

TAPS®

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors



Disenfranchised Grief: Military Perspectives



Welcome

Moderator

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Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors



This program is supported by the Hospice Foundation of America. □
For more information visit: www.hospicefoundation.org

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Learning Objectives

- Understand the concept of disenfranchised grief.
- Discuss military-specific issues that may lead to disenfranchised grief.
- Offer suggestions for assessment and intervention.



Continuing Education Credits

- Certificates of Attendance will be provided for those who attend the entire program and complete the evaluation.
- Please check with your state licensing board for your professional discipline requirements for continuing education.





Approved CE Providers

- **Chaplains:** The Association for Professional Chaplains will accept certificates of attendance for use in reporting continuing education hours.
- **Social Workers:** This program is approved by the National Association of Social Workers, Provider # 886505639, for 1.0 continuing education contact hours.
- **LPC:** Provider approved Licensed Practical Counselor (LPC) Credits for 1.0 continuing education contact hours through the *Grief, Loss and Life Transitions Graduate Certificate Program, Counseling Department, The George Washington University, Washington, D.C.*



Evaluation

- ALL participants seeking continuing education credits MUST fill out the online evaluation within 30 days of the program.
- You MUST provide your state and license number, as well as your email address on your evaluation in order to receive credit. CE certificates will be sent to you via email within 3-7 weeks of completion of the program.
- The evaluation will appear instantly after today's program. The form can also be found on www.taps.org/professionaleducation under the program title.



Certificates and Evaluations

To receive credit or certificate of attendance, fill out an evaluation of today's program at:
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This evaluation **MUST** be completed within 30 days. Your CE certificate will arrive in 4-6 weeks via the email you have provided. If you do not receive your certificate, please contact us at education@taps.org



Questions Today

If you have any questions today, please submit them through the webinar toolbar located at the bottom left of your screen. Time at the end of the program will be dedicated toward questions and answers.

To **Download** a copy of today's powerpoint presentation, click on the toolbar to the left of your screen to **PRINT DOCUMENTS** and **VIEW LINKS**.



The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors



Our Mission

TAPS provides ongoing emotional help, hope, and healing to all who are grieving the death of a loved one in military service to America, regardless of relationship to the deceased, geography, or circumstance of the death.

TAPS meets its mission by providing peer-based support, crisis care, casualty casework assistance, and grief & trauma resources.

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Since its inception, **TAPS**
Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors
has assisted more than 30,000
surviving family members, casualty
personnel and professional
caregivers.



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Guest Speaker

Kenneth J. Doka, PhD, MDiv



Professor of
Gerontology at the
Graduate School of The
College of New
Rochelle and Senior
Consultant to the
Hospice Foundation of
America (HFA).





Goals

- To review the nature of typical grief
- To discuss some of the types of losses that persons in the military and their families may experience
- To describe self-help strategies



Grief is a reaction to loss



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Grief May Be Manifested in Many Ways

- Physically
- Emotionally
- Cognitively
- Spiritually
- Behaviorally



The Grief Process

A Roller Coaster of Reactions



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Grief is a very individual reaction

The need to assess



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Grief is not a time-bound process
that ends in detachment

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Amelioration

- Pains diminishes
- Individuals function as well as they did (sometimes better) prior to the loss
- Yet, grief has a developmental effect



Types of Connections

- Memories
- Biography
- Legacies and liabilities
- Spiritual
- Extraordinary Experiences





Disenfranchised Grief



A loss that cannot
be socially
sanctioned, openly
acknowledged or
publicly mourned



"You know, we're just not reaching that guy."

