period of grieving given the person's cultural and religious context are viewed as normal bereavement responses and are not assigned a diagnosis. The disturbance causes significant impairment in personal, family, social, educational, occupational or other important areas of functioning.

[56]

NRK

Nyheter Sport Kultur TV Radio Distrikt

Nordland Snakk med oss Fordypning TV Radio

Advarer mot effekten ved å gjøre sorg til en egen diagnose

Innen få år kan sorg bli en egen diagnose. – Svært problematisk å sykeleggjøre en naturlig følelse, sier Anders Skuterud i Norsk Psykologforening, som frykter un

[57]



NRK

Nyheter Sport Kultur TV Radio Distrikt

Norge Siste nytt Dokumentar Klima NRK Ytring

Nå blir sorg en offisiell diagnose

Opp mot ti prosent av dem som mister noen nære, kan utvikle forlenget sorglidelse. Nå blir lidelsen en diagnose.



DFTG

We wanted to talk to you as a psychologist about what happens when people are grieving — what happens with the people around them?

CC

Grief is extremely individual and often comes in waves. There is no recipe, nothing is right or wrong - but what most people share is that the experience comes and goes in waves, over time. Grief should be more normalized and accepted, both by the griever and the people around them. Also, it is important to add and remember that you can have a good life while grieving. Grieving can represent an opportunity to reconnect with our values and live more fully. Anyway, most important is that you understand and are accepting and compassionate towards your feelings and needs.



DFTG

*But when everything feels meaningless,
how can you do that?*

CC

Grief has a function – it gives us an opportunity to retreat and reflect around what's really important for us. Many people feel like things get clearer with tragedy - who they want around them, how they want to spend their time and energy. Many can feel a sense of life joy – that they suddenly want to live more. And this is taboo.

DFTG

Why do you think so?

CC

People tend to want to separate the emotional and the rational, as if body and mind are two separate units. And in our western world, it seems like the rational

thinking is still considered superior to the emotional feeling. We need to learn how to acknowledge the functionality of feelings; they are there for a reason. So, if you feel joyful, even in grief, the shame you might feel comes from the rational and from the social norms around us.

DFTG

What about the feelings of the people around grievers?

CC

Sadly, people tend to not know how to react or behave around grief. There is a difference between showing empathy and sympathy. Empathy is showing the bereaved that "I am here". Sympathy is showing them "Poor you" and thus creating a distance to the other, treating them like a victim. This makes the griever feel alienated, like there is something wrong with them.

DFTG

Why is it so hard to be a friend of a griever?

CC

People often find it hard to know what to say and do, and therefore either become silent or become too action-oriented. We have a tendency to forget that just being present often is the best, and more than enough.

DFTG

Because there is nothing wrong with the griever, they lost someone they loved – that is not strange..

CC

Grief is the price of love. Therefore, grief is a natural and honoring response. It's an invitation to being thankful of what still is, and absorb the most valuable things in life, more fully.

DFTG

What would you say is the most important factor when someone is in need of grief support?

AØ

People need to meet others with the same experience. Then you feel more understood, and you can also give back to others. Type of loss is more important to have in common, than for example culture or religion. At Fransiskushjelpen, we are open for everyone. Today, we have 22 grief support groups, divided by type of loss — who they lost and age of the griever. We are also clear about not being doctors or psychologists - we are just here to facilitate group conversations, and talk to the bereaved in an everyday language.

DFTG

Why is that important?

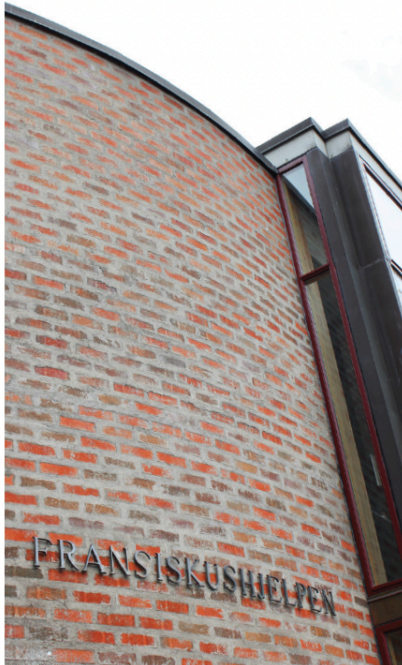
AØ

Many people are afraid to be stigmatized as a sick person, because you have reactions that are outside the 'normal'. So you isolate yourself because you are afraid that people might judge you. You can feel like an alien. When you come here, you can relax. I like to look at us as a landing field – somewhere safe to land with all your baggage.

DFTG

We see a tendency of people opening up more about mental health issues, like anxiety. In a way they have found landing fields in social media, blogs and on reality TV. Have you noticed a difference?





AØ

Yes, many people who come to us now are between 20-30 years old, and they have a culture for sharing on social media. We see that they also need to meet someone face-to-face.

DFTG

What do you think would be the consequences of not meeting face-to-face in a grief process?

AØ

I can't say for sure - I'm not an expert on the positive/negative effects of social media. But we do know a lot about the chemical processes that happens when you meet a person physically. This conversation we are having right now for example would be different in writing. We mirror each other, we get triggered by the other's words and body language.

DFTG

Our ambition is to create a conversation about grief, and find ways of making it easier for everyone. What are people doing now to help themselves?

AØ

There are many things that can help. Go for a walk, do yoga, share on social media, play games, do drugs. They are all different activities that serve different needs - a way of coping. There is no recipe for grief. Everyone is different, and people try many things to get better. Everyone just wants to feel better.

DFTG

Many we have talked to have admitted to feeling shame about trying to feel better, like if they go to a party or laugh out loud. They feel that it's taboo - "I should be sad".

AØ

Some things are more socially and culturally accepted. Meditation is more accepted than partying. Social norms affect our brain to see, feel and think things. And if the norms change, our behavior changes.

DFTG

We feel that we have a responsibility here because as designers we introduce new ways of doing, new social norms. We feel this will be the essence of our diploma – to also discuss the designer's role and responsibility in designing new social norms. We don't want to create a solution to grief, but show a spectrum of new ways of handling grief - and make people talk about it.



