



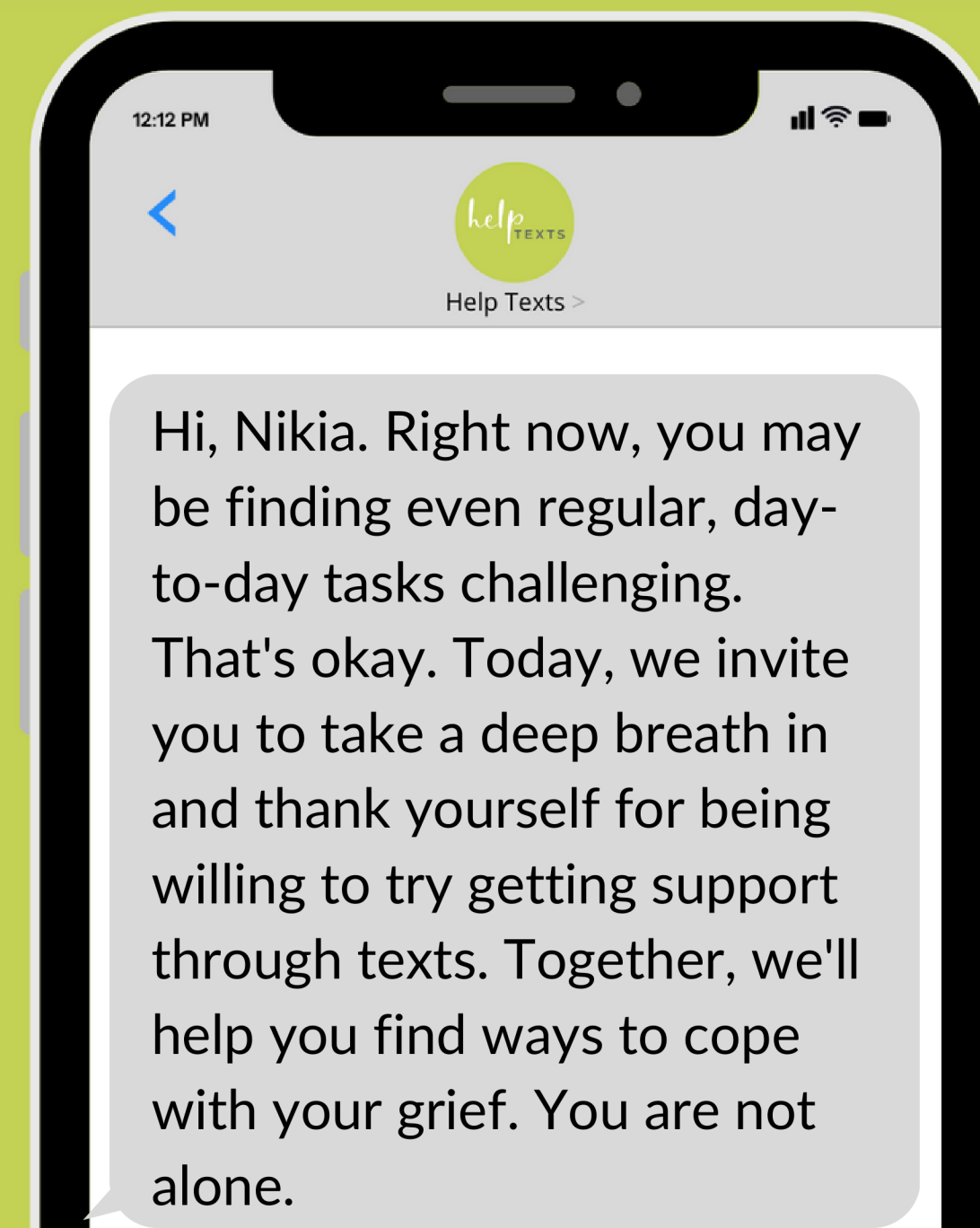
Text Me About It:

Receiving Grief Support Through Text Messaging

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Help Texts
helptexts.com



PANDEMIC PARADIGM SHIFT

2020

- Grief hit hard... we weren't prepared
- Lack of accessible and effective grief services

2021

- As demand increased, our infrastructure weakened
- Grief became a mainstream media topic
- Policies shifted (Yay, for small wins! 🎉)

2022

- Radical acceptance of a paradigm shift
- A call for new and innovative approaches
- The BIG mHealth arrival



"Bereavement care in the United States is broken. The lack of consistent, high-quality bereavement care for Americans constitutes an invisible public health crisis" (Mulheron & Inouye, 2020).

