



TOPIC 1 THE GRIEVING PROCESS

Remember that grief is a process that can last a long time, and everyone experiences it differently. Most people who experiencing a deep grief, often question whether they are 'suffering sufficiently'. In fact, the signs and symptoms of grief and depression can be very similar. Experiencing grief is necessary, and feelings of sadness and of emptiness does not mean that the griever is depressed. Grief is an extremely painful emotional state, but differentiating intense grief from depression is not always easy. It is common for people to confuse uncomplicated grief (normal grieving process) with a depressive disorder, but the duration of the symptoms, the characteristics, and the severity, help us to distinguish them. It's important to be kind to yourself and seek professional help if you feel like you can't handle the pain on your own and/or discern the difference between one and the other.

Module 4:

After death

IN THE GRIEVING PROCESS:

- Feelings of emptiness and loss may occur.
- Sudden and transient swings in mood, which usually decrease over the course of the days and/or occur in waves.
- The pain of grief can also be accompanied by positive emotions and moods.
- The content of thoughts usually focuses on memories of the deceased.
- Self-esteem is usually preserved.
- Grief has a very clear trigger: the loss of someone or something.
- The intense sadness, anxiety, and lack of motivation inherent in grief tend to last for a specific period, which varies greatly between people.
- In the initial phase, there may be a lot of anguish and deep sadness, but usually, as the weeks or months go by, these feelings weaken.

Grief is a primal reaction, and each person grieves differently based on their personality, previous losses, relationship with the deceased person, and environment. An important component of grief is the deep sadness you feel in the face of a loss, as it serves a specific purpose.

The key to healing this deep pain or sadness is not to ignore it, but to take care of it. Paying attention to that deep inner sadness, tuning into your pain, pausing, and reflecting, will help you better understand how you feel, what you need, and what to do going forward. Moreover, as time goes by, you will become aware that these moments of pain and deep sadness will become less and less intense and less frequent.

Try not to isolate yourself too much, because in between these moments of deep sadness, most people are able to experience some pleasures and receive comfort, whether through the support of other family members, a good friend and/or even other people of your community.





...at the end of life



IN DEPRESSION:

- Feelings of hopelessness and apathy may occur.
- A depressed mood is persistent and there is an inability to feel happiness or pleasure.
- The depressed mood is not linked to specific thoughts or concerns.
- There is widespread unhappiness and distress (for no reason).
- The thought pattern is usually made up of self-deprecating or pessimistic ruminations, and possibly feelings of self-worthlessness and/or self-loathing.
- Symptoms of sadness and anxiety don't always have a specific trigger.
- Symptoms such as intense sadness, anxiety and lack of motivation can be quite long-lasting and intense.
- Symptoms such as anguish and deep sadness tend to worsen over time, causing a serious and significant impact on the person's functional life (whether in interpersonal relationships, at work, school, etc.)

If you find that you've lost all interest in everything you previously cared about and can't find joy or meaning in any of the moments in your life, you may be suffering from clinical depression.

If your symptoms don't go away or if you have a history of depression, it's important to contact a mental health professional or your doctor.

Depression is treatable, either through ongoing counselling, psychological support or if necessary, using medication, prescribed by a doctor.

Don't suffer in silence, seek help.

How to use the flashcard

This flashcard aims to help you differentiate some signs and differences between the grieving process and depression, to normalise the emotional symptoms, you are experiencing, or on the contrary, alert you to the need to seek professional help, if you identify some warning signs.

Having someone to talk to, share feelings with, and seek guidance with can make a big difference in your ability to cope with loss.

Tips for Trainers

Each person deals with loss in a unique way, and there is no 'right' or 'wrong' approach. Offering support, understanding, and empathy to someone who is grieving is essential to help with the healing process.

It's important to understand the difference between clinical depression and the naturally deep sadness that accompanies grief. To be able to differentiate, a careful assessment of the current and previous psychic condition is necessary, and it should be carried out by a health professional.



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