

Today

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Research
overview

2

Moral injury in
families of missing
people

3

Using Art to raise
awareness, find
meaning, and educate

Moral injury



Self -care first

This presentation contains sensitive material related to **trauma, moral injury, grief, anxiety, depression, and going missing.**

The content may be distressing.

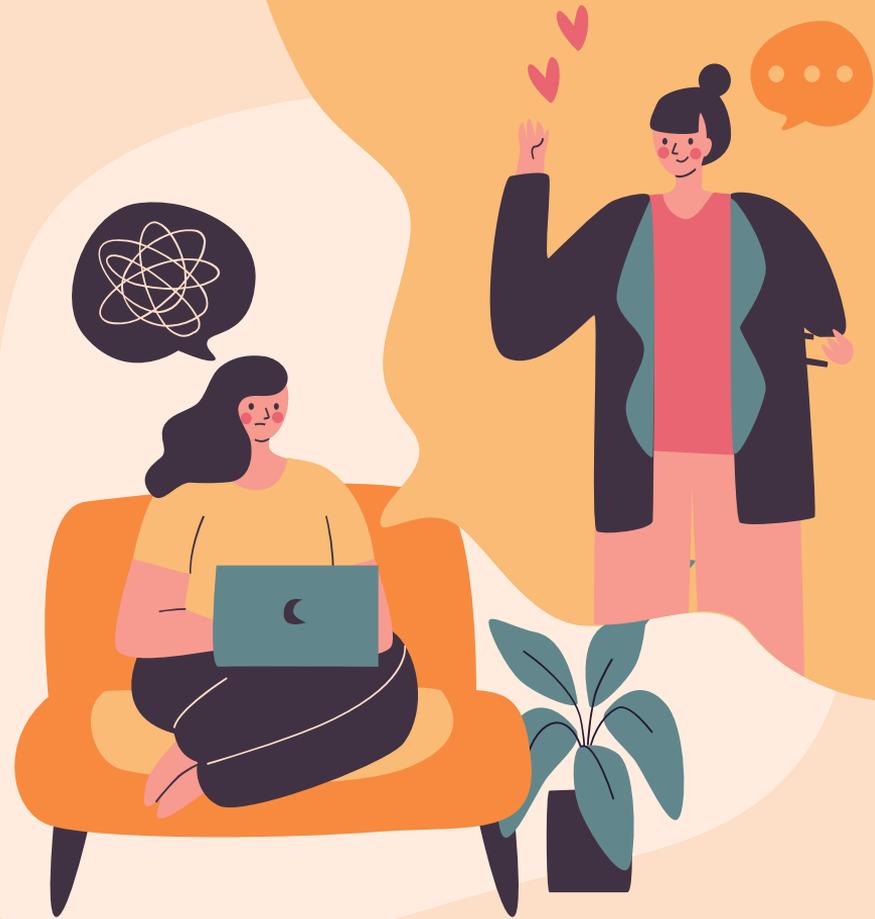
If you feel uncomfortable or need a break, please feel free to step away.
If at any point you feel overwhelmed, remember that it's okay to take care of yourself.

Your emotional well-being is important.

AIM OF RESEARCH

1. To raise awareness and understanding of the support needs and challenges of relatives and friends of missing people and how they change over time.

2. Develop training materials and artefacts for mental health, health care providers to reduce moral injury, hermeneutical injury, foster empathy, and person-centred support.



