When we are confronted by painful thoughts or memories it is natural to want to push them away.

Unfortunately, human beings are not very good at not thinking of something.

You can try this for yourself:

For the next 30 seconds, try as hard as you can not to think of a white bear.

Count how many times you think of a white bear.

You will probably find that it’s quite difficult.

The more we try to NOT think of something, the more we end up thinking about it.

Further, once we have stopped trying-not-to-think-of-something there is a tendency to think more than usual about that thing. This is sometimes called the ‘rebound effect’.