SHINED A LIGHT ON BARRIERS

- Cost
- Time
- Safety
- Transportation
- Variance in grief-informed professionals
- Limited access to professionals with similar cultural backgrounds
- Stigma & lack of trust in the mental health/healthcare system
- The preferred type of support was not available
- Looooooooong....long...long (did we mention long?) waitlists
- Lack of grief literacy

Could grief-informed texts be a solution?



OVER 20 YEARS OF EVIDENCE

- Mental & health care settings have used texts for 20+ years
- The literature showed that texts:
 - Supportive & effective (Dwyer, et al., 2021)
 - Increase compliance (Kannisto, et al., 2014; Berrouiguet, et al., 2016)
 - Significant behavior change (Buhi, et al., 2013;)
 - Increased knowledge & developed skills (Hall, et al., 2015)
 - Highly accessible/reduced barriers (Martin, et al., 2020; Singleton, et al., 2021)
 - High retention rates (Schwartzman & Boswell, 2020)
- Limitations
 - Non-clinical or limited clinical scope
 - Limited data on diverse cultures
 - Frequency

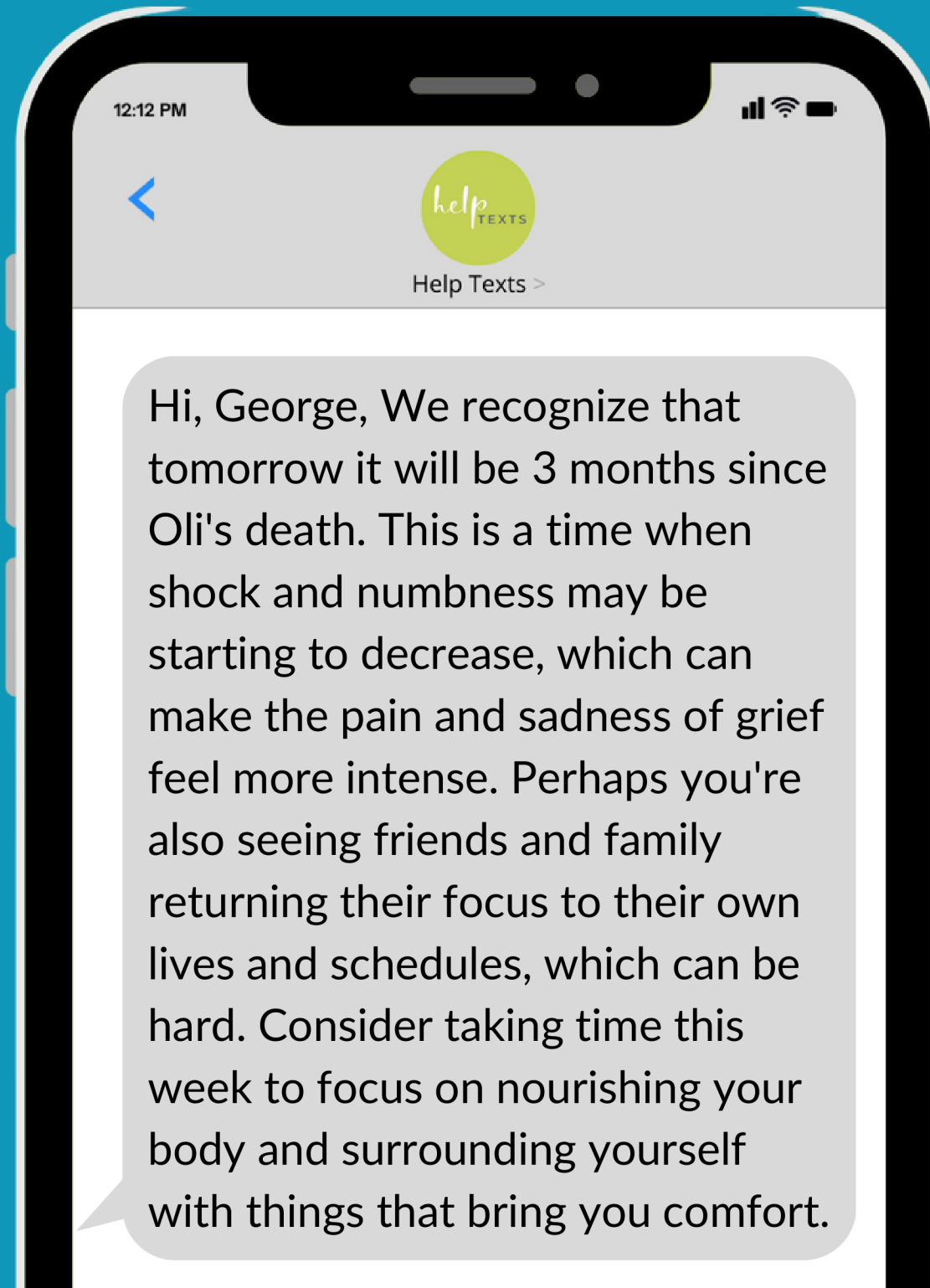


COULD THIS WORK FOR GRIEF?



- Would people be open to receiving texts as a form of grief support?