AØ

That's very interesting, I'm glad to hear designers work this way. I think we also need to talk about the physical aspects of grief; there are some reactions that are just there, we can't control it. It's a part of us.

DFTG

What's your motivation with working with grief?

AØ

Many people experience growth during grief; they become more aware of the beauty, vanity, and ephemerality of life. When you are in a crisis you are also very open, so if you meet someone that relates to you, it can have a big effect. But I can't talk too much about the positive effects of grief in the beginning, grieverers are too down to start thinking about themselves in the future.

DFTG

We hope to create some of these openings or landing fields with our designs. Not everyone comes here to you, so what if there were more available landing fields in everyday life – ways to connect with others in a safe way.

AØ

People are afraid of death - they are afraid of dying. That's why it's hard to talk about, and why many don't know how to approach people with grief. But if you do, you become a mark. A person that has shown that 'it's ok to talk with me'. For many people it's enough to see and understand that 'I'm not alone'. They may not need to talk about themselves.

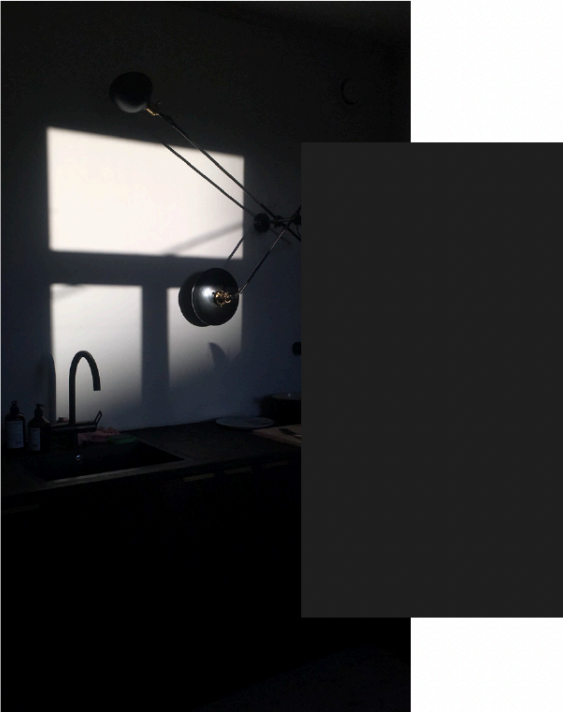
DFTG

We have sort of become marks ourselves actually. We see it all the time - in the classroom, with friends

and family. Since they know that we are working with grief, they open up about their experiences with grief, without us even asking. It's like we are a half open door, you can enter if you like.

Through our research, interviews, observations and discussions we categorized our information into six findings.

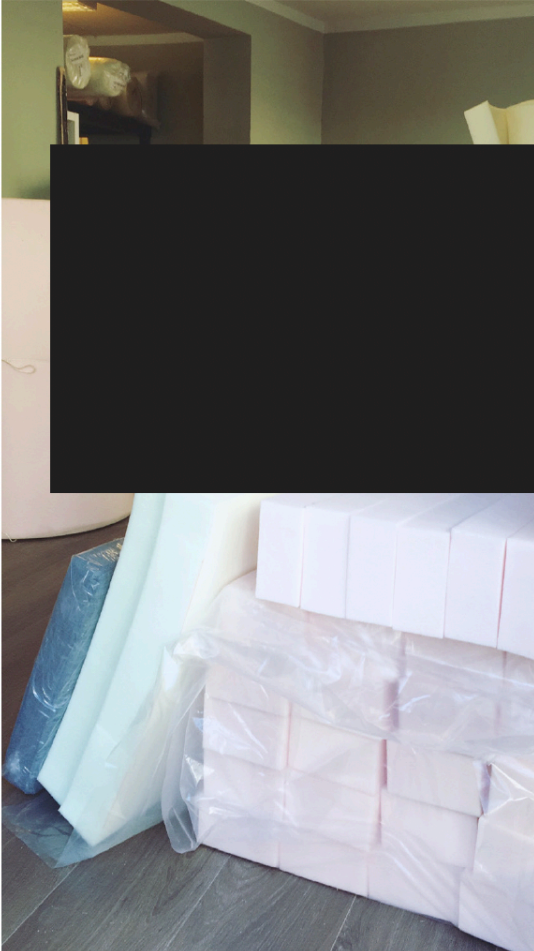
We did this to make sense of the information, and use the findings as possibility areas for ideation. Instead of then trying to solve all of them, we made around 40 concepts, using quick prototyping, to better understand the findings. We designed to get closer to what could be the final problem statement.



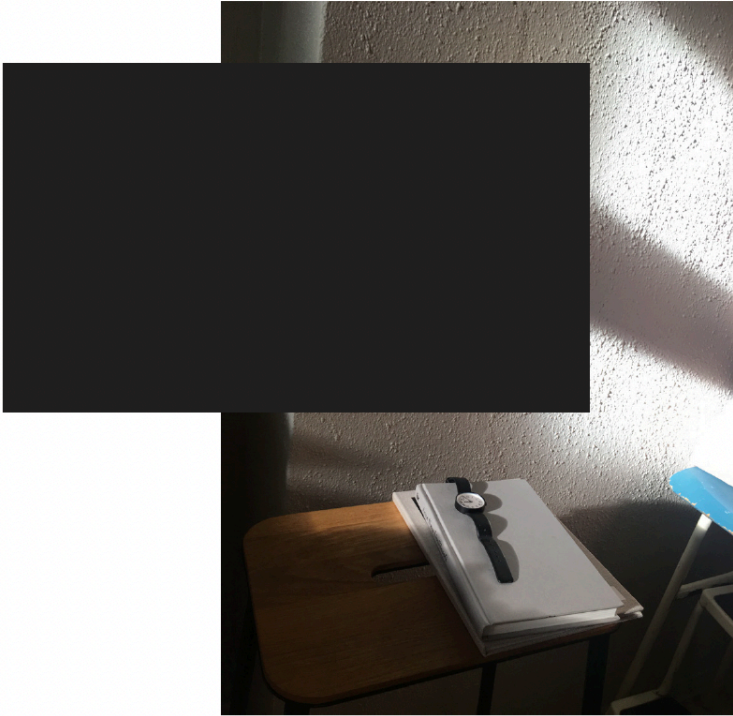
*Sometimes grief
is secret. Many
feel they can't
commemorate and
share the memories
of someone on the
same level as the
departed's closest
relatives.*