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Beyond Feeling Rules

It is acceptable to grieve the deaths of family members



Contexts of Disenfranchised Grief

- Relationship is not recognized
- Loss is not acknowledged
- Griever is not recognized
- Disenfranchised deaths
- Ways individuals grieve



Relationship is not recognized

- Friend
- Ex-spouse
- Lover/partner
- Co-Worker
- Therapist/patient
- Caregiver
- Teacher/coach
- Celebrity
- Soldier



Military Ties Are Strong

- Work and live together
- Morale – *The American Soldier Study*
- Yet, loss of comrades often not acknowledged





Loss is not acknowledged

- Perinatal loss
- Elective abortion
- Incarceration
- Job loss
- Infertility
- Family abandonment or alienation
- Broken relationships - divorce
- Loss of an animal companion
- Relocation and return
- Psychosocial loss
- Illness and anticipatory grief



Grief and Deployment

- The nature of *anticipatory grief*
- A sense of loss may begin with deployment
- Grief reactions may exist throughout the deployment in military personnel and their families
- These feelings can be disenfranchised by self or others



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Stages in Family Reactions

- Pre-deployment
- Deployment
- Post-deployment
(reunification)





The Pre-Deployment Phase

- Can vary in time from days to months.
- Preparing for departure (including getting finances and documents in order).
- Remaining spouse may relocate near relatives/support system
- Often deep anxiety in family – some distancing may occur.





The Deployment Phase

- Usually about 6-18 months.
- Possible irregular contact between soldier and family increasing anxiety.
- Possible financial hardship.
- Changes in family system.





Deployment



- The reaction of the remaining spouse will greatly influence children's reactions
- Value of support groups



The Post-Deployment Phase



- Often a stressful time as fantasies may exist that everything will improve
- Reunion causes new changes within the system and possibly conflict
- Can be further complicated if soldier is wounded – physically or psychologically from combat experience



Media Coverage

- The way media covers the military action can have an effect on both the family's level of information and their sense of perceived support





Loss in the Military



- Service members are likely to experience multiple losses
- Physical and psychological injury
- Families may experience *psycho-social loss*
- These losses may be disenfranchised



Griever is not recognized
Disenfranchising Death

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A soldier's death

- Disenfranchisement of “dangerous work”
- Lack of understanding within and without of military culture





Military Losses Can Be Complicated

- The nature of military death
- The complication of MIA's





Ways Individuals Grief



- Understanding Instrumental Styles of Grieving



Deaths in the Military (Combat or Peacetime Casualties)



- Suddenness and “preventability” as complicating factors
- “Out of order” deaths and the loss of an assumptive world
- In Wars with mixed support – ambivalence and disenfranchised grief
- Spiritual issues



How Can We Help Ourselves?

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Sensitivity to Loss

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The Power of Naming

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Validate and Value Grief

Many people simply need to understand the process of grief and acknowledge that their reactions are within the parameters of typical grief



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Review Responses to Prior Losses



- What worked?
- What didn't?



Assess Strengths

- What Helped Before?
- External Sources of Help
 - L, D, R
- Spiritual Strengths



Encourage Decisions – Discourage Drift

- Small choices empower bigger ones
- You are the best person to know what you need
- Choose, communicate, compromise





Learn to Deal with Others

- The Value of Informal Support
- Coping with Insensitive Comments
- Linn's Questions
 - Why did it hurt?
 - What did it mean?
 - How could I respond?



Encourage Self-Care

- Grief and physical health
- Encourage Clients to Nurture Themselves
- Avoid undo stress