- How long would they stay with the service?
- How would vulnerable populations respond?
- Would texts be perceived as helpful & supportive?
- Will they text back? If so, what themes would emerge?

IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME



Texts are customized based on age, relationship, cause of death, time since death, and more

Two texts a week for 12 months with additional texts on important dates and no repeating texts

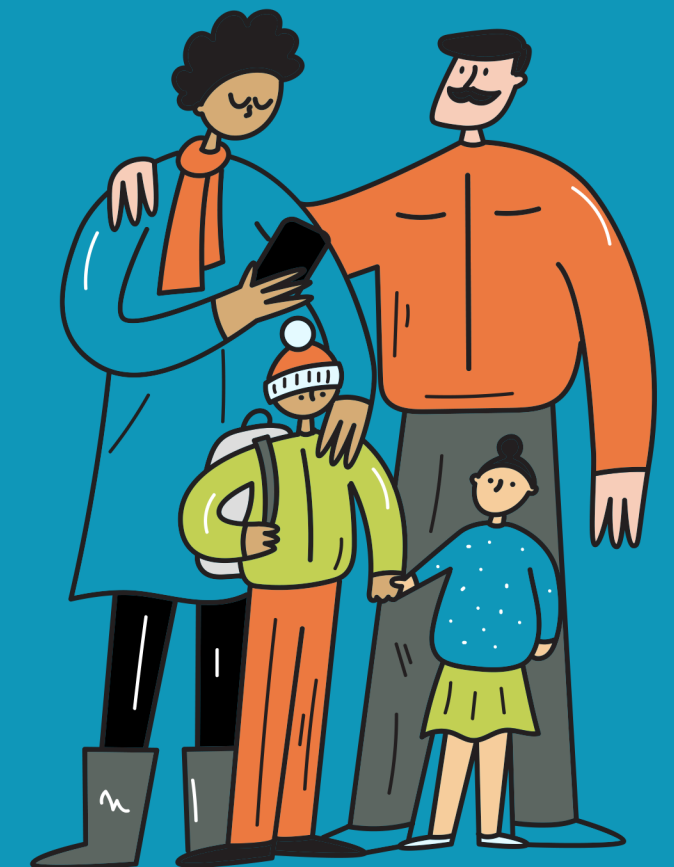
Texts are evidence-based and written by grief-informed experts

No timeline for when people can sign up

Available in 20 languages

Can add 2 supporters in

No installs or downloads- it's not an app!



WHO SHOWED UP?

- **86%** of users identify as female, followed by males (11%)
- Most users range in age **45-64 (42%)**, <45 (37%), 65+ (14%)
- Common causes of death are **cancer (28%)**, other illnesses (18%), and cardiovascular (8%)
- **39%** experienced the death of a child, (29%) spousal loss, and (16%) parent
- **68%** signed up within the first 5 months after a death (**44% <2 mo**)
- **92%** stayed enrolled for 6 months, 85% for 12 months
- **40%** listed supporters



HOW HELPFUL IS IT?

