

# Basics of Grief

# Grief

An issue central in the life of  
every human being

# Grief Myths

- Disease
- Dysfunctional
- Result of human weakness
- Due to lack of spirituality

# Core Thoughts

- Unique journey
- Loss of someone profoundly cherished
- Intense emotional pain
- Result of having loved someone you have lost

# Grief is a Mystery Trip

- It is never a clear journey with warning signs, etc.
- This makes it also a very scary journey.
- A person's coping skills will be challenged as they never have before.

# The 4 D's in Dealing with Grief

- Denial
- Drugs
- Diversions
- Distractions

These keep people from going to the scary  
places of grief

# We Must Hurt to Heal

- When we run away, our grief remains unhealed
- Time will never heal grief.
- What we do with time will lead to healing
- We need to work it through
- We can't get over it, but we must go through it.

# General Needs of Bereaved

- Understanding and comfort in dealing with their loss.
- Those whose loss was sudden will vary with those who have lost someone to prolonged illness.
- Those who lost someone due to prolonged illness greatest time of need is while the person is dying.

## General Needs 2

- The grief period of sudden death is usually much longer. The real impact of grief may surface months after the event. By then there is a danger that friends have stopped visiting or have grown too impatient to listen
- Both excessive grief and lack of grief are abnormal
- The average grief cycle is 24 months.

# At the loss of a Loved One

## What People Need

Permission to grieve

Hope

Comfort/support

Understanding grief cycle

## Don't Need

Sermonizing

Bible quoted to them

Told what to feel

Indifference

“Grief is not a problem to be cured. It is a simple statement that you loved somebody”

# Managing the Loss

- Promote the grief work.
- Surround yourself with family and friends.
- Avoid medications such as sedatives.
- Refrain from making hasty decisions.
- Recall the unforgettable memories.
- Consult with professionals if grief comes too intense.
- Share you feeling with others.
- Establish goals for yourself.
- Maintain hope.

# “Get Over It”

- Extremely insensitive
- Means there will come a time when you won't care anymore.
- I hope this time never comes for me.

# You Can't Get Over It

- But you can live through it.
- You can survive to a new life, a new identity to who you are.

# Answers

- Grieving people don't look for answers, they look for direction.
- They are hoping we will ask what they think.
- We have to listen, listen, listen.

# What Not To Do

- Be judgmental, criticize or blame
- Do most of the talking
- lie or tell half truths
- Use euphemisms like “gone away”, “resting”, “sleep”, etc.
- Be afraid to tell the student that you don’t know all the answers.
- Avoid the students
- Minimize the loss

# What Not to Do

- Change the subject
- Use clichés such as “we all have to die sometime”.
- Say “I know how you feel”
- Believe that a child or teen think the same way as an adult
- Attempt to become a substitute for the deceased.

# What Not to Do

- Think that a student's busy activity means he/she is being disrespectful or disinterested.
- Pressure the student to talk
- Tell them how they should feel.

# What We SHOULD Do

- Allow the new loss to take precedence with classmates
- Trust your instincts
- Initiate discussion of the loss if students don't bring it up
- Encourage students to attend visitation, funeral, memorial service
- Consider an appropriate memorial

# What We SHOULD Do

- Marshall positive forces in the student's life
- Realize that not talking about the loss doesn't make it go away
- Encourage classmates to be a support system for the grieving student and his/her family
- Communicate the knowledge that all feelings are okay and need to be expressed
- Recognize that laughter and play don't mean that the student did not love or care about the person who died.

# What We SHOULD Do

- remember the four “T”s in sympathy:  
Talk,  
Touch,  
Tears,  
Time
- Dispel guilt feelings

# Advice from Adolescent Support Groups to Caring Adults

- Mention the person who died **by name** – it personalizes the loss.
- Use words **died** and **death**.
- Be patient. If we cry, please understand. If we make you feel uncomfortable, we don't mean to.
- Please remember that the normal grief cycle is 24 months. In case of suicide, it may last even longer.

# More Advice

- “Thinking of you” cards or notes on anniversaries (death, wedding, etc.) or the dead person’s birthday are greatly appreciated. It is comforting to know that you remember and care.
- Please don’t tell us “I know how you feel.”
- Please don’t tell us “you have to take care of your mom or dad or other siblings”.
- Be happy with us when positive things happen to us.

# A Mystery Trip

- Grief is a mystery trip for all people.
- It will take us to scary places
- It should never be traveled alone.