Lecture 6 Module 2 of 7

Disenfranchised Grief/ Complicated Grief

Disenfranchised Grief Grief that is experienced when a loss is not or cannot be: • Openly acknowledged • Publicly mourned

• Socially supported

Doka (1989). Disenfranchised Grief: Recognizing hidden sorrow.

Disenfranchised Grief (cont.)

Examples of Loss Not Recognized (loss itself not deemed socially significant)

- Perinatal Death
- Abortion
- Giving Up a Child for Adoption, Foster Care

Disenfranchised Grief (cont.)

Examples of Loss Not Recognized (loss itself not deemed socially significant)

- Surrogate Motherhood
- Separation, Divorce
- Pet Loss



Disenfranchised Grief (cont.) Examples of Griever Not Recognized (griever not socially defined as capable of grief)

- Young Children
- Mentally Disabled
- Aged Individuals
- Incarcerated

Disenfranchised Grief (cont.)

Examples of <u>Relationships</u> <u>Not Recognized</u> (society defines "legitimate" grievers as primarily familial)

- Extramarital
- Cohabitation
- Gay/Lesbian
- Neighbor

Disenfranchised Grief (cont.)

Examples of <u>Relationships</u> <u>Not Recognized</u> (society defines "legitimate" grievers as primarily familial)

- Colleague
- Roommates (as in nursing homes)
- Teachers/School Personnel
- Healthcare providers

Disenfranchised Grief (cont.) Additions (2002)

Circumstances of the Death

- Nature of the death - (suicide, AIDS)
- Death that provoke anxiety or embarrassment
 - (autoerotic asphyxiation, execution of prisoner)

Disenfranchised Grief (cont.) Additions (2002)

Ways Individuals Grieve

- Intuitive – (feeling)
- Instrumental
 - (cognitive, physical, behavioral)

"Normal" vs. Complicated Grief Reactions

- Dependent on many factors
 - Type of relationship with the deceased
 - When there is attachment, there is grieving.
 - Negative ties bind just as strongly as positive ties.

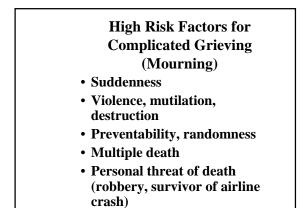
"Normal" vs. Complicated Grief Reactions (cont.)

- Dependent on many factors Death circumstances
 - -Personality/coping skills
 - -Life circumstances
 - Concurrent stressors
 - Financial problems
 - Physical/mental status

Rule of Thumb:

*Can or can't manage day-to-day living.





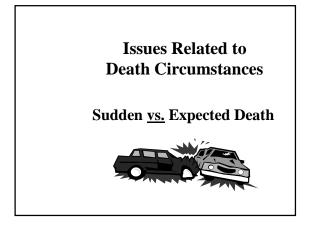
High Risk Factors for Complicated Grieving (Mourning) (cont.)

- Shocking encounters of death of others (see burning bodies)
- Antecedent variables

 difficult premorbid relationship with the deceased
 - previous or concurrent losses
- Specific types of death such as loss of a child

Reminder/Red Flag:

Assure adequate medical care - assess for PTSD



Sudden Death:

- No preparation
- No goodbye
- Unfinished business

Sudden Death: Suicide

- Overwhelms the survivors
- Sense of unreality
- Search for the Why?
- Sense of helplessness
- Feelings of rejection, abandonment

Sudden Death: Suicide (cont.)

- Issue of "preventability"
- Feelings of guilt, anger, rage
- Feelings of extreme vulnerability
- Unfinished business

Sudden Death: Homicide

- Feelings related to the senselessness, brutality of the act
- Fright related to rage at person who committed the act, sometimes desire to violently destroy this person
- Feelings of fear, loss of control, violation

Sudden Death: Homicide (cont.)

- Heightened sense of personal vulnerability
- Involvement with judicial system "secondary victimization"
- Media involvement which is often personally intrusive

Sudden Death: Homicide (cont.)

• Prolonged, intense period of rumination to work it through (why?)

Note: This type of death and the involvement of the legal system (often over a period of years) places the survivors at higher risk for complicated grief.

Accident

- Many of the same issues apply:
 - $-No \ goodbye$
 - -Range of emotions
 - Involvement of media, police, courts
 - -Unfinished business

End of Module 2