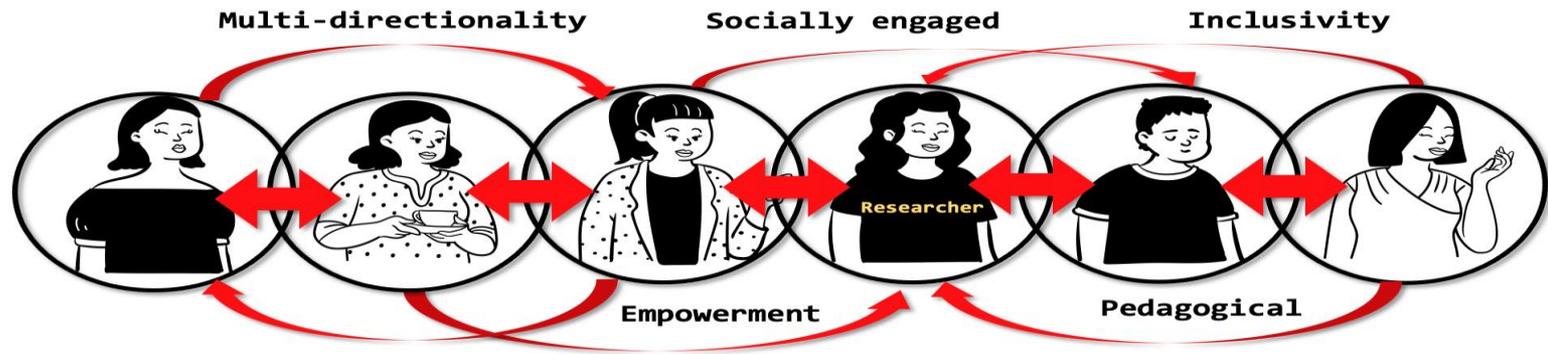
moral injury

Moral injury refers to the psychological, emotional, and social harm experienced by individuals when they are involved in events that violate their deeply held moral beliefs or values.

Litz et al. (2009), Williamson et al. (2018), Shay (2014)

hermeneutical injury

The harm caused when the process of interpreting and understanding a person's experience or text is done in a way that misrepresents, distorts, or invalidates their perspective. Fricker (2007), Foucault (1980), Mouffe (2000)



ART-BASED METHODOLOGY



MSc Psychology Findings and representation

6 life story interviews, focus group on need with 37 participants, art exercise
11 paintings and collages, 1 animation, 1 film