Utilize Resources such as Bibliotherapy

- Validation
- Hope
- Learn Coping
- Be Prescriptive





Analyze Empathic Failure

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Counter Empathic Failure

- Counseling
- Support Groups
- Therapeutic Ritual

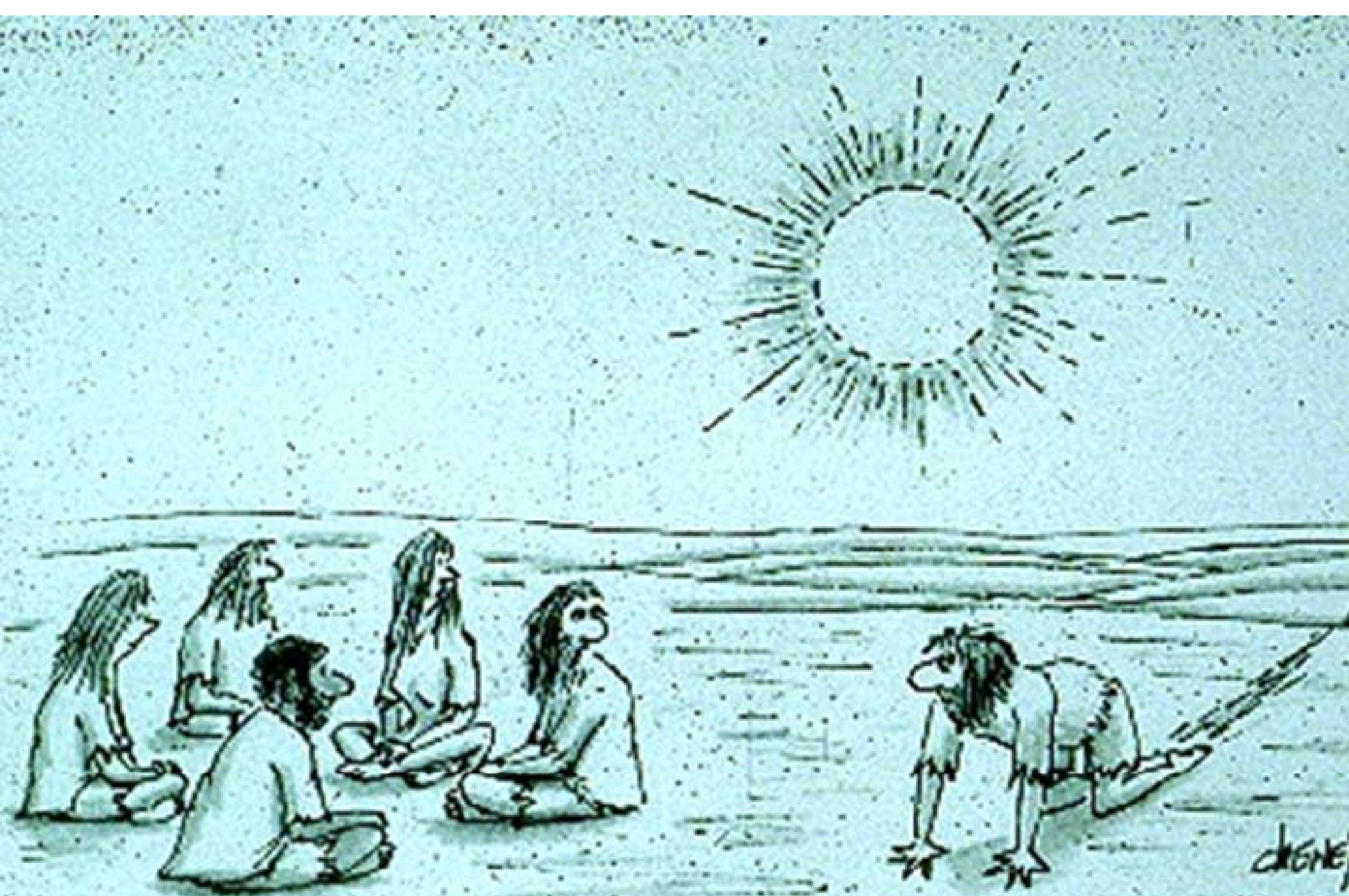


Counseling Individuals

The Tasks of Grief

- Acknowledge the loss
- Express manifest and latent emotion
- Adjust to a changed life
- Relocate the loss
- Reconstitute faith and philosophical systems challenged by the loss

Worden (Modified)



"Sorry, no water. We're just a support group."



Support Groups Have Value

- Validation
- Ventilation
- Respite and Support
- Learn Coping Techniques





The Value of TAPS

- Understanding and Enfranchising Others
- The Value of Shared Support and Ritual





The Value of Ritual and Memorials



- Ritual as liminal
- Social, psychological and spiritual Benefits
- A sacred moment, a sacred space



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Frank and Ernest



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QUESTIONS



Thank You for Joining Us

Please join us for our next webinar on Thursday,
May 19, 2011, 12 PM- 1PM EST featuring:

M. David Rudd, PhD, ABPP

**University of Utah, Dean, College of Social & Behavioral
Science, Professor of Psychology**

*“Understanding Combat Trauma: The Influence and
Impact of Survivor Guilt”*

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