Bereavement and Loss

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Overview

- Medical model
- Developmental model
- Phases model
- Therapeutic approach
- Social constructionist approaches
- Narrative approaches
Medical model

- Engel (1961) and Murray-Parkes (1998)
- Grief shares 5 characteristics with major illness
  - Causes pain
  - Disturbs physical and mental functioning
  - Affects concentration
  - Impairs memory
  - People may need to break from usual routines
Developmental model

- Kubler-Ross (1969)
- Denial
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Depression
- Acceptance
- Move to change from the sequential notion
Phases model

- Bowlby (1980)
- Numbness sometimes accompanied with intense anger or distress
- Yearning or searching which has no time limit
- Disorganisation and / or despair
- Greater or lesser degree of reorganisation
- Broken down into 3 linear phases
Phases model continued

- Protest – anger, crying and searching
- Despair – less vigorous crying
- Detachment – outward cheerfulness whilst emotionally distant
Therapeutic approach

- Worden (2001) task centred based on the phase model
- Accept the reality of the loss
- Work through the pain of the grief
- Adjust to the new environment
- Relocate the deceased emotionally and move on
Social constructionist approaches

- No one truth
- Reality is constructed between people in the moment
- Beliefs and behaviour is understood in context
- All events occur within a complex web of beliefs, discourses and moral imperatives
- There are multiple ways of understanding and acting into the world
Moving towards narrative

- Based on Bruner’s idea of literary texts
- Storylines
- Compelling plots
- Surprises, expected turns
- Not filling in all of the gaps……
Metaphors

- Finding a metaphor that fits the person and the problem
- One that can gain ground
- One that creates a context for a shift in position
- Using the clients language and extending the ideas
Narrative approaches

- White, (1988)
- Moved from goodbye metaphor to saying hullo again – as an alternative metaphor
- Pointed to some concerns about the developmental and phases model
- Worked to reclaim the lost person
- Idea to incorporate rather than accept
Based on the social constructionist idea that we all have a community of voices that are available to us

- We can bring to mind our version of self through the eyes of another
- We can actively consider the ongoing effect of a voice of influence
- We can upgrade and downgrade voices
Interventions

- Use of questions to re-integrate the lost person – experience of experience
- Alternative knowledges of the self from the lost person’s perspective
- Recruiting audiences for any new developments
- Use of language – appreciative perspectives – resources to harness – contrasting perspectives not finding truth
The social construction of emotion

- Attend to emotional performance as communication
- Consider cultural practices and beliefs
- Explore family beliefs about death and dying
- Track the influence of family beliefs on the practices at individual level
- Consider the relational effects of death between family members
- Explore the use of language and patterns of communication
Show curiosity about possible connections between behaviour, emotion and belief system
If we see all behaviour (action, emotion and interaction) as communication, how can we explore its meaning in the context of an important episode?
What ideas do we have about responses to death and dying?
How does this influence the approach we take?
Re-membering

- Association of life rather than a core self
- Re-engage, upgrade and downgrade membership
- Purposeful re-engagement with the history of one’s relationships with significant figures – not all known to the person
Definitional ceremonies

- Telling of the story by the person
- Retelling by those invited to be an outsider witness group
- Retelling of the outsider witness group by the person
Contextualise the work

- Client group
- Therapeutic practices
- Methods of intervention – use of questions
- Creative ideas with children and young people
References and resources

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Reference