95%

Perceive texts
as helpful



93%

Perceive texts
as supportive

QUALITATIVE THEMES

HELPFUL

REMEMBERED DATES

CONSISTENT

ACCURATE/TIMELY

VALIDATING/NORMALIZING

GRIEF LITERACY

APPRECIATION

ONGOING

COPING SKILLS

MEANINGFUL

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

ENCOURAGED GRIEF WORK

FEEL SEEN AND HEARD

DECREASED ISOLATION

RECOGNIZED THE DECEASED



Feedback for improvement: asynchronous, frequency, personalization

helpTEXTS

"I don't know what I would do without your **kind & supporting messages..very much appreciated**"

"Thank you for your texts! **I am grateful to know the feelings I am experiencing are often completely normal** and to be expected."

"Thanks for all the **support and great information over the past year!** My grief journey was blessed by your caring messages."

"Thank you. Your grief support via text messages has been a tremendous **help and source of comfort.**"

"Thank you so much for the **encouragement and the antidotes for my struggle.** Please continue to reach out to those in need."

"Today I'm so **thankful for your kind message as today I'm falling apart and can not find my way back!** Your words always **help.** Thank you"

"Thank you for your message last week as **it was my dads 1st anniversary its actually amazing how theses messages help me understand my feelings and give me support just a little message can help me so much** I wouldn't be where I am today if it wasn't for your help along this journey thank you so much"

"These texts mean so much. It is the first time, following all the bereavements I've been through that **the right words are being said. In an ongoing way.**"

DAILY INBOUND FEEDBACK LOOKS LIKE THIS

I'm so grateful to receive these texts, they help me think about how to deal with different emotions and some **invaluable ideas** how to help with overwhelming thoughts.

These msgs are **helping me more than you will ever know.**

Your messages **give me so much comfort while i am at my lowest.** Thank u so much i love getting them



THE VALUE OF TEXTS EMERGE

What mattered to us:

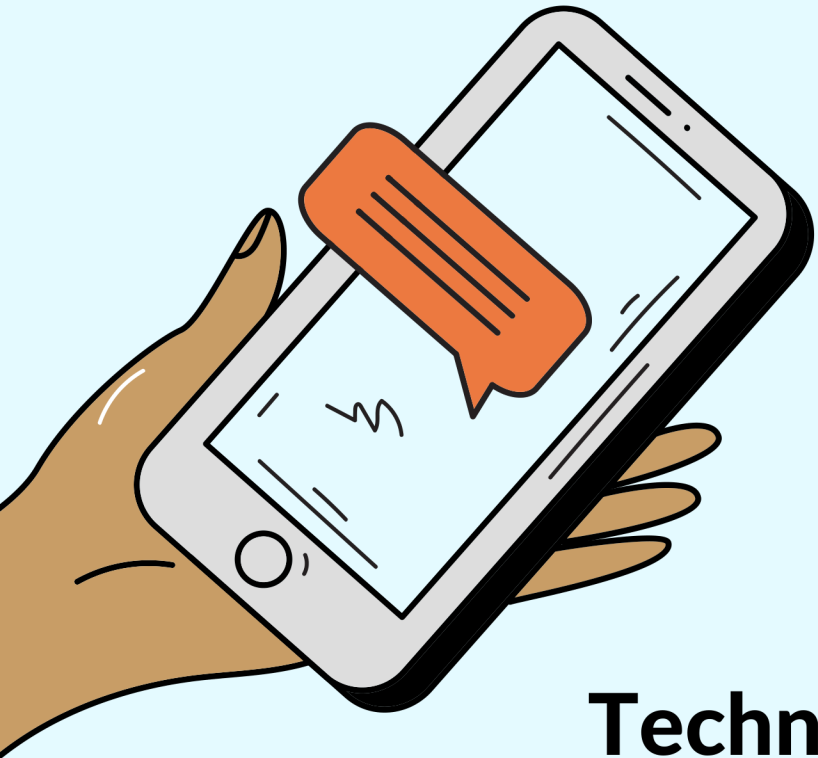
- Easy to access
- Ongoing
- Personalized
- Helpful & supportive
- Evidence-based/expert
- Strategies for coping
- Increase grief-literacy
- Include two supporters
- Affordable
- Delivered anywhere