Life story Interviews

10 participants



Art Workshops Body mapping as research method

5 participants



Autoethnography

Narratives
Paintings
Creative expression
Scoping review



Workshops medical, nursing and counselling schools

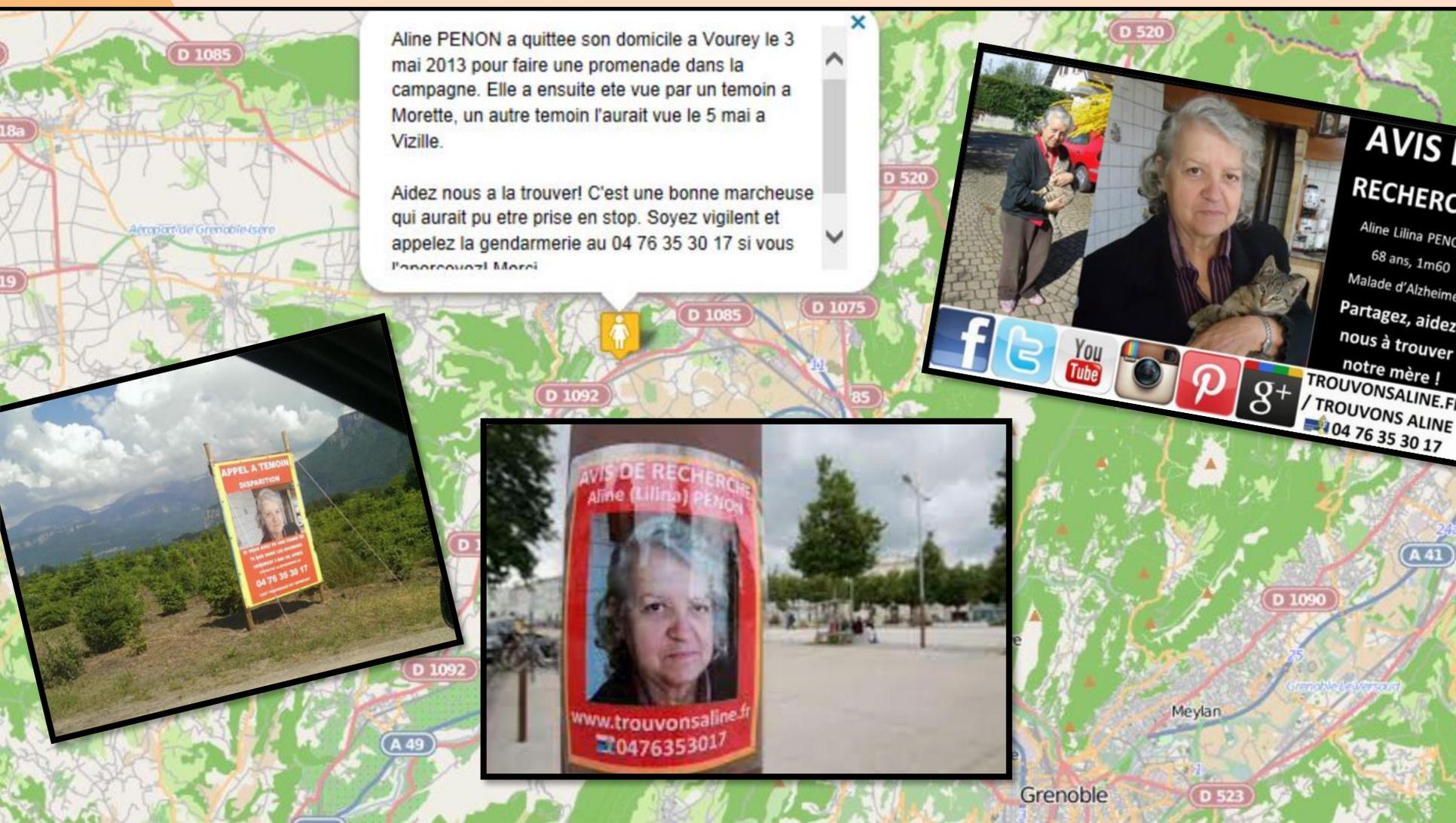
Body mapping and role play

IMPACT AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Aline PENON a quitte son domicile a Vourey le 3 mai 2013 pour faire une promenade dans la campagne. Elle a ensuite ete vue par un temoin a Morette, un autre temoin l'aurait vue le 5 mai a Vizille.

Aidez nous a la trouver! C'est une bonne marcheuse qui aurait pu etre prise en stop. Soyez vigilant et appelez la gendarmerie au 04 76 35 30 17 si vous l'apercevez! Merci

AVIS RECHERCHE
Aline Lilina PENON
68 ans, 1m60
Malade d'Alzheimer
Partagez, aidez
nous à trouver
notre mère!
TROUVONSALINE.FR
/ TROUVONS ALINE
04 76 35 30 17





170,000

Individuals per year (Missing People 2023) in the UK



8-12 million

Individuals per year in the world (estimation)



170,000

Individuals per year (Missing People 2023) in the UK

X 12 =

Number of people impacted emotionally or financially by missing people



8-12 million

Individuals per year in the world (estimation)



