Grief Is a Journey
Finding Your Path through Loss

Kenneth J. Doka, PhD
Professor of Gerontology, The College of New Rochelle
Senior Consultant, The Hospice Foundation of America
TAPS Advisory Board

Goals of this Webinar
• To debunk some of the myths of grief
• To assist individuals grieving a loss by:
  – Validating grief
  – Offering advice for coping with loss
  – Exploring special losses

The Myths of Grief
• Grief is a journey through predictable stages
• Grief has a timetable
• Grief is about detachment
• Grief only occurs after a death
• Grief ends with closure and detachment

How to Avoid Grief
• Avoid any attachments!
• Grief is the price we pay for love

What is Grief?
• A reaction to loss
  Each reaction is individual, impacted in part by:
  • Relationship
  • Circumstances of death and life
  • Support (both internal and external)
  • Health
  • Culture and spirituality

Grief
• Affects us in many ways
  – Physically
  – Emotionally
  – Intellectually
  – Behaviorally
  – Even spiritually
**Styles of Grief**
- Grieving styles help find a path through grief
  - Instrumental vs. Intuitive
  - Styles on a continuum

  How we grieve is not a measure of love

**Grief as a Roller Coaster**
- Coping with grief and grieving styles as a family
  - Complementary or symmetrical?
  - Isolating or interacting?
  - Conflicting or respectful?

**Resilience as a Pattern**
- "Am I doing too well?"
- Some people have a comparatively limited reaction to loss, due to:
  - Fewer losses or other stress
  - Death was not sudden
  - Intrinsic spirituality
  - Good psychological health
- Patterns of resilience can teach us something

**Resilient Grievers**
- Had an optimistic mindset
- Responded to challenges
- Held the belief that, even in the worst situations, they could learn and grow
- Focused on positive memories

**Grief**
- No timetable to grief
- Over time, the pain lessens
- We return to similar, sometimes better, levels of functioning
- Yet bond always continues

**Continuing Bonds**
- Memories
- Biography
- Legacies
- Extraordinary experiences
- Spiritual connections
Continuing Bonds
• The lessening of grief is not the end of memory or attachment
• As the pain ebbs, positive memories become more common
• Surges of grief may still occur

When Grief Is Sudden
• A dual challenge
  – The challenge of grief
  – The challenge to our assumptive world, impacting concepts of benevolence, meaning, fairness, identity, and predictability
• Not necessarily easier or harder, just different

What Can Help?
• Choices in grief
• Catherine Sanders’s “Phases of Grief”
  – Shock
  – Awareness of loss
  – Conservation and withdrawal
  – The turning point
  – Renewal
• Worden’s Tasks

Accepting Reality
• The role of the funeral and other rituals
• Talking about the loss freely

Experiencing Emotions
• No need to bottle feelings
• Understanding ambivalence and finishing business
• Planning for difficult times

Adjusting to Life without the Person
• Assessing change
• Coping with loneliness
• Drawing from strengths and avoiding past weaknesses
• Recognizing secondary losses
• Getting support (D, L, R)
Continuing the Bond

- Building in moments to remember or reaffirm

*Sanders’s Questions*
1. What do I wish to take from my old life into my new life?
2. What do I wish to leave behind?
3. What do I need to add?

Reviewing Faith and Meaning

- Challenge to our spirituality and assumptions
- How does your faith or philosophy speak to you?
- What resources does it offer (beliefs, practices, rituals, community)?

Resources for Your Struggle

- Books
- Self-help groups
- Counseling

Creating Rituals

- Types of Ritual
  - Continuity
  - Transition
  - Reconciliation
  - Affirmation

A Year From Now

- My exercise with my grief group
- My hope

Questions?

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Upcoming Event

- **Photographing Grief**
- **Date**
  - Wednesday, May 16 from 4:30 – 6:30 pm ET
- **Location**
  - TAPS Institute for Hope and Healing, 3033 Wilson Blvd., 3rd floor, Arlington, VA
- **Presenters**
  - What’s Your Grief co-founders Lisa Williams and Eleanor Haley
- **Register here**
  - https://griefphoto.eventbrite.com

Ordering Books

- **Order from Amazon**
- **Order from Barnes & Noble**
  - https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/grief-is-a-journey-dr-kenneth-j-doka/1120912726

CE Info

If you would like to receive CEs for this program, please go to educate.hospicefoundation.org

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