

Grief Is a Journey **Finding Your Path through Loss**

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

How we grieve is not a measure of love

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Grief as a Roller Coaster

- Dual Process Model
- Ups and downs, good days and bad days
- Some predictable, some not
- Not universal stages but personal pathways (including resilience)

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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

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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

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Grief

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

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Continuing Bonds

- Memories
- Biography
- Legacies
- Extraordinary experiences
- Spiritual connections



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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

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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

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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

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Accepting Reality



- The role of the funeral and other rituals
- Talking about the loss freely

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Experiencing Emotions

- No need to bottle feelings
- Understanding ambivalence and finishing business
- Planning for difficult times



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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)

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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
Litsa Williams and Eleanor Haley
 - **Register here**
 - <https://griefphoto.eventbrite.com>



Ordering Books

- Order from Amazon
 - <https://www.amazon.com/Grief-Journey-Finding-Your-Through/dp/1476771510>
- 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

CE Code: GJNY

