

Grief Training Basics

For Faith-Based Grief Support

Rev. Dr. Dale A. Young



Comfort Those Who Mourn

- We can comfort those who mourn
- If we understand mourning and grief
- If we understand the grief journey
- If we understand the tasks of grief work.





Some Quotes About Grief

- Grief is a normal emotional response to significant loss.
 - Herbert Anderson, “All our losses, all our griefs.”
- Grieving is the intentional work grief-stricken persons engage in, enabling them to return eventually to full, satisfying lives.
 - Herbert Anderson, “All our losses, all our griefs.”





The Journey Through Grief

Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.

- I have learned that if we are to heal, we cannot skirt the outside edges of our grief. Instead, we must journey all through it, sometimes meandering the side roads, sometimes plowing directly into its raw center.
- I have also learned that the journey requires mourning. ...to mourn is to be an active participant in our grief journeys.





Kenneth Doka

“Living with Grief”

- Grief is often defined as the emotional reaction to loss.
- Emotions are not the whole story;
- in addition to feelings, a bereaved person may experience reactions that are distinctively cognitive, physical, behavioral, social or spiritual in nature.



Grief And Mourning

- If Grief is the normal human response to loss.
- Mourning is the cultural expression of loss.



Grief Manifestations

- Emotional
- Physical
- Cognitive
- Behavioral
- Social
- Spiritual



Manifestations of Grief: Emotional

- Anger
- Guilt
- Sadness
- Anxiety
- Relief
- Numbness
- Loneliness



Manifestations of Grief: Physical

- Loss of appetite
- Bodily aches and pains
- Insomnia
- Tension
- Nausea



Manifestations of Grief: Cognitive

- Confusion - inability to concentrate
- Constantly reviewing the loss
- Impaired judgment
- Absent-minded
- Disbelief
- Sense of “going crazy”



Manifestations of Grief: Behavioral

- Indecisiveness
- Sleep disturbance
- Social withdrawal
- Crying
- Sighing
- Self-medicating: use of tobacco, tranquilizers, alcohol or drugs.



Manifestations of Grief: Social

- Social disorganization/fragmentation/chaos
- Family Structure Reorganization
 - Who takes care of whom?
 - Shifts in care giving
 - Independence vs. dependence/interdependence
- Circling the wagons/family system
- Acceptance vs. Rejection
- Search for Social Support vs. Isolation



Manifestations of Grief: Spiritual

- Changes in spiritual beliefs or practices
- Anger at God
- Loss of faith
- Where is God in this?
- Comfort from faith
- Search for meaning



Grief as an Individual: Process

- Type of loss
- Type of death
- Circumstances around the death
- Nature of the relationship
- Characteristics of the bereaved person
- Social and cultural factors



Can you get over it?

Grief is not a time bound process that ends in detachment

We no longer talk about “closure” ;

Instead, we talk about living with our grief and healing the wounds of grief.



Tasks of Grief

How can we help?





Tasks of Grief

- **Acknowledging the reality of death/loss**
- **Facing the emotions of grief/Embracing the pain of loss**
- **Adjusting to a new life/Developing a new self-identity**
- **Searching for meaning**
- **Remembering**
- **Rebuilding faith**
- **Receiving ongoing support from others**



Tasks of Grief

Acknowledging the reality of the death/loss

- How can we help?
- Affirm that death truly happened. View the body.
- Attend the funeral.
- Talk about the deceased in past tense.



Tasks of Grief

Facing the emotions of grief (Embracing the pain of loss)

- How can we help?
- Listen without judging
- Show up.
- Be present.



Tasks of Grief

**Adjusting to a new life / living w. Loss
(Developing a new self-identity)**

- How can we help?
- Practical help.



Tasks of Grief

Searching for meaning

- How can we help?



Tasks of Grief

Remembering

- How can we help?
- Mention the name.
- Rituals
- Anniversaries



Tasks of Grief

Rebuilding Faith

- How can we help?



Tasks of Grief

Receiving ongoing support from others

- How can we help?
- Organize a grief support group.

If I can stop one Heart from breaking

I shall not live in vain

If I can ease one Life the Aching

Or cool one Pain

Or help one fainting Robin

Unto his Nest again

I shall not live in Vain.

- Emily Dickenson (1830-1886)



*Blessed are those who mourn;
for they shall be comforted.*

- ...and he will guide them to springs
 - Of the water of life,
 - And God will wipe away every tear
 - From their eyes.
- Revelation 7:17



Additional Grief Training

- Grief Support Group Facilitator Training
- Complicated Mourning due to Violence
- Pastoral Care of the Bereaved
- Understanding Grief in Children & Adolescents



Grief Training Basics

Sponsors of this training:

- Share Your Heart- Miami, Florida
- Global Grief Support, Inc.
Presenter: Rev. Dr. Dale A. Young