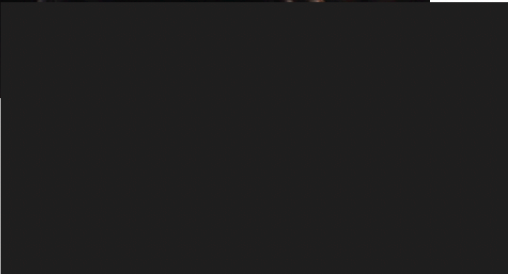
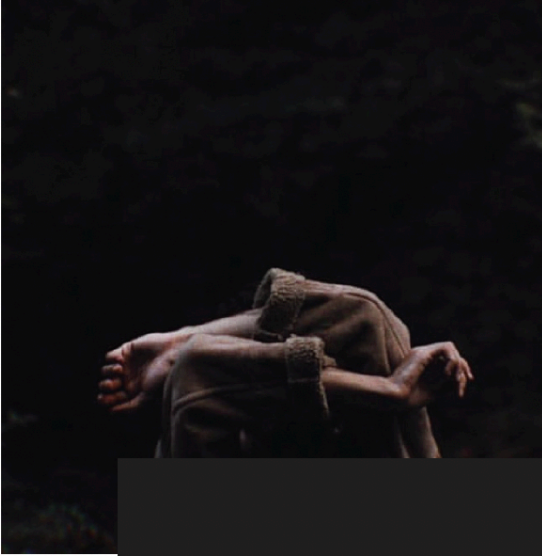
Grief happens over time. The bereaved often feel there is a time limit to how long it's acceptable to grieve. They explain that people tend to forget to ask, after a period of time.



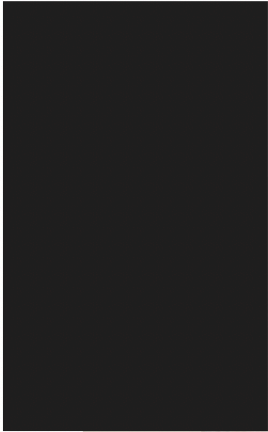
*Yolo! We say it, but
we don't mean it.
We act like death
doesn't concern
us. We believe
we are immortal
and strive to stay
young. Death and
grief is not a part of
everyday life when
it doesn't concern
us directly.*



*«My condolences»
After saying
this, we are out
of words. Most
people fear saying
something wrong,
so they end up not
saying anything at
all.*

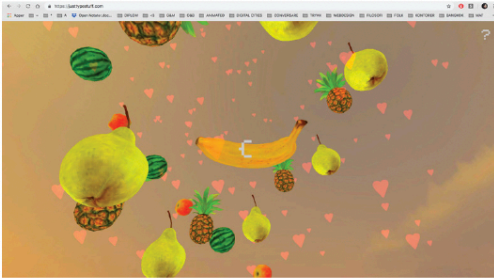


*Grief is physical.
Losing someone
you love makes
your body feel
terrible. Many
people experience
severe health
issues due to
grieving.*

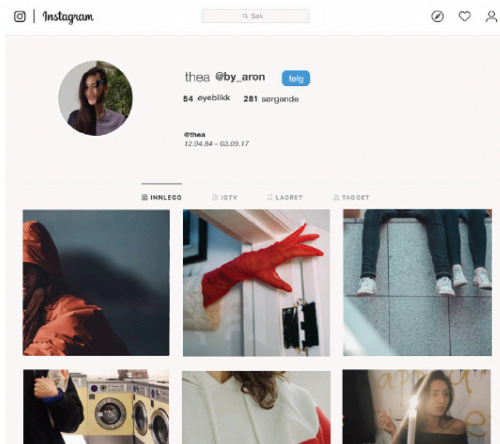


*What do we do?
In a post-religious
time, Norwegians
lack rituals to help
them grieve and/
or support the
bereaved.*

[59]



A commemorating website, using objects instead of words, allowing for anonymous grief.



Instagram accounts for the deceased, run by friends on their behalf.

Köndolérer

Emotional phonetics
that creates a new
layer on written words.

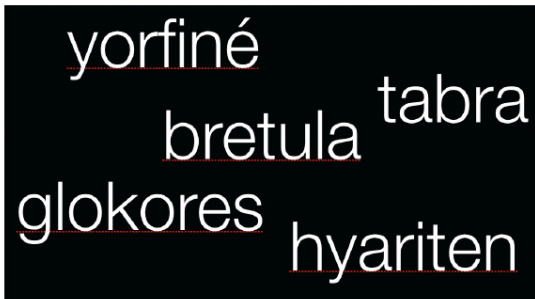
At this point, our challenge was:

«How might we imagine an alternative present, where grief is handled in a more collective way»?

