**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 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)

**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

**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?
  - Conflicting or respectful?
  - How we grieve is not a measure of love

**Grief**

- Affects us in many ways
  - Physically
  - Emotionally
  - Intellectually
  - Behaviorally
  - Even spiritually

**How we grieve is not a measure of love**
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 Litsa 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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