

Grief and Loss Talk

Presented to Health Watch USA

By Dr. Alan Cusher

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Grief

- Grief is a normal process and for most people does not produce an emotional reaction requiring counseling or professional intervention.
- One of the most accepted models discusses how the grieving process is facilitated by completion of the tasks of mourning.
- These have been formally described by Dr. William Worden:



Four Tasks of Mourning

- **Accept the loss**
 - **Acknowledge the pain of the loss**
 - **Adjust to world without the one lost**
 - **Find an enduring connection with the one lost while reinvesting in a new life direction**
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Modifying Factors of Grief Experience:

- The nature of the death (sudden death, prolonged illness, violent death, peaceful death)
 - The closeness of the relationship with the deceased
 - The nature of the relationship with the deceased (complicated, ambivalent, unresolved issues)
 - The degree to which the death conforms to or violates the assumptive norm (death of young child or young adult, crime victim).
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Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on the initial task of mourning

- **Accepting the Loss: Interference with any of the typical experiences of the dying process or mourning process that reinforce the reality of the death:**
 - **Not being present when the person is dying**
 - **Not witnessing the death or physically being able to view/touch the deceased**
 - **Not being present at the funeral, calling hours, burial.**
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Non-Death Related Losses

- Health and physical safety,
 - Job (professional identity),
 - Financial
 - Home
 - Freedom
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Non-Death Related Losses (Continued)

- Security
 - Social contacts
 - Routines
 - milestone events
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Calls with our Members and Families

- **Compassion and Empathy with boundaries.**
 - **Be compassionate and empathetic but within the boundaries of your role.**
 - **Listen**
 - **Say a kind word acknowledging the loss or distress**
 - **Refer or provide resources**
 - **Sometimes the most practical solutions are elusive to those in grief -it's ok to suggest the obvious**
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Compassion and Empathy with boundaries

- ▶ If there is no family and no friends, whom might they call?
- ▶ Try to maintain that buffer between the member's experiences and your own
- ▶ Try not to take on or take home (to the next room), the grief or distress you've heard about during work
- ▶ Use an APP or skill to decompress and relax for example: *Calm, Mindfulness, Breath Relax, Headspace*



Things to Say to the Bereaved

- ▶ I am so sorry for your loss.
- ▶ I wish I had the right words, just know I care.
- ▶ Avoid the open-ended unless you are prepared to spend some time hearing hard stuff: “I can’t imagine what you are going through, but I am here to listen if you need me.”



Things to Say to the Bereaved (continued)

- ▶ In general, questions invite further elaboration while empathetic expressions as statements can get your point across while allowing you to lead the conversation and keep it within bounds.
- ▶ “You seem to have so much to say about Based on what you are telling me, he/she must have been an important part of your life and so difficult to lose.
- ▶ I wonder if you might benefit from talking with someone who can help you process this loss.”

Resources

- ▶ **Helping others with Grief:**
<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/grief/helping-someone-who-is-grieving.htm>
- ▶ **Coping with Serious Illness:**
<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/grief/coping-with-a-life-threatening-illness.htm>
- ▶ **Grief:**
- ▶ <https://www.dougy.org/grief-resources/>
- ▶ **Boston Medical Center** <https://www.bmc.org/support-patients/bereavement-committee/adult-resources-and-grief-services>
- ▶ <https://www.caredimensions.org/grief-support/index.cfm>
- ▶ <https://mindfulnessandgrief.com/>