

The Rutgers DSW Program

Module Title: Loss II: Lifespan Approaches to Loss

Instructor:

Residency: March 2019

Time:

Module Description:

Losses occur throughout the lifespan; some are overt deaths of other humans, some are deaths of pets or celebrities that affect one, and yet the vast majority of losses are experienced day to day and may not even be recognized as losses, so much as felt in a way that destabilizes one. Starting with the premise that the destabilization of loss can promote growth, we will examine how individuals at progressive stages of the lifespan experience maturational, normative and other losses. We will discuss how different developmental stages create different contexts for coping with loss. The definition of loss will be a broad one, incorporating definitions that some might call progress rather than loss. Therefore, for each developmental phase, we will consider what happens when someone of that age dies, how someone of that age experiences the death of a loved one, what losses happen typically in that age span and what maturation occurs that leads to a sense of loss.

A sub-theme of this module will be that identity is continually re-worked as a result of processing different aspects of loss (including maturation). Particularly in the teens through mid-adulthood, identity aspects of loss hold sway. This has implications for therapeutic work of all sorts, not just grief work; the development of self-concepts and self-efficacy is known to have influence on individual's mental health and therefore loss and its identity changes are required knowledge for social workers in all areas of practice.

Module Objectives:

1. Consider the ways developmental stage affects the phenomena of grieving and frames the grieving process over a lifetime.
2. Describe typical losses at different developmental stages and way the "typicality" of those losses makes them harder to grieve.
3. Define the concept of maturational loss and identify several.

Required Readings:

1. Bennett, S. M., Litz, B. T., Sarnoff Lee, B., & Maguen, S. (2005). The scope and impact of perinatal loss: Current Status and future directions. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 36(2), 180-187.
2. Christ, G. H. (2000). The impact of development on children's mourning. *Cancer Practice*, 8 (2), 72-81.
3. Bagnoli, A. (2003). Imagining the lost other: The experience of loss and the process of identity construction in young adults. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 6 (2), 203-18.
4. Marshall, H.(2004). Mid-life loss of parents: from adult child to orphan. *Ageing International*, 29 (4), 351-367.
5. Ishii, H., Torunaga, Y., Kawatani, D., Nishizono, M., Ishii, H.. (1998). Clinical features of pathological grief reaction in the elderly. *Psychiatry & Clinical Neurosciences*, 52 (6), 571-576.

Recommended Readings:

1. Grout, L.A., Romanoff, B. D. (2000). The myth of the replacement child: Parents' stories after perinatal death. *Death Studies*, 24 (2), 93-113.
2. Neimeyer text- Ch 9- Buckle & Fleming- Parental challenges after the death of a child

3. Currier, J., Holland, J., & Neimeyer, R. (2007). The effectiveness of bereavement interventions with children: A meta-analytic review of controlled outcome research. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology, 36*, 253-259.
4. Christ, G. H., Siegel, K., Christ, Adolph, E. (2002). Adolescent Grief: It never really hit me... until it actually happened." *JAMA: Journal of the American Medical Association, 288* (10), 1269-79.
5. Cait, C.A.. (2004) Spiritual and religious transformation of females who are parentally bereaved in adolescence. *Omega: Journal of Death & Dying, 49* (2), 163-181.
6. Li Kitts, R. (2005). Gay adolescents and suicide: Understanding the association. *Adolescence, 40* (159), 621-28.
7. Murphy, S., Johnson, et al. (2003). Parents' responses after the death of their child due to accident, suicide or homicide. *Death Studies, 27* (1), 39-62.
8. Burke, L. A., Neimeyer, R. A., & McDevitt-Murphy, M. E. (2010). African American homicide bereavement: Aspects of social support that predict complicated grief, PTSD, and depression. *Omega, 61*(1), 1-24.
9. Johnson, D. M. & Zlotnick, C. (2009). HOPE for battered women with PTSD in domestic violence shelters. *Professional Psychology: Research & Practice, 40*(3), 234-241.
10. Petersen, Ruth , Moracco, Kathryn E. , Goldstein, Karen M. and Clark, Kathryn Andersen. (2005). Moving beyond disclosure: Women's perspectives on barriers and motivators to seeking assistance for Intimate Partner Violence. *Women & Health, 40*(3), 63-76.
11. Room, R. (2005). Stigma, social inequality and alcohol and drug use. *Drug & Alcohol Review, 24* (2), 143-155.
12. Lynn, J., Teno, J. M., Phillips, R. S. et al. (1997). Perceptions by family members of the dying experience of older and seriously ill patients. *Annals of Internal Medicine, 126*, 97-106.

Module Reflection Questions: These are designed to help you think about the readings- you do not need to write anything, nor even be prepared to answer them, they are merely here to help you think about some of the issues in the readings.

1. How does the development of a child affect the way they grieve the loss of a loved one?
2. What do you believe about the nature of cumulative losses and the way maturational losses add to the cumulative load (or do not)?
3. What hazards might be inherent in "enfranchising" the disenfranchised losses of specific developmental stages (caregiving in childhood; identity consolidation; commitment to an intimate partner; professional attainment; retirement, etc.)?