170,000

Individuals per year (Missing People 2023) in the UK

2 million

Number of people impacted emotionally or financially by missing people

X 12 =



8-12 million

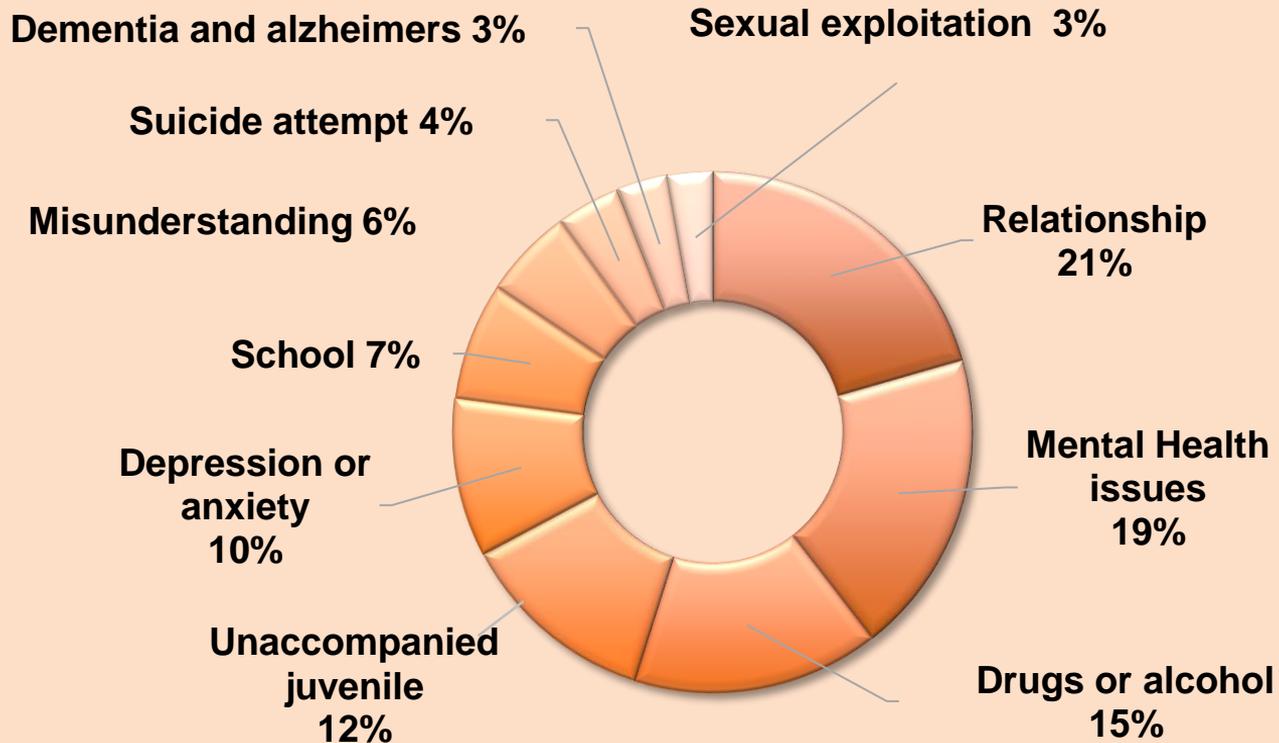
Individuals per year in the world (estimation)

96-144 million

PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERN

National Crime Agency, 2021

Reasons why people go missing



RISK TO LIFE

(Missing People, 2023)



4 in 10 people going missing are feeling suicidal

3 in 4 adults report coming to harm while missing

Half of exploited children, and **a third** of trafficked children are reported missing from care each year.

The number of people dying while missing is consistently **higher** than the number of deaths from homicide.

TRAUMA RESPONSE

ADMINISTRATIVE
CHALLENGES

POLICE, MEDIA,
PUBLIC BIASES

SOCIAL CHALLENGES

PSYCHOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

- Ambiguous Loss (Boss, 2000, 2007, 2017)
Limbo, missing person both present psychologically and absent physically
- Disenfranchised grief
- Unclear, uncertainty, helplessness
- Narrative void impacting the autobiographic self (Clifford et al., 2020)
- Anticipatory mourning
- Ruminating and counterfactual thinking
- Increase the likelihood of prolonged grief (PG), depression, and post-traumatic stress (PTS) symptoms.

LEGAL
CHALLENGES



EPISTEMIC (Hermeneutical)
INJUSTICE

FINANCIAL
CHALLENGES

MORAL INJURY RESPONSE

PSYCHOLOGICAL

Cognitive, intrusion, rumination, negative impacts on mental health, negative self-concepts around beliefs of worthlessness or failure

BEHAVIOURAL

Avoidance
interpersonal difficulties

EXISTENTIAL

EMOTIONAL

Guilt, shame, anger, grief, suicidal thoughts, hopelessness, emotional dysregulations

SOCIAL

Alienation, social withdrawal, reduced capacity for trust



MORAL INJURY



OURSELVES

Example of transgressions of values perceived:

Legitimate unpreparedness
Not being able to protect/prevent missing/find one's missing family member

OTHERS

Example of transgressions of values perceived: Cyberbullying, Lack of witness accounts and media attention
Lack of understanding from others

BETRAYAL

Example of transgressions of values perceived: Lack of transparency in police resource allocation and processes, Lack of informed support

Crisis intervention approach

Supporting families in the longer term

Changing the narrative

**Moral Injury as response to Power imbalances
(institutional inaction and blindness, ethical
violence and moral distancing)**





Missing People

5,537 followers

1d •

In partnership with the Mirror, we have put together a petition demanding urgent government action, with a focus on prevention and guaranteed support for those who go missing and those who are found.

