

Missouri Institute of Mental Health

Presents

*Good Grief: Helping Clients With
Co-occurring Disorders Cope With Loss*

Presenter

Mark Sanders, LCSW, CADAC

The background is a solid blue color. On the left side, there are several curved, overlapping bands of lighter blue, creating a wave-like effect. In the center, there is a dark blue, swirling shape that resembles a vortex or a stylized eye. The text "The messed up stage" is written in a yellow, italicized font, positioned in the upper middle part of the image, overlapping the wave-like pattern and the dark blue swirl.

The messed up stage

The background is a solid blue color. On the left side, there is a series of concentric, overlapping blue arcs that form a spiral shape, extending from the top left towards the center. The arcs are in various shades of blue, creating a sense of depth and movement.

*Grief is not about forgetting it's
about remembering with less pain*

The background is a solid blue color. On the left side, there are several concentric, wavy lines in shades of light blue and white, creating a ripple effect. On the right side, there is a dark blue, irregular shape that resembles a splash or a drop, with a lighter blue area inside it.

*Grief begins after you accept the
loss*

Backer, Hannon and Russell Model

1. Shock and numbness

2. Intense grief (yearning, anger, guilt, and disorganization)

3. Reintegration

- *Creating a new reality for yourself*
- *Developing new coping skills*
- *Learning to live with the loss*
- *The intensity of feelings decrease*
- *You start to enjoy life more fully*

Signs of Complicated Grief

- *Medical problems*
- *Chronic insomnia*
- *Inability to form relationships and work*
- *Development of a psychiatric or substance use disorder*

Factors That Complicate Grief

Adaptation of a cultural norm which encourages us to grieve as quickly as possible and not remember

What Happened to Rituals?

- *Wars*
- *Loss of connection to the ancestors*
- *Disintegration of the family*
- *Technology*
- *The world of work*

Losses Clients With Co-occurring Disorders Grieve

- *The same losses as everyone else (+)*
- *Childhood abandonment*
- *Father hunger*
- *Mother hunger*
- *Loss of childhood-premature entry into adulthood*

Losses Clients With Co-occurring Disorders Grieve Continued

- *Loss of the life, home, wishes, dreams and aspirations prior to mental illness and addiction*
- *Loss of freedom*
- *Loss of jobs, self-respect, relationships*

Losses Clients With Co-occurring Disorders Grieve Continued

- *Loss of therapists, case managers and peers, community*
- *Programmatic discharge*

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Other Factors that Complicate Grief

The grieving person already has a psychiatric Condition which makes them vulnerable

- *Depression*
- *Attachment Disorder*
- *Personality Disorder*
- *Psychosis*
- *Addiction*

Other Factors that Complicate Grief Continued

- *Unspeakable death*
- *Ambivalent deaths*
- *Sudden death*
- *Unacknowledged losses*

Other Factors that Complicate Grief Continued

Extreme guilt and layers of guilt

- *"It's my fault."*
- *Punitive God guilt*
- *Survivor guilt*
- *Karma guilt*
- *Role guilt*
- *Perfectionistic guilt*

Characteristics of Effective Grief Counselors Who Work With Clients With Co-occurring Disorders

- *Good listening and basic counseling skill*
- *View grief as natural*
- *Comfort discussing your own losses*
- *Slow to label grief as pathological*
- *Ability to talk about God*
- *Slow to prescribe pills for grief*

What Grief Counselors Do

- *Listen*
- *Assist clients in expressing and identifying feelings connected to loss*
- *Normalize those feelings*
- *Help clients establish community*
- *Help clients tap into their natural resources for support*

What Grief Counselors Do Continued

- *Pay attention to how previous losses effect current losses*
- *Help clients remember as opposed to trying to forget their losses*

What are some ways/rituals people put in place to remember their losses as a part of the healing process?

Global Rituals

- *Libations*
- *Shiva*
- *Kaddish Prayer*
- *Death Store*
- *OBON – Japanese Summer Festival*
- *The Day of the Dead*
- *Feast of the Dead*

What Else Might be Helpful Besides Talk Therapy?

- *Journaling*
- *Art*
- *Being in nature*
- *Music*
- *Meditation*
- *Yoga*
- *Turning pain into purpose*



The Lion King