

The Education Commission and COGIC Scholars Ministry Seminar

“Pastoral Care: Leading People Through Times of Grief”

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"It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, for death is the destiny of everyone; the living should take this to heart." —Ecclesiastes 7:2

“When you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart.” – Jeremiah 29:13-14

1. Definition of Grief
2. Loss as the Normative Metaphor
3. Six Categories of Loss
 - a. Material loss
 - b. Role loss
 - c. Relationship loss
 - d. Systemic loss
 - e. Functional loss
 - f. Intrapsychic loss
4. Six Types of Grief
 - a. Anticipatory grief
 - b. Sudden/traumatic grief
 - c. Chronic sorrow
 - d. “Near miss” grief
 - e. Pathological grief
 - f. Tragic sense of life grief
5. John Bowlby- Attachment Theory
 - a. Goal of Attachment Theory
6. Understanding Grief as a Disease
 - a. Mourning is necessary
7. J. William Worden – Four Basic Tasks of Mourning
 - a. Task #1 Accept the Reality of the Loss
 - b. Task #2 Experience the Pain of Grief

- c. Task #3 Adjust to an Environment in which the deceased is missing
 - d. Task #4 Withdraw emotional energy and reinvest it in another relationship/Find an enduring connection with the deceased while embarking on a new life
8. Normal /Uncomplicated Grief – Broad Range of Feelings and Behaviors
(four general categories)
- a. Feelings
 - i. Sadness
 - ii. Anger
 - iii. Guilt and self-reproach
 - iv. Anxiety
 - v. Loneliness
 - vi. Fatigue
 - vii. Helplessness
 - viii. Shock
 - ix. Yearning
 - x. Emancipation
 - xi. Relief
 - xii. Numbness
 - b. Physical Sensations
 - i. Hollowness in the stomach
 - ii. Tightness in throat/chest
 - iii. Oversensitivity to noise
 - iv. Sense of depersonalization
 - v. Breathlessness
 - vi. Weakness in the muscles
 - vii. Lack of energy
 - viii. Dry mouth
 - c. Cognitions
 - i. Disbelief
 - ii. Confusion
 - iii. Preoccupation
 - iv. Sense of presence
 - v. Hallucinations
 - d. Behaviors
 - i. Sleep disturbance
 - ii. Appetite disturbance
 - iii. Absent minded behavior
 - iv. Social withdrawal
 - v. Dream of the deceased
 - vi. Avoiding reminders of the deceased

- vii. Search and calling out
- viii. Sighing
- ix. Restless over activity
- x. Crying
- xi. Visiting places or carrying objects that remind the bereaved of the deceased
- xii. Treasuring objects

9. Determinants of Grief

- a. Who was the person?
- b. The nature of the attachment
- c. Mode of death
- d. Historical antecedents
- e. Personality variables
- f. Social variables

10. Complicated Grief

- a. Grief Counseling vs. Grief Therapy
- b. Goals of Grief
 - i. To increase the reality of the loss
 - ii. To help the counselee deal with both expressed and latent affect
 - iii. To help the bereaved overcome various impediments to readjustment after the loss
 - iv. To encourage the counselee to make healthy emotional withdrawal from the deceased and feel comfortable reinvesting that emotional energy in another relationship

11. Use of Medicines

- a. Overall Consensus
- b. When Needed

12. Facilitating Grief Through the Funeral Ritual

- a. Importance of Funeral to Grief Process
 - i. Can help make real the fact of the loss
 - ii. Can give people an opportunity to express thoughts and feelings about the deceased
 - iii. Can reflect the life of the person who is gone
 - iv. Can draw a social support network close to the bereaved after the loss has occurred

13. Abnormal Grief/Complicated Mourning (Reasons why people fail to grieve)

- a. Relational Factors
 - i. Highly ambivalent relationship
 - ii. Highly narcissistically charged relationship
 - iii. Highly dependent relationship

- b. Circumstantial Factors
 - i. Loss is uncertain
 - 10 MIAs (Vietnam, Korean War, WWI, WWII)
 - 11 No body (9-11/World Trade Center)
 - 12 Multiple Losses (earthquake, fires, airplane crashes)
 - c. Historical Factors
 - i. Inability to tolerate emotional stress
 - ii. Inability to tolerate feelings of dependency well
 - iii. Very independent person
 - iv. Strong sense of one's self concept
 - d. Social Factors
 - i. Loss is socially unspeakable (suicide, AIDS)
 - ii. Loss is socially negated (abortion)
 - iii. When the person and those around him/her act as if the loss never happened
 - iv. Absence of social network
 - v. Bereaved lack others who know the deceased to give them support
14. Best Approaches for Helping Someone Who is Grieving
- a. Communicating openly about the loss
 - b. Placing oneself in the presence of reminders of the deceased
 - c. Reminding the bereaved that their feelings, thoughts, and behaviors are natural and acceptable
 - d. Praying with and for the bereaved
 - e. Encouraging the bereaved to read and reflect on scripture
 - f. Postponing deeper reflection on theological questions or concerns
 - g. Linking the bereaved with additional resources
15. Conclusion
- a. Quote from Pastoral Psychotherapist Margaret Kornfeld

“What is the process by which grief is lived through? How do widows who were married for forty years reorganize their inner experience to become independent, to think of themselves as “I” not “We”? Where does this courage come from? The human spirit is fortified by Grace.”

References

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Scripture References

Psalms of Lament:

Psalms 3-7, 10-14, 16,17, 22, 23, 25-28, 31, 35, 36, 38, 39, 51-59, 61-64, 69, 71, 73, 86, 88, 102, and 130 (Claus Westermann, 1980, 53)

Helpful Bible Verses:

Psalms 119:76	Matthew 11:28	Deuteronomy 33:27	Jeremiah 29: 13-14
Psalms 23:4	Psalms 46:1	Psalms 119:50	Isaiah 57:18
Isaiah 66:13	Matthew 5:4	Romans 15:13	I Thessalonians 4:13-14
Revelations 21:3-4			