Sign the petition to help us make sure that all missing people and their loved ones get the right help at the right time: <https://lnkd.in/ekVPTR92>



missing people in Spain is not that different from ours, in the UK

Table of Contents

- Celebrating our loved ones missing and coming together is heart-warming
- The pain of missing a loved one has no frontier
- Using art, and creative ways helps process emotions
- The experience of families of missing people in Spain is not that different from ours, in the UK

I was very impacted by the stories told by families. What saddens me the most is realising that families in Spain, as well as those in Italy, Mexico, France and England, must fight for justice, not to be ignored, among other issues.

How could this be? How is it possible that relatives of missing persons are still being overlooked in so many countries?

We need to fight together for our rights internationally

People should not be discussing our courage or hope. It must be stated unequivocally that the families of missing persons are routinely ignored by those countries' legal systems and law enforcement agencies. Negligence can have devastating consequences for children, individuals, communities, and future generations. We rely on organisations to help us, but they can betray our trust and cause trauma. What society should provide for all is safety, fairness, trust in institutions, professionalism, humanism, and empathy...

Hide this

We need to fight

*Using art to
understand, heal and
educate*



Externalizing the Unspeakable

Neurobiological Mechanisms:

- Bilateral stimulation via large-scale painting engages both hemispheres,
- Enhancing memory reconsolidation
Color/form metaphors externalize internal states, reducing avoidance (Haeyen S, 2021)

Somatic-Art (Heijman J et al. 2024)

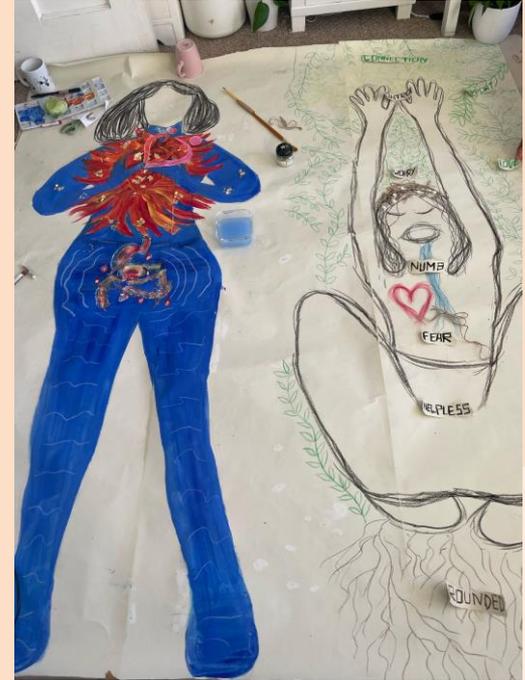
Trauma Re-scripting via Embodied Metaphors
(Haeyen S, 2021)

Memory Timeline Integration (Heijman J et al. 2024)



Exploring empathy in Health, mental health

Exploring strength and reframing narratives for families of missing people



Use QR code to download the free app ARTIVIVE on Google Play & iTunes to see the paintings come to live through augmented reality. You can also use your headphones for the sound.



1. **Install** the Artivive app



2. **View** the artwork through your smartphone



The void in us

It is like a permanent part of you is missing.. This emptiness is so incredibly painful..

The empty space left behind, we grieve every day, waiting for news that might help us understand what and why this happened.

It's just to know, isn't it?

Nothing more, but yet so much.

It doesn't sound like much, but it's pretty big!

Artivive app available on the App Store and Google Play. Scan the QR code to download the app.



Artivive app available on the App Store and Google Play. Scan the QR code to download the app.

It is always with you

If you don't know anything, you just imagine everything... But there is that possibility... that somebody out there does know... It's just a terrible way for a human being to have to live with all those horrible thoughts. It's always with you.

It's always there... He is always there... It is a very excruciating existence... But you can't actually allow yourself to go down that rabbit hole and wallow in it. You try and put all those emotions in boxes. You just have to deal with it the best we can day in, day out.



Artivive app available on the App Store and Google Play. Scan the QR code to download the app.

Keep circling around

First, the nature so normal life, an explosion within you, like your whole life and your family's life has just exploded, like your whole life has been shredded in that wretched poster... Trying to escape by waiting for a food with your belongings in a box. The worst missing constantly bears down on top of you with all that anxiety and depression and cycle of hoping and despairing, and it just feels overwhelming. You just keep circling around... going back to that again, like a broken record... we crawl into our wounds that never heal and hide...

