Grief and Loss: The Ongoing Face of Grief and Loss and the Theory Behind It

Presenter: Dan Dubovsky MSW
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Session Goals
- Examine views of death and mourning as experienced in a variety of cultures
- Describe physical and behavioral manifestations of grief
  - Discuss how these may be misinterpreted as symptoms of illness if the loss is not recognized
- Examine losses that persons with disabilities and their families, as well as providers, experience
- Discuss the importance of addressing these losses

Theory of Loss and Grieving
- Theoretical Basis for Loss and Grieving Through Death
- Theoretical Basis for Addressing Ongoing Losses
  - Physical and Behavioral Manifestations of Grief
**Cultures and Loss**
- Attitudes towards life and death
- Expression of pain, suffering and grief
- Acceptance of outside help
- Expectations of family responsibility
- Gender roles

Dubovsky (1997)

**Dealing with Death and Dying**
- Denial and isolation
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Depression
- Acceptance

Kübler-Ross (1969)

**Common Responses Associated with Loss**
- Denial
- Guilt
- Grief
- Psychosomatic manifestations
- Reconsideration of life’s meanings

Katz and Floria (1986-7)
Physical Manifestations of Grief

- Hollowness in the stomach
- Tightness in the chest and throat
- Shortness of breath
- Oversensitivity to noise

Adapted From Pickett (1993)

Physical Manifestations of Grief

- Muscle weakness
- Lack of energy
- Dry mouth
- Hallucinations
- Mask-like face

Adapted From Pickett (1993)

Behaviors Associated with Grief

- Sleep disturbances
- Appetite disturbances
- Absent-minded behavior
- Social withdrawal
- Distressing dreams

Adapted From Pickett (1993)
Behaviors Associated with Grief

- Sighing
- Restlessness
- Crying
- Anger outbursts
- Mood swings

Adapted From Pickett (1993)

Losses Experienced by Individuals

- Losses Experienced by Individuals with Disabilities
- Losses Experienced by Families of Individuals with Disabilities
- Losses Experienced by Service Providers

Losses Experienced by Families

- Hopes and dreams
- The enjoyment of birth and infancy
- Self-esteem and competence
- Balanced family system
- Support from family, friends, community

Dubovsky (1996)
Losses Experienced by Families

- Companionship
- Their loved one (placement, suicide, leaving the family)
- Faith
- Financial security
- Privacy

Dubovsky (1996)

Losses Experienced by Families

- Freedom
- Social network
- The ability to “kvell”
- Security about the future
- Control

Dubovsky (1996)

Blame Checklist

Check off all those whom you can blame for the problems you encounter:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yourself</td>
<td>Infomercials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your significant other</td>
<td>Aliens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genetics</td>
<td>The line-up of the planets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The system”</td>
<td>A superior being</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dubovsky (1998)
Losses Experienced by Persons with Disabilities

- Hopes and dreams
- Self-esteem and competence
- Balanced family system
- Peer relationships
- Intimate relationships
- Support from others

Dubovsky (1996)

Losses Experienced by Persons with Disabilities

- Their family (through separations)
- Consistent caregivers
- Vocational/educational opportunities
- A role in the family and in society
- Joy and pleasure

Dubovsky (1996)

Losses Experienced by Persons with Disabilities

- Potential/talents
- Companionship
- The ability to be like everyone else
- Freedom
- Security about the future
- Control

Dubovsky (1996)
**Losses Experienced by Providers**
- Hopes and dreams
- Self-esteem and competence
- Relationships
- The ability to “kvell”
- Faith
- Security about the future
- Control

Dubovsky (1998)

**Issues in Grief**
- Factors That Influence the Response to Loss
- Tasks That People Who Are Grieving Experience

**Risk Factors for Prolonged Grief**
- History of multiple losses
- History of incomplete management of grief
- Inadequate social supports
- Unrecognized or stigmatized loss
- Social isolation

Dubovsky (1998)
Dimensions in Adjustment to Loss

Response
- Intensity of response to loss

Duration
- Time needed to resolve emotional issues

Effects
- Degree of disruption to the individual and family system

Adapted from Rosen (1990)

Tasks That Grieving Persons Need To Perform

- The family’s shared knowledge and acceptance of the reality of the loss
- The family’s shared experience of the pain of grief
- Reorganization of the family system
- Redirection of relationships and goals

Adapted from Rosen (1990)

Helping Individuals Address Loss and Grieving
Providing Help to Individuals and Their Families

- Really listen
- Be honest
- Raise awareness of experiences of separation and loss
- Acknowledge losses experienced

Dubovsky (1996)

Providing Help to Individuals and Their Families

- Validate losses experienced
- Avoid “good parent/bad parent” issues
- Support confronting losses in a positive manner
- Encourage communication

Dubovsky (1996)

Providing Help to Individuals and Their Families

- Genuinely care
- Be there for support
- Acknowledge your own feelings about loss
- Refer for further treatment when necessary

Dubovsky (1996)
“Times of loss offer people the opportunity to:
- Deepen emotionally
- Grow in maturity
- Experience healing
- Connect to one another as human beings

…Don’t let this opportunity go by!”

Dubovsky 1999

Reference
➢ Contact Information
➢ Source Material

Contact Information
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**Source Material**

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**Source Material**


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**Source Material**

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