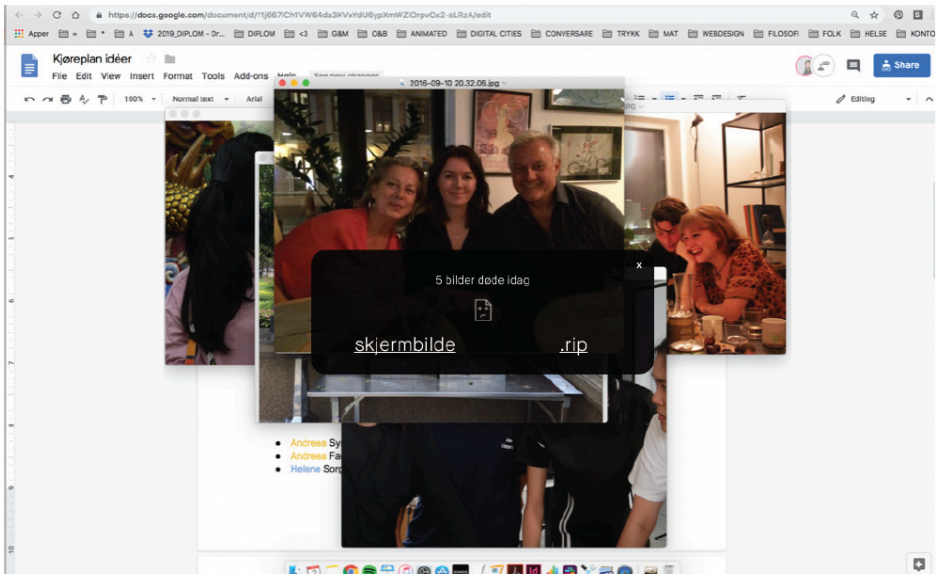
Using the six finding as a framework, we made concepts like these:

<<<

New special words to express condolences.



A program that deletes files without notice, converting them to .rip files. A modern memento mori.



In Norway, mourning is considered an individual responsibility.

Many bereaved feel lonely in their grief, and little in their surroundings helps them understand that they will be living with grief over time. At the same time, people around the bereaved are scared to behave the wrong way. They lack words and rituals to face the other's grief, and are afraid to make things worse. They become scared of the bereaved.

This chicken/egg situation creates a void between the bereaved and their surroundings. This can lead to isolation and depression, and damage relations.

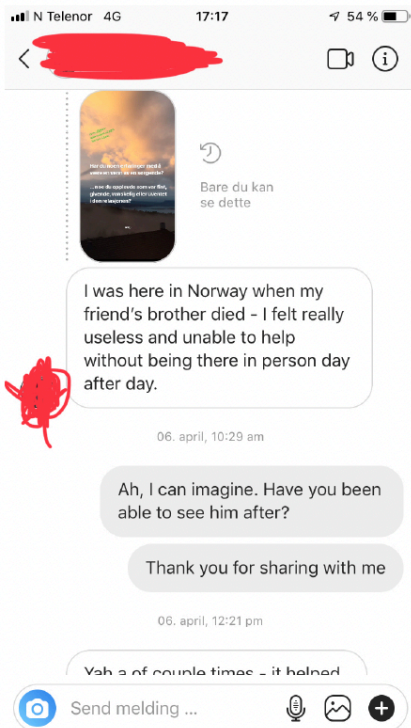
What are we actually afraid of? We posted a question to reach friends of grievors on Instagram Stories:

“Do you have any experience being a friend of a griever? Did you experience something nice, rewarding, difficult or unexpected in that dynamic?”

They told us that they felt useless and unable to help, disappointed and disoriented — that they struggled to understand, and that they even felt guilty.

Findings

Main take away from the explorative ideation



 **ou**  here • 5h

Venninnen min mistet moren sin... Skulle ønske jeg ikke synes det var så vanskelig å være en god venn. Er der for henne nesten daglig, og nå er jeg utbrent. Noen som kjenner deg igjen?

 4



5

 **1**  close • 5h

Snakk med henne.



 **2**  here • 5h

Jeg kjenner meg igjen. Du må finne ut av grensene dine, selv om du har empati med sorgen er den ikke din, du må sørge for pusterom.



 **3**  here • 5h

Det er viktig å ta en pause. Er det flere venner som kan stille opp? Dere kan jo evt bytte på.



 **4**  very close • 5h

Hvis det var meg, så vil jeg ikke snakke så mye om det. Men å finne på gøy ting sammen. 🤔 kanskje foreslå for henne at dere går heller på kino, ser filmer hjemme, eller gjør noe gøy?



0

1

1

1

 **ou**  very close • 8h

Jeg skammer meg over at jeg ikke liker kompisen min lenger. Etter moren hans døde er det ofte slitsom å være vennen hans. Noen som kjenner seg igjen?

#skam #bekjennelser

 5



-5

 **1**  here • 5h

Shit ass. Ta nu en prat med han, der er ho tross alt moren HANNES som døde, så at det kjennes litt ubehagelig for deg er bare teit.



 **2**  very close • 5h

På hvilken måte er han slitsom?



 **3**  Hometown • 5h

Godt han ikke trenger ha deg i livet sitt så mye lengre.



 **4**  close • 8h

Tror du bør reflektere litt over hvordan du er som venn. Er klart lov å synes noen er slitsomme, men hvorfor du føler på dette når kompisen din sin mor er død sier mye om deg som person.



0

2

-1

-1

We tested these taboos on the anonymous social media app, Jodel, to see how people honestly reacted to these confessions. The reactions ranged from anger to understanding, and we thought it was interesting how much this both provoked and resonated at the same time.

Why discursive?

Our approach in this project has been discursive, explorative and reflective. We have looked broadly at the social and cultural implications of grief in Norway today. We chose to work discursively because our motivation lies in studying culture and social relations, and we want to use our design skills not only to produce solutions, but also to produce reflections and maybe even behavioral change.

Another ambition has been to contribute to our school's development in this field. We are encouraged to reflect on our designs, and our role as designers in society. And to do this, we need to be aware of the "designer's fallacy" - a term by Don Idle⁸, that explains that the Achilles heel of designers is that they are too optimistic and believe too much in their designs/solutions.

As a result, they are blind to the possible negative effects that might emerge. This is a muscle we need to train, just as much as learning other design tools and methods. And doing a diploma with this angle has helped us explore our Achilles heel. And we have been given the freedom to do so as well.

How we worked

Our approach is discursive design. There are many terms that aim to describe this approach of reflection, discussion and critical thinking rather than problem solving, such as speculative design, critical design, future design and discursive design.

Designers Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby⁹ explain the purpose of this kind of design as:

«By moving upstream and exploring ideas before they become products or even technologies, designers can look into the possible consequences of technological applications before they happen. We can use speculative designs to debate potential ethical, cultural, social, and political implications.»