How is it possible that that happened? This sense of the incomprehensible? Help from people, the church, mental health support, hope and missing people comes as a slow-moving boat... The media is a double-edged sword, so helpful but also so overwhelming... The police, as a big heavy anchor, is dragging us down. Time doesn't heal. Time doesn't repair. We learn to re-live each day of our agony as an unrelenting record that starts with searching and concludes with the dissolution of our world...



Artivive app available on the App Store and Google Play. Scan the QR code to download the app.

Constantly filling the gaps...

It's not something you expect to ever happen in your family. Because it is incomprehensible and awful, everything has just lost its ground and bearing. It's like living a nightmare, hope is all we have. Getting the police to do anything was really hard work...so you sort of have to lead your own investigation... but it's pretty much like looking for a needle in a haystack. There is always hope that somebody must know something.

In the dark days, the worst of scenarios come back to mind, the crying floods are open, will I ever see them again?



Artivive app available on the App Store and Google Play. Scan the QR code to download the app.

Moral injury

There are a lot of unanswered questions that you have to learn to live with. You want the world to stop and help you, but you must learn to accept that the media, the police, and social services have all other priorities... You feel so powerless, fazed with the inaction of authorities and a society that doesn't care about the families nor how to prevent people from going missing.



3 MINUTE FILM

Youtube: https://youtu.be/E_LNJ2-Mlco?si=2W4GqCtJcKSBWwEd



THE EMPTY BEDS

MISHEARD

That sensation of I've got nowhere else to go that made me attempt to take my life...

...but doctors do tend to believe what the police tell them over what you are telling them is actually going on.

And I think that part of the problem was I felt I really wasn't believed about the level and pressure the police put on."

Dad, 14-year-old son missing for 18 years

An illustration of a person in silhouette carrying a large, dark, tangled ball. The ball is made of many overlapping lines, suggesting a complex or overwhelming situation. The person is walking on a path, and the background is a simple landscape.

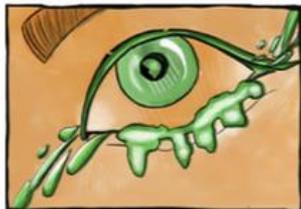
Children left behind

Children are often forgotten, everyone tries to protect them from the cruel reality of what is happening, but they suffer in silence from it.

It feels so hard to talk about it. For the families, and the communities, it feels like an open wound that keeps opening.

Yet talking and seeking help for their mental health and support is crucial for children to make sense of their experience and so they can maintain continuing bonds with the missing person.

An illustration of a child sitting on a beach, looking down at a puddle of water. The child is wearing a blue dress and is holding a large, dark umbrella. The background shows a blue sky and a sandy beach.



I DON'T KNOW HOW TO LIVE LIKE THIS

Because of the high level of uncertainty, it's as though I don't know anything anymore.

I've been a mental health professional all my life, people would say, she has her training to help her cope.



I mean, you can have the best training in the world but you're still a mum. You're still completely broken hearted. A broken heart is a broken heart. It doesn't matter what training you have!

Psychiatrist, whose adult son went missing when experiencing psychotic episodes



I SHOULD HAVE SAID YES

The doctor did say to me; "Do you think maybe you need some counselling?"

and in my head, I was going YES!
and in my body, I was saying NO!

"I think it's... you know... I'll be okay..."

Then I thought about it afterwards. I thought I shouldn't have turned it away.

I should have said yes.
Nobody asked again...

Mother, son missing since 1996 after a night out



THROWING PILLS AT US IT'LL BE OKAY!

"We'd like to drug you up so that you are calmer.

It'll be okay.

I'm sure he'll be coming back."

"But I feel there is something SERIOUSLY wrong here ... it is not like him!

and

Nobody's looking...

Nobody's listening..."

Mother, whose son went missing 29 years ago



HOLDING SPACE

I remember going to see my GP and I sat down he never clinched, he gave absolutely no negative sign whatsoever that time was running out, he just was amazing! I had no idea that he gave me all that time. And that was exactly what was required.

Dad, missing his sons since 2007



THANK YOU!

Any questions ?

If you have been affected by any of the issues raised in this presentation and would like some support, please contact **Missing People** on 116 000, www.missingpeople.org.uk

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