



TOPIC 2 FAMILY IN MOURNING

Dealing with grief after the death of a loved one, following a terminal illness, is a challenging experience for any family. It is very common for grief to be experienced differently by each member of the same family. Each family member may react differently to grief, and it's important to recognize and respect these differences.

People have distinct personalities, experiences, and ways of dealing with emotions, which significantly influences how they cope with their loss of a loved one. Empathy, mutual support, and understanding of the various ways of experiencing grief can even strengthen family bonds and make it easier to overcome this difficult period.

Here are some reasons why grief can be experienced differently:

1. **Personality:** Different personalities can lead people to express and cope with grief in unique ways. Someone who is more extroverted may seek support through talking and interaction, while a more introverted person may prefer to process internally.
2. **Relationship with the deceased:** The type of relationship each family member had with the deceased can profoundly influence how they cope with the loss. For example, the grief of a spouse may be different from the grief of a child or a sibling.
3. **Previous experiences of loss:** Experiences of previous loss, trauma, or emotional challenges, can shape the way a person copes with grief.
4. **Stages of grief:** The grieving process is often described by stages, such as denial, anger, negotiation, depression, and acceptance. Everyone can go through these stages differently and at different timings.
5. **Beliefs and values:** Each person's religious, spiritual, or philosophical beliefs can influence how they interpret and cope with death, directly affecting their grieving process.
6. **Coping strategies:** Coping strategies vary from person to person. Some may resort to religion, others to work, physical activity, artistic expression, etc.
7. **Emotional communication:** Some people are more emotionally expressive, while others may have difficulty sharing their feelings. This can impact how they externalize and seek support during grief.

Module 4:

After death



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...at the end of life



Here are some suggestions for exercises and dynamics to work on grief as a family:

- **Circle of Remembrance:** Invite the family to sit in a circle and encourage each person to share a special memory about the deceased loved one. This can help to celebrate the life of the person they have lost and to remember happy times.
- **Tree of Memories:** Draw a large tree on a piece of paper or cardstock. On smaller sheets of paper, write down memories, messages, or feelings related to the deceased loved one. Placing these leaves on the tree to build a collective memory.
- **Keepsake Box:** Provide a box and invite family members to place meaningful objects or souvenirs related to a loved one. Periodically, they will be able to open the box and share these items, promoting the sharing of stories.
- **Gratitude Journal:** Encourage family members to keep a gratitude journal, where they can regularly write down something they are grateful for towards their loved one. This can help focus on the positive memories.
- **Artistic Expression Wall:** Provide art supplies and invite family members to create a mural that represents their emotions and memories. This can include drawings, paintings, or collages.
- **Unsent Letters:** Writing letters to the deceased loved one, expressing feelings, unspoken thoughts, and unspoken words. These cards can be shared among family members (or keep them private, if they prefer) and later create a ritual, for example, of burning them.
- **Memory Candle:** Lighting a candle in memory of the loved one during special moments, such as birthdays or significant dates. This can become a symbolic ritual of honouring the person's life.
- **Box of feelings:** Put a variety of feelings (sadness, longing, joy, love, etc.) written on pieces of paper in a box. Invite family members to choose a role and share what they are feeling.
- **Conversation Circle:** Organize regular family conversation sessions to openly discuss grief, creating a safe environment for everyone to express their feelings.

TRAINER TIPS

This flashcard aims to work on grief in the family through exercises and dynamics that can help each of the members to better express their feelings, strengthen family bonds and face the process of loss together.

TRAINER TIPS

Finding family grief support videos/documents can be a valuable tool to help family members better understand and cope with the grieving process. When selecting videos/documents, look for those that resonate with the family's specific emotional needs.

Remember that it is essential to respect the rhythm and preferences of each family member during these activities, which should be adjusted according to the age and emotional sensitivity of the participants.



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