Grief and Recovery: The Healing Journey Towards Wholeness

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Why Grief and Recovery?

“Empirically supported treatments for co-occurring substance use disorders (SUDs) and grief problems are lacking, despite the salience of grief pathology in substance abusers.” Addiction Medicine; Pilot study shows promise for treating complicated grief and substance use disorders. Biotech Week.

“We are in the best positions to help others grieve when we have confronted our own pain.” Dr. George Kurian, Healthy Grieving-Does Faith Matter?

“If we do not face up to our losses and grief, we can turn to alcohol and drugs as a mistaken way out.” Fr Jack McGinnis, Grieving Can Give You Life!
Grief

“Grief is the physical, emotional, somatic, cognitive and spiritual response to actual or threatened loss of a person, thing or place to which we are emotionally attached.”

- John Bowlby, Attachment Theorist

“Grief and Loss is separation from the self, one’s higher power, the divine, the creator, the source of all, or the universe.”

- Mary G. Winds, Reverend V. Jauhara Care
Normal and Complicated Grief

Grief is a normal and natural response to loss.

“Complicated Grief, according to theorist Therese Rando, is the absence of grief. With complicated grieving, an individual tends to deny or repress the realization of the loss.” (Werblin, 1999).
“Grief is a complicated reaction to loss, which many people who are chemically dependent on drugs or alcohol experience. For many, the grief is not dealt with and the individual does not or cannot recover from their dependence on drugs or alcohol. In other words, grief can often keep many individuals in active addiction.”

- Mary G. Winds and Reverend V. Jauhara Care
Addict: Complicated Grief and Loss

• Loss of Self
• Loss of the Substance and Behavior
• Loss of Partner
• Loss of Children and Family
• Loss of Meaning, Purpose, Connection to a Higher Power
• Loss of Culture of Addiction
• Loss of Job, Career
• Loss of Relationships with Others Who are Addicted
• Loss of Housing
• Loss of Friends
Grief Theory

Dr. Elizabeth Kübler-Ross’s Grief Cycle

• Denial
• Anger
• Bargaining
• Depression
• Acceptance
“Relapse is an act, and like many unhealthy acts, it begins as a thought. This thought feeds into a pattern of thinking, which triggers an emotional response, which then leads the recovering individual back into the mental and/or physical circumstances that first drove him to substance abuse.” Emily Battaglia, Coping Strategies for Recovery.

- Integrative Medicine Model: Holistic Approach to Therapy
- Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Mindfulness-based Behavioral Relapse Prevention (MBRP)
- Relapse Prevention Skills—Terrance Gorski Model
What an Individual May Gain from Addressing Loss and Grief in His/Her Recovery

• Sense of Self
• Self-Worth
• Self-Confidence
• Healthy Relationship with Their Higher Power, the Divine, the Creator
• Positive Boundaries
• The Ability to Trust
• Love, Spontaneity, Freedom to Feel
• Trusting & Healthy Relationships
• Sense of Reality
• Ability to Choose
• Meaning & Purpose in Their Life
• Responsibility
• Healthy Life Style
• Improved Emotional & Physical Health
Thank you

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