

UNC-CH School of Social Work
Clinical Lecture Series

presents

The Journey of Grief: For the Clinician and Client

October 19, 2009

Steve Bradley-Bull, MA, MEd, LPC
Center for All Seasons
center4allseasons@hotmail.com



Intention of Lecture

- ▶ **Aim:** Help prepare participants to work more effectively with grieving clients through exploring participants' own losses and perspectives on life, death, and grief.
- ▶ **Methods:** Offering participants additional knowledge and engaging participants in a variety of experiential exercises related to grief and mourning.

Check-In

- ▶ Name and/or relationship to you
- ▶ Something that has been helpful for you in your grief

Grief and Mourning: Defined

Grief — The thoughts and feelings on the inside after someone dies

Mourning — The outward expression of those thoughts and feelings

“We all grieve when someone dies, but if we are to heal, we must also mourn.”

~ Alan D. Wolfelt

Grief and Mourning: Impacts

Both impact our entire experience

- ▶ physically
- ▶ cognitively
- ▶ emotionally
- ▶ behaviorally
- ▶ religiously / spiritually

Grief and Mourning: Experience

Our experience

- ▶ is never completed but is instead managed
- ▶ is a process of remembering and maintaining a relationship with the deceased
- ▶ is an individualistic process

Grief and Mourning: Process

- ▶ “Moving forward with our life knowing our loved one is no longer here.”
- ▶ There are basic needs or aspects of grief and mourning that we need to “yield” to or “experience fully” if we are to heal.

~ Alan D. Wolfelt

Self-Care

Early, often, throughout:

- ▶ Eating
- ▶ Sleeping
- ▶ Exercise / Movement
- ▶ Support (internal and external)



Acknowledging the Reality of the Death

Acknowledging

REACTING

Experience: Shock, denial, fear, relief

Interventions:
Story telling

Concerns: Unhealthy coping mechanisms

Needs: Normalization, safety, planning



Experiencing the Pain of Loss

Experiencing

REACTING

Experience:

Feelings, realizations, questions

Interventions:

Healthy and safe environment

Concerns: Avoidance

Needs: Trust, space, support



Remembering the Person Who Died and the Relationship Realistically

Experience: Ambivalence,
confusion, connection

Interventions:

Remembering

Concerns: Cultural
complications

Needs: Permission,
honesty, rituals

RESPONDING

Remembering



Searching for Meaning

Experience: Self inquiry

Interventions:

Education and exploration

Concerns: Not maintaining a healthy relationship with the deceased

Needs: Understanding, acceptance, meaning

Searching

RESPONDING



Developing a New Identity and Re-investing in the Future

Experience: Adjustment,
awareness, resistance

Interventions: Facilitation,
goal setting, problem
solving

Concerns: Frustration,
fear of future losses,
unhealthy positive aspects

Needs: Courage, self-
care, ongoing support

Developing

RESPONDING





Process of Grief and Mourning: Review

- ▶ Never completed; managed
- ▶ Need for process to be gradual
- ▶ Importance of engagement in process
- ▶ Variety of modalities for healing
- ▶ Awareness of cultural complications
- ▶ Process often “messy” and not linear





Wanting Memories

Kaeli Reichel



Check-In

- ▶ Were there any parts of the song that were meaningful to you or that related to your experience of grief and mourning?

Grief and Mourning Work



for ourselves
and
with others

Grief and Mourning: History

- ▶ Why do you grieve and mourn the way you do?
- ▶ What was modeled to you growing up?
- ▶ What cultural messages have you received about grief and mourning?
- ▶ What is similar now to how you grew up grieving and what is different?
- ▶ Are there any aspects of your grief and mourning (processes) that are not healthy?

Personal Relationship to Death

- ▶ Books
- ▶ Beliefs
- ▶ Practices

Five Remembrances

- ▶ I am of the nature to grow old. There is no way to escape growing old.
- ▶ I am of the nature to have ill health. There is no way to escape ill health.
- ▶ I am of the nature to die. There is no way to escape death.
- ▶ All that is dear to me and everyone I love are of the nature to change. There is no way to escape being separated from them.
- ▶ My actions are my only true belongings. I cannot escape the consequences of my actions. My actions are the ground on which I stand.

~ Buddha

Life Review

Stephen Levine suggests reflecting on

- ▶ gratitude
- ▶ forgiveness

I'm Ready

Tracy Chapman



Check-In

- ▶ Was there anything resonating for you related to the song?
- ▶ Are there practices that invite you to reflect on your beliefs and thoughts about your own death?

Blessings for Those Who Remain

Leader: In the rising of the sun and its going down,

People: We remember them.

Leader: In the blowing of the wind and the chill of winter,

People: We remember them.

Leader: In the opening buds and rebirth of spring,

People: We remember them.

Leader: In the blueness of the sky and the warmth of summer,

People: We remember them.

Leader: In the rustling of the leaves and the beauty of autumn,

People: We remember them.

Leader: In the beginning of the year and when it ends,

People: We remember them.

continued...

Blessings for Those Who Remain

continued...

Leader: When we are weary and in need of strength,

People: We remember them.

Leader: When we are lost and sick of heart,

People: We remember them.

Leader: When we have joys we yearn to share,

People: We remember them.

**Unison: So long as we live, they too shall live,
for they are a part of us, as we remember them.**

“The Gates of Repentance”
Jewish High Holy Day Prayer Book

References



Kubler-Ross, E. (1968). *On Death and Dying*. New York: Touchstone.

Levine, S. (1997). *A Year to Live: How to Live This Year as if It Were Your Last*. New York: Bell Tower.

Wolfelt, A. D. (2007). Center for Loss and Life Transition. *The Journey Through Grief: The Mourner's Six Reconciliation Needs*. Retrieved on October 10, 2009, from <http://www.centerforloss.com/articles.php?file=journey.php>

Unicorn Bereavement Center: Duke Home Care and Hospice.
1001 Corporate Drive, Hillsborough, NC 27278 (919) 644.6869
<http://dhch.duhs.duke.edu/modules/dhccbereave/index.php?id=1>

Additional resources on death, dying, and bereavement:
Ken Doka, Robert Neimeyer, Therese Rando, William Worden