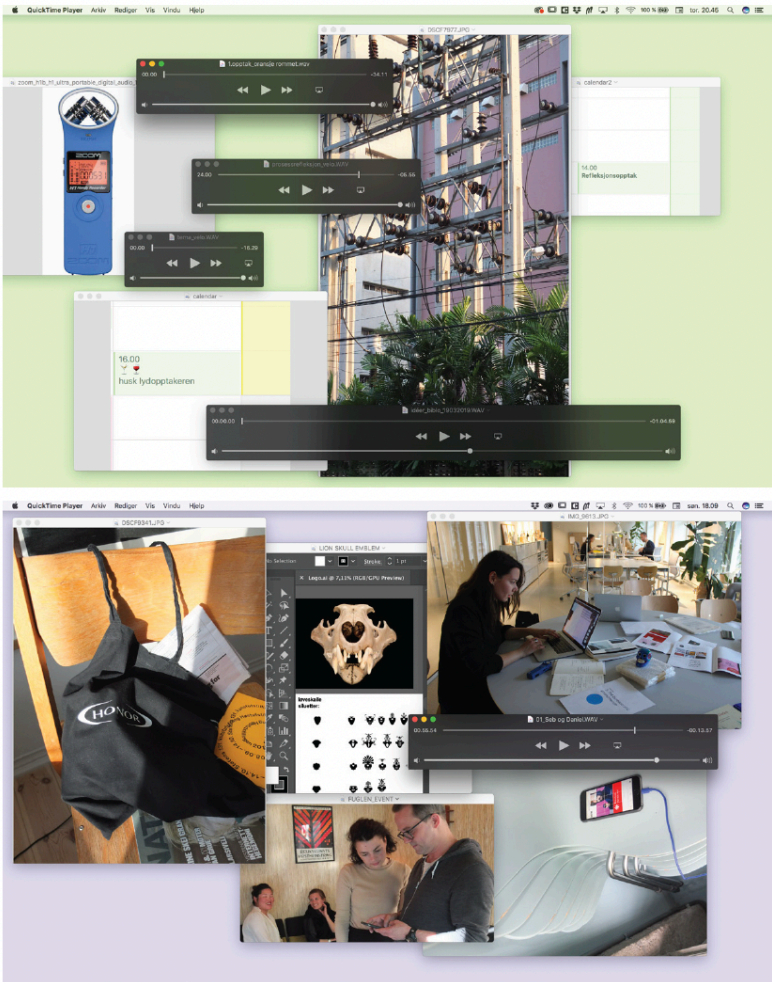
When deciding how to show implications, we quickly decided on making an alternative present, where different products and inventions would portray a whole reality. We wanted to use the diploma as a study of possibilities. We discovered early on that grief is extremely individual, and creating one design would be too narrow. Secondly, we knew from previous design projects that showing a diversity of designs co-existing in a universe makes them all more believable.

We have systematically reflected and discussed throughout the process. We recorded our own discussions and meetings with others, and have re-listened to these recordings throughout the process. This has been a way of layering our reflections on top of each other, instead of thinking of the process as a linear one.

Contrary to a 'normal' design project, we haven't user tested our ideas. Instead, we have showed our ideas to several people with different backgrounds in the arts, culture and social studies, to see how they resonate. Among them was a writer,

Desktop images: Recordings of ourselves and others, discussing and reflecting on our process. Evidence of process and worldbuilding, and sharing the scenarios with others.

Discursive design





an artist, an art and fashion historian, a film director and a psychologist. If other fields like film, music and literature can tackle this issue, why can't design? We wondered;

How can we use design to develop new knowledge about what design can be in society?

It was through these discussions, conversations and philosophic encounters that we were able to validate our ideas. Did they bring up a relevant and interesting issue, and if yes – was it the most important one? That's when we understood that the more unexplored issue with grief is that people around the griever feel unsure, scared or even shameful when trying to help.

DFTG

There used to be a grief armband, to show people that you lost someone – we don't really have any of that today in Norway?

RB

No, there is really nothing like that anymore. It's gone with a hierarchic society constructed around strict sartorial coding. I could find it in me to sentimentally hanker after the demand for formal wear - white gloves, hats, parasols – but when you are in a state of deep pain, do you really want that kind of attention? Is the armband or a black garb a loss? I don't think so. One thing is that it would break all social and cultural norms in Norway to perform your grief like that, and thus make up for a lot of (unwanted) attention. Yet more importantly, and in the name of cultural progress, I believe it's a lot of good

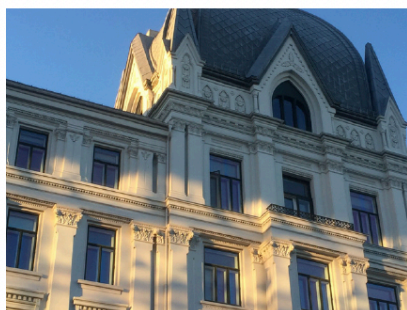
health to be gained in deciding when, and to whom, grief is your defining life experience.

DFTG

We've been thinking about making clothing to show that you're a really honorable friend of a griever. Do we have anything that shows honor that would make sense to adapt? Something on our shoulders, a badge...

RB

Well, after MJ – at least not epaulettes! That is just off the table right now. But regardless of him, and as I said, as our secular society doesn't use formal clothing to express cultural or social status anymore, sporting a black armband after the funeral would quickly become corny as our culture no longer demands it. The impossibility of wearing a hat in earnest, has to do with the exact same thing. I love



hats, and wish I could wear them every day, but our post youth quake-society has made them redundant and thus gimmicky. If you ask me, the same thing would go for the reintroduction of grief clothing on a daily basis – both for the griever and their supporters.

DFTG

We've seen football players wear these black armbands to show respect for someone passing?

RB

Right, but again, that's not an everyday situation, it's a part of a performance, on a stage. And they are already wearing uniforms.