What mattered to them:

- Feeling seen and heard
- Validating/normalizing
- Convenient/archive
- Coping skills
- Timely
- Grief literacy
- Ongoing
- Supportive/helpful
- Personalized
- Remembered important dates

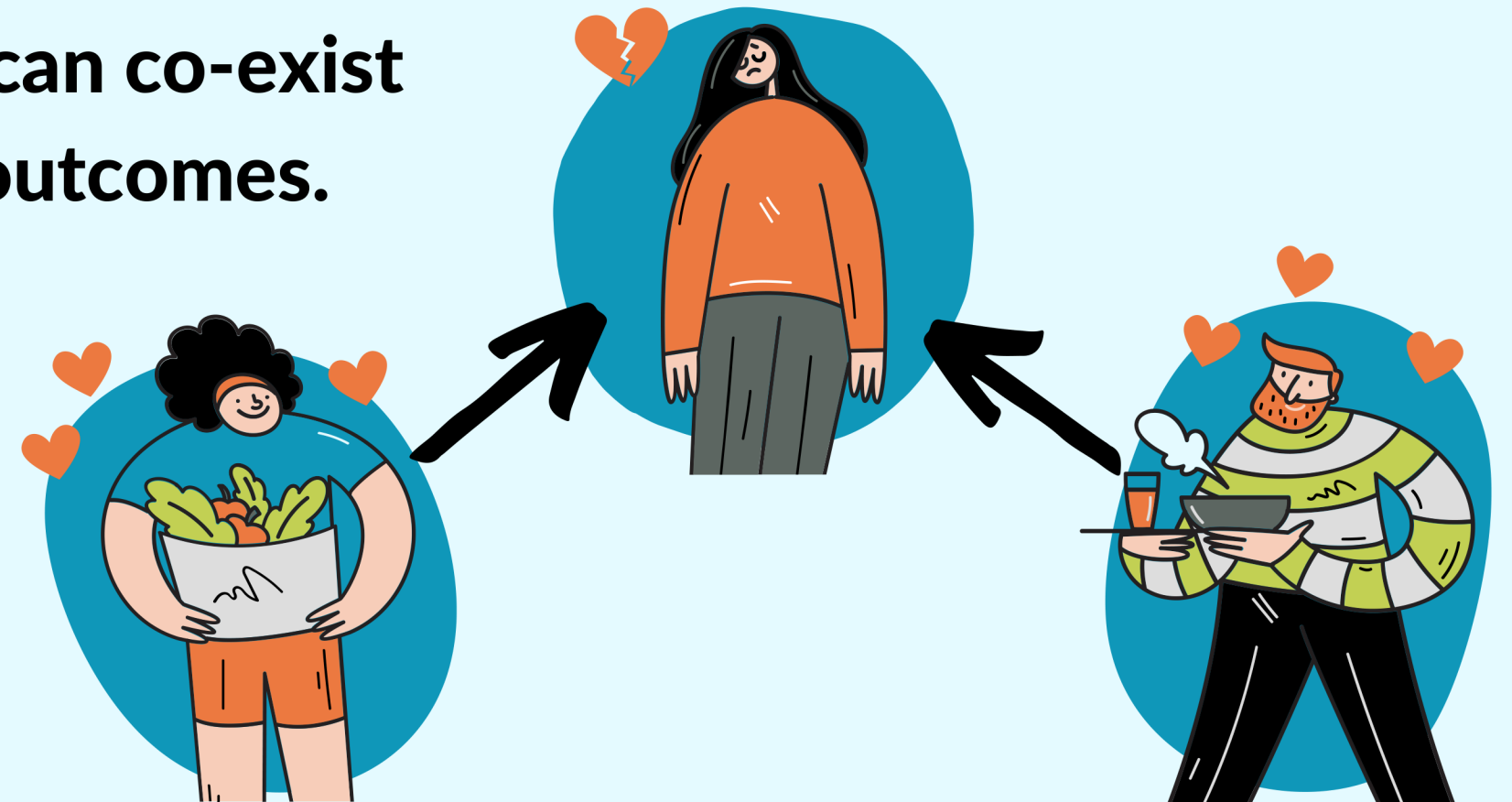
WE STILL HAVE A LOT TO LEARN

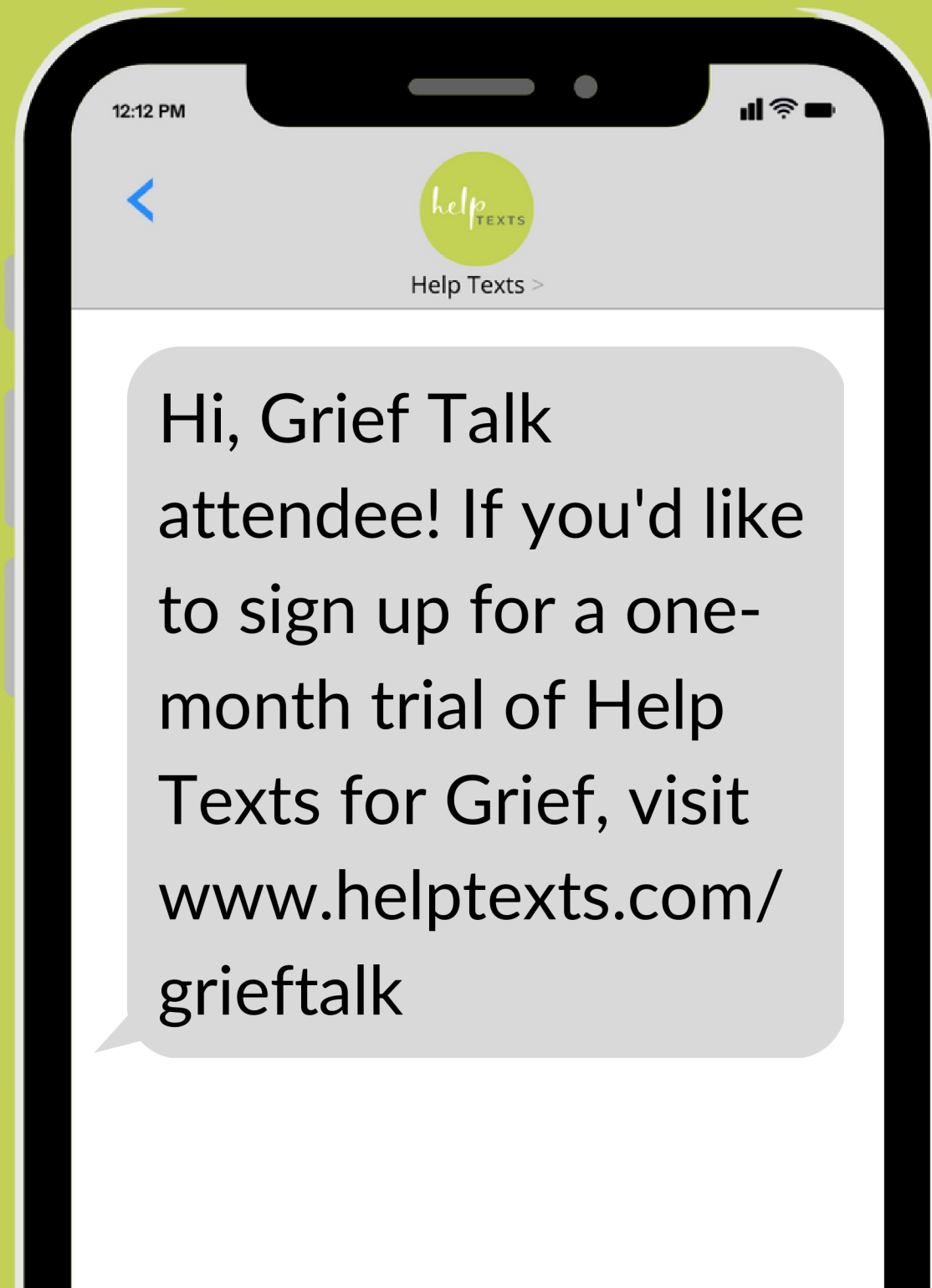


Grief-informed texting is just one of many new, innovative & proven ways to support griever. (Let's think of more!)

Technology and human-centered work can co-exist and yield powerful and transformative outcomes.

We live in a diverse world with diverse needs and barriers, we must shine a light on all forms of accessible and effective support.





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