





**HOSPICE
OF THE
WESTERN
RESERVE**

Transitioning Through Grief
Mary Murphy, M.Ed., LPC




Reflection



For Grief


A Poem By
John O'Donohue



What Is Grief?

- ♦ A *normal, natural and necessary* response to a loss
- ♦ A *process*, not an event
- ♦ A *unique* experience that operates on an *individual timeline*

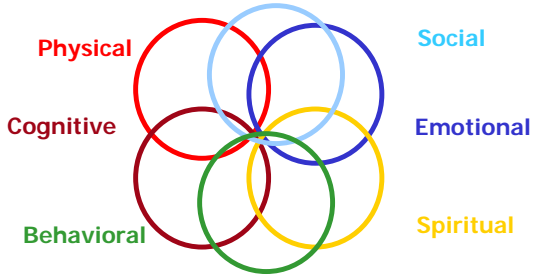
Determinants of Grief



- ♦ Nature of relationship
- ♦ History with the person
- ♦ How the person died
- ♦ Personality of bereaved
- ♦ Social variables
- ♦ Other stresses

Worden, 1991

Aspects of Grief



The diagram consists of five overlapping circles arranged in a circle. Each circle is labeled with an aspect of grief: Physical (red), Cognitive (dark red), Behavioral (green), Social (blue), Emotional (yellow), and Spiritual (orange). The circles overlap in the center, representing the interconnected nature of these aspects.

Common Grief Reactions



- ✓ Fatigue/sleeplessness
- ✓ Irritability/mood swings
- ✓ Less attention to details
- ✓ Personality changes
- ✓ Withdrawal from others
- ✓ Decreased productivity
- ✓ Decreased motivation

Supports through Grief



- Social
- Spiritual
- Family history of adaptive grief experiences
- Ability to express through
 - Verbal/written
 - Art
 - Music
 - Kinesthetic
 - Nature
 - Ritualizing

The Four Tasks of Grief



- ◆ Task I: To accept the reality of the loss
- ◆ Task II: To work through to the pain of grief
- ◆ Task III: To adjust to an environment which the deceased is missing
- ◆ Task IV: To find an enduring connection with the deceased in the midst of embarking on a new life

(Worden, 1991)

Tasks of Grief



- ◆ Task I:
To accept the reality of the loss

C. S. Lewis



I look up at the night sky. Is anything more certain than that in all those vast times and spaces, if I were allowed to search them, I should nowhere find her face, her voice, her touch? She died. She is dead. Is the word so difficult to learn?

(A Grief Observed, p. 15)

Tasks of Grief



- ◆ Task II:
To work through to the pain of grief

Coretta Scott King on Grief



We had talked about it, joked about it, prayed about it. He had prepared me, but when death actually arrived, the feeling of separation was overwhelming. Our bedroom was filled with emptiness. My nights were lonely. In church, the preachers often said that suffering would endure for a night, and joy would come in the morning. But, I assure you, morning does not return without a long passage through the lonely nights of heartache. Sometimes I felt that my joy would never return.

Tasks of Grief



◆ Task III:

To adjust to an environment which the deceased is missing

Joseph Biden



For the first time in my life, I understood how someone could consciously decide to commit suicide. Not because they were deranged, not because they were nuts, because they had been to the top of the mountain, and they just knew in their heart they would never get there again. There will come a day - I promise you, and your parents as well - when the thought of your son or daughter, or your husband or wife, brings a smile to your lips before it brings a tear to your eye. It will happen.

(Speech to military families, 2012)

Tasks of Grief



◆ Task IV:

To find an enduring connection with the deceased and reinvest in life and relationships.

Harriet Sarnoff Schiff



As long as I live, I will be sorry Robby is dead. That is fact. That is something I carry always. There are times, especially the good times, when I miss him still. But there are still good times. We share joys as a family that he did not live to share and I am sorry. But we still have joys. That is as it should be for us. That is as it should be for you.

(The Bereaved Parent, p. 146)

Kintsugi





With Gratitude