DFTG

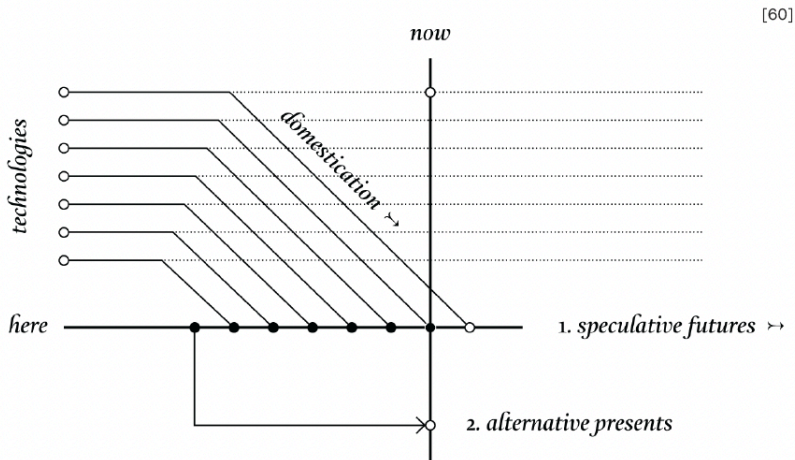
Do we really wear anything today that shows our current state of mind or social status?

RB

Apart from the fact that clothing always show social status and group belonging, one small way or the other, the only thing I can think of with an absolutely fixed cultural meaning is the engagement or wedding ring. Not only do you wear it as a modest piece of jewelry, but you wear it to show other people that your status has changed: that you are permanently committed to another person. I guess it's the last acceptable fashion declaration of emotional status in public, on an everyday basis.

We found this model by designer and teacher at RCA, James Auger ¹⁰, that visualizes how to make an alternative present. He says:

In order to create believable scenarios that show new social norms already embedded in society, we had to change something in the past.



This is why we had to work back to 2011 in order to tell the story of the honorary friend, the Griefftime Program and honest.txt. People need to know where the concepts come from, in order to believe them.

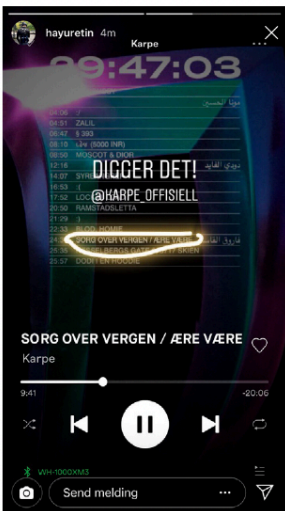
We chose two methods to tell the story. The first was to write the scenarios and explain how historical events have led up to our alternative culture. Secondly we made the story come alive through Instagram stories.

We chose this format because of it's nowness, and because it's an accessible format for us since we are not film-makers. It's also a way to show fragments of culture and social interactions, without saying «this is how it is», because there isn't one way to experience a culture. We drew

inspiration from the Norwegian TV-series, SKAM ¹¹, and how they used social media. The characters in the show posted real time with the narrative, which gave the fictional world an effect of realism, and contributed to the huge engagement people had for the series. We also created characters for our Instagram-universe, with different background stories and interests.

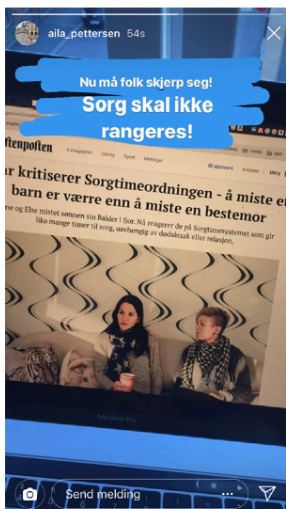
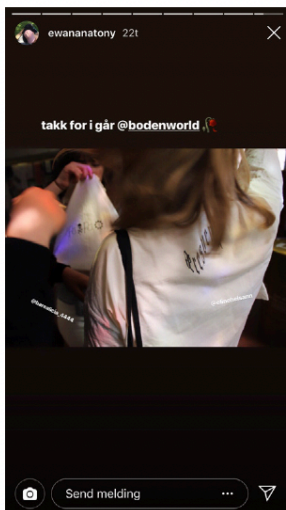
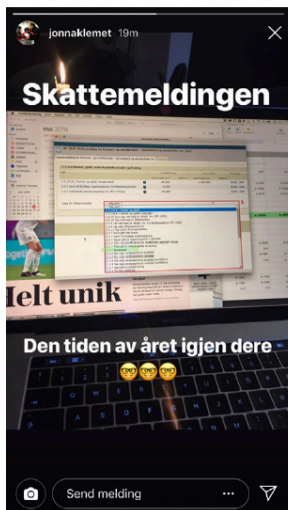
What are we designing?

We are designing diegetic prototypes. This is a term by David Kirby¹². It's inspired by the cinematography term diegetic sound: the music within a fictional world. This means that what we design should feel like it exists in our alternative present. Kirby has written about how Stanley Kubrick balanced the need for scientific accuracy and the need for an artistic style that made the movies interesting to watch.



Storytelling

Instagram stories



Kubrick had said:

*«I think there were two problems in the design of anything. One was, is there anything about it that would be logically inconsistent with what people felt would actually exist; and the other one was, would it be interesting? Would it look nice?»*¹³

What is important according to Kubrick, is that it can't only be a plausible design, but it has to also be desirable and interesting.

We have chosen to solve this though storytelling – the scenario text, the evidence material and the Instagram stories. Contrary to ordinary design, we didn't make personas in order to figure out what to design. We designed according to

our studies of our culture, and then made personas that portray the implications our design has on them and their everyday life.

*«Films act as virtual witnessing technologies and communicative vehicles for science, because filmmakers are asking science consultants to help them develop realistic models of the natural world».*¹⁴

We talk about our work as prototyping culture – as opposed to the functionality of a product or service. We have used design as a tool to enable technological imagination and give an experience of a new culture. Anne Balsamo, cultural theorist and media designer uses the term “technological imagination” and says:

“technology and culture are inseparable; those who engage in

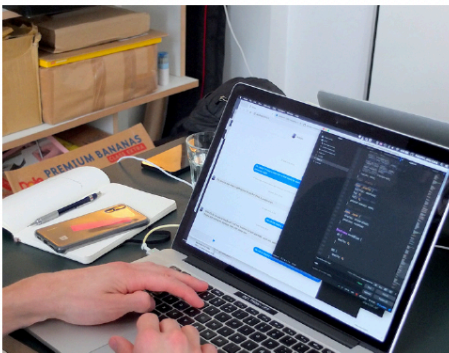
technological innovation are designing the cultures of the future.”¹⁵

Referring to Balsamo, designer and researcher Einar Sneve Martinussen, believes that;

“(...) we could describe interaction design’s engagement with technoculture as both cultural reproduction, in the sense of interpreting and conceptualizing technoculture, and as cultural invention and contribution, through the design of new interactions, products, and expressions.”¹⁶

When desining, we prioritized experience. For example: we haven’t programmed the Grieftime app for NAV, because we don’t have to create that experience. But we did have to prototype the honest.txt, because you need to feel how it is to lose control over your writing.

The prototype `honest.txt` was designed by us, and programmed by our external supervisors Internet Friends Forever, on a one-day workshop May 6th.





Storytelling



Prototyping at IFF



DFTG

Our diploma project is a discursive design diploma about grief. We're making scenarios and diegetic prototypes – a term coined by David Kirby to explain prototypes within a universe. His research about discursive design is influenced by film making, and how scientists and filmmakers have been working to imagine the future, like Kubrick did in the making of "2001: A Space Odyssey". We were wondering what you think when we say "diegetic prototypes"?

JT

In film we talk about the difference between 'mimesis' - imitation, and 'diegesis' - narration. Film is often considered a mimetic art form. We represent and imitate reality. We make a contract with the audience that everything they see is within the film.

A term we use is 'verisimilitude' - we create the effect of something real. It's not the same as realistic, it's whether something is believable. So, it's never about the thing itself, but the narrative of the thing. So, I guess for design it must mean a prototype that is not meant to function as the real thing, but to create a story?

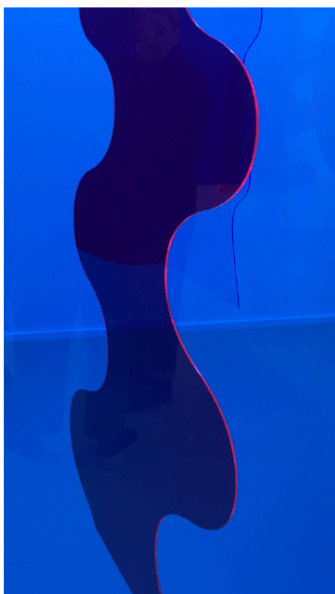
DFTG

Exactly. It's not about the design of the object as an object - like it's functionally, form and materiality. But rather showing the social and cultural implications of that design. And to do so, we have to create narratives.

JT

So, if we're talking about a chair, you wouldn't design a chair like a furniture designer?





DFTG

No. It could be a chair, but it depends on why the chair is there. Is it a chair that only pregnant people can sit in, because of a new regulation? Or maybe it's a chair that only looks like a chair, but is something else. Instead of designing a solution to a problem, like designing a "chair to sit comfortably in", we use our design skills to create narratives in order for people to imagine something that doesn't exist.

JT

You manipulate what exists, and make us curious, like a chair that starts to melt!

DFTG

Yes, we want them to be critical of what they see. Why is the chair melting? It's a type of design where the designer is not trying to convince anyone of what she

has made is good or bad. That's up to the 'audience' to reflect upon.

JT

Right, fiction is not holistic, it's a tool to create ambivalence. This makes me think of Brecht's 'verfremdung' – alienation. He wanted the audience to be present and aware, and not caught up in the narrative – he wanted to 'break down the fourth wall'. So instead of having a plot, it's about creating curiosity and a thematic space. And the audience should be doubting the intention.

DFTG

So, how does one do this? And especially with a topic like grief?

JT

"If the aim is to create ambivalence, you can look at Freud's term: 'Das Unheimliche', 'the

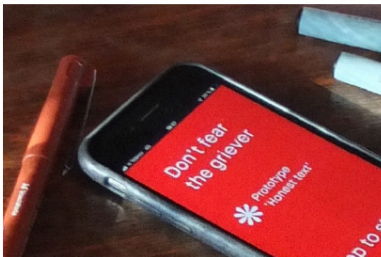
uncanny' - that which is strangely familiar. The key here is to break with the familiar, the normal. When you do that it can feel both scary, and sometimes humorous. You can create scenarios where something unexpected happens which makes you laugh; or you can make it so unsettling that it truly disturbs the audience. Either way, people will try to create meaning. "Why is that thing there? Why is he walking like that?". Cause and effect. That is why grief and death is so hard, we have no answers, no narrative about what happens after. Just a big hole. And in a culture where the religious guidelines are gone, we struggle to deal with it. At least I do."

Was is believable? Did it appear interesting? Did it engage?

In order to validate whether people understood what we had done, we did a communication test, not a user test.

We wanted to validate whether people believed in the stories and if they sparked discussion. We invited people to a gathering at a café and bar in Oslo, Fuglen. We reserved an open venue and had a four hour session, testing visual and written rethorics. People where invited to see the scenarios with our designs, and test the honest.txt prototype.

Overall this test led to many brave discussions about the taboos around grief, between people who didn't all know each other from before. This in and of itself was a goal for us in our project.





What have we learnt from this project?

We will now share some concluding reflections about the subject grief, our approach discursive design, about ethics in design and finally what we learnt about ourselves.

About the subject grief

Going into this subject, we had some personal experiences, but were still not aware of the complexity, and individuality of grief. We thought, for a long time, that the issue at stake was that grief is really hard to talk about. But by doing this project, we learned that talking about grief wasn't the most difficult issue, it was that friends and people around the griever have a hard time showing that it's ok to talk about it. This flipping of perspective was key for us, and gave us a new dimension we



hadn't really articulated until it became obvious for us halfway into the project. We have learnt that even though we now are "experts" on grief, we still struggle in our personal relationships when someone is going through grief. It's really hard. Every time. Because people are different and the reactions are unforeseen. But what always helps is to act normal, and don't treat griever different. Don't fear the griever.

About discursive design

We have used our design skills to find out what design can be, and to better understand grief and the challenges within this subject. By choosing this approach, we had to be flexible and adaptable to the process – something we believe we've been good at. We were never done until we were done, and we constantly changed our plan according to new knowledge and

events. This was also a disadvantage, as we could never show someone 100% what we are doing. People had to see fragments of our project and deal with questions and abstractions, which demanded more of us as designers to explain and communicate throughout.

About ethics

In this project we have learned about emotions and social norms - and understood that our responsibilities as designers are more and more complex. We have the power to visualize, persuade and change people's behavior.

Researcher in psychology Lisa Feldman Barrett says that «feelings are learned from past experience»¹⁷. Her studies show that the way our brain knows what caused something, is past experience. It makes predictions on what's going on. This is

called 'emotional concepts'. How we experience shame or happiness is entirely learned through experience. It's how other express their emotions that form the social norms that set the standard for us.

Why was this important for us when designing for grief?

The emotional concepts for grief in our society are: guilt, anger, isolation and meaninglessness amongst others. But, if feelings are learned, the way we grief is learned. This means that the feelings of grief can be different than the ones we know. If that is the premise, we can design for new feelings as well as the 'old' ones. But should we?

When discussing this ethical issue, we research the concept of "social norm engineering". We read about an

experiment in Somalia that explained the concept for us. In 2013, the UN organized a secret operation in Somalia to weaken the power of Islamic extremism¹⁸. They did this by arranging «Inspire Somalia» - a contest based on American Idol. At this time, music was forbidden in Somalia. The United Nations believed that by getting people excited over music was a way to introduce democratic voting and individual expression. The short version of the story is that it did have an effect. Somalia is not completely changed today, but since 2013 there has been music in the streets.

What does this tell us - and why is it relevant for design? Psychologist Betsy Levy Paluck studies this phenomenon. She says that for a long time people assumed the path to change depended on having the right argument. "It was all rhetoric and no poetics," she says in an interview ¹⁹.

But around the 90s, poetics started becoming more powerful, through the arts. Because when you use storytelling, people listen in a different way than in an argument. Her studies show that people change their behavior when they see that something new is socially acceptable, like on a reality tv show about music. How can this be?

“Their defensiveness is disabled. Their counterarguing is at rest», Paluck argues. Though her research with different cultural projects she draws this conclusion: “What it boiled down to was that despite the fact that people loved this program, it didn’t change their beliefs. But it did change their perceptions of norms, and at the same time it changed their behaviors. Which is why I thought this is something significant.”

We found this really interesting. It also told us something about the power we have as designers, and the responsibility that follows. «It's a very uncomfortable thought," Paluck says. "We like to think that all of our behaviors flow from our convictions, and what we do is a reflection of who we are and what we think. But we're constantly tuning ourselves to fit in with the social world around us¹⁹" This is something we need to be aware of, and take with us into our professional lives.

Another learning from this project was that we had to report the project to the NSD – the Norwegian Data Protection Services. This was a new experience for us, and by doing it we got an awareness of the type of information we needed to collect, and not. For example – all the interviews with grievors are anonymized. We only took

notes, but no sound or images. Because we didn't have to.

Our project is not objective research, it's a design project - and therefore subjective. The project reflects how we perceive grief, how we see the world around us. And when we are clear about this, the project can be understood as exactly that, and not something else.

About ourselves

It's a strange thing to wrap up 5-6 years of education in a paragraph. Both of us went into the design education with prior bachelors in both arts management and journalism. We know how privileged we have been to be able to study a second round, and especially within the field of design. We've been able to combine our

past experience with this education, and we feel that this project in particular has let us do this.

Andreea's understanding of culture and networks provided a richness to the project. Her positive and systematic mindset made us able to spot and connect the dots despite the complexity of the project. Helene's sociology background has brought a never-ending curiosity about the subject. Her relentless pursuit to understand and challenge social norms, brought a diversity and engagement to the project. Together we have naturally embraced how the project developed – which has been essential to be able to handle such a serious and sensitive topic.

What we learnt especially in this project, was how we can draw parallels to other creative professions - and by doing so getting inspired and confident in shaping our own profession the way we want and see possible.

We will leave AHO with a feeling of pride and content of having had the courage to take on a complex subject and the audacity to look outside our expertise and learn from others.



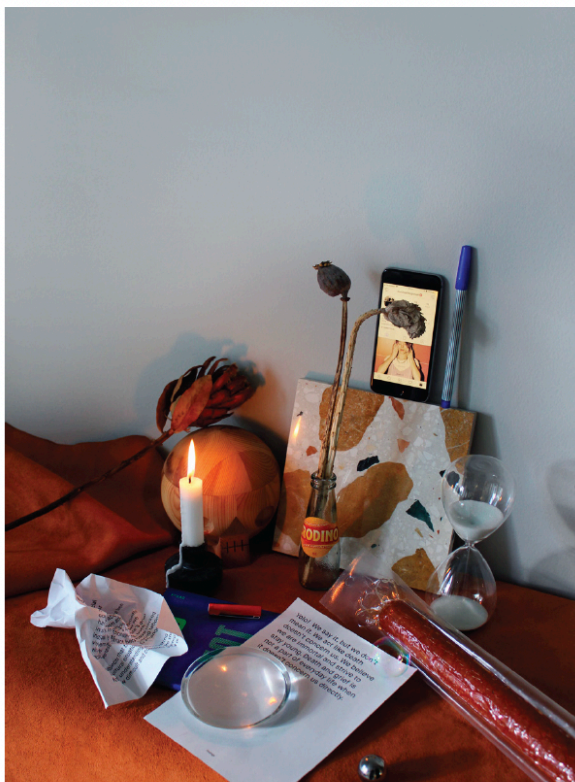
We want to thank some people that
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Don't fear the griever

by

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TEXT

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