

Long-Term Care Staff: Honouring Grief and Increasing Resiliency

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WEBINAR BROUGHT TO YOU BY ONTARIO CLRI AT BRUYÈRE

The Ontario Centres for Learning, Research and Innovation in Long-Term Care (CLRI) strengthen quality of care and living for residents across the province through training, education and knowledge mobilization.

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Question

How long have you worked in LTC?

- 0-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- Over 20 years

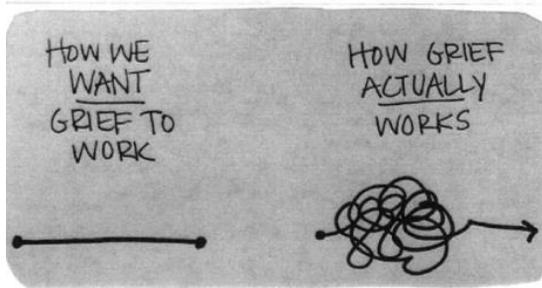


Definitions

What is Grief?

- The word grief comes from the Latin word 'gravis' meaning heavy.
- Grief includes the feelings and thoughts experienced following a loss. It is not an illness but a natural response to losing someone or something.





Definitions

What is mourning?

- Mourning is an outward expression of grief.
- Mourning is the process that unfolds as individuals share their inner feelings of grief with others. It is the public face of grief. This process is often reflected through rituals such as funerals, burial rites, and memorial services.



Definitions

What is Bereavement:

- The term “reave” from bereavement literally means “to split, tear, or break apart”.
- A person experiencing a loss may indeed feel that they have been torn from an individual or loved one.
- The term bereavement encompasses both grief and mourning.



Definitions

What is Resilience:

- The ability to face adversity and ‘bounce forward’
- Resilience depends on thoughts and behaviours that promote personal assets and protect the self from the potential negative effects of stressors



Resilience: Hardiness and Coherence

Two models that explain personality based components of resilience: **hardiness** and **sense of coherence**. (Ablett & Jones, 2007)

Hardiness: personality, resources and ability to cope with stress

- Control
- Commitment
- Challenge

Sense of Coherence: ability to be aware of stressors, interpret resources, and make sense and meaning out of life.

- Comprehensibility
- Manageability
- Meaningfulness

Question

Do you talk openly about grief in your workplace?

1. No, not at all
2. Not often, maybe sometimes with co-workers
3. Yes, fairly often with co-workers
4. Yes, it is our policy to regularly debrief
5. Other

Your Heart

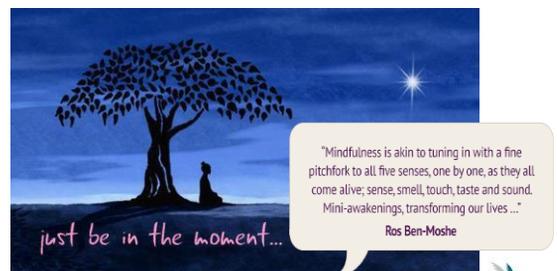


"Courage is to tell the story of who you are with your whole heart."

- Brené Brown



Noticing



"Mindfulness is akin to tuning in with a fine pitchfork to all five senses, one by one, as they all come alive; sense, smell, touch, taste and sound. Mini-awakenings, transforming our lives ..."

Ros Ben-Moshe

just be in the moment...

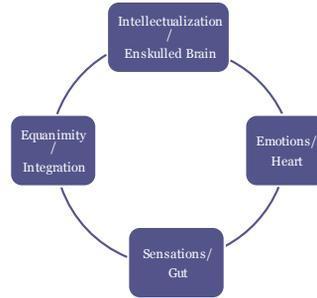


Mindfulness

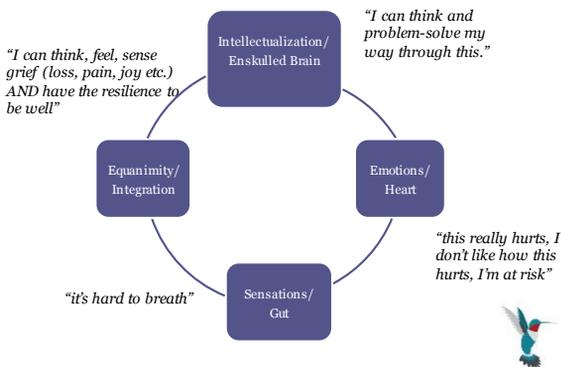
- Mindfulness means paying attention on purpose, in a particular way, moment-by-moment, nonjudgmentally.
- Means noticing our body, emotions, sensations and thoughts.
- Mindfulness practices help health care workers cope with stress, connect with patients/residents, practice self-compassion and increases overall quality of life.



Worker Responses to Dying and Death



Adapted from the work of Dr. Bernice Harper (Harper, 1994, 1997); and Dr. Daniel Siegel (2007, 2010, 2012, 2017)



Reflection

- Why am I participating today?
- Why did I become a _____?
- Why do I continue to do the work I do?



What else will promote resilience?

- Change your perspective (and story)
- Use gratitude practices
- Set realistic goals
- Celebrate successes
- Have compassion and self-compassion
- Foster positive relationships
- Practice acceptance
- Try non-attachment to outcomes
- Improve self-awareness and self-discovery



Why is this important in LTC?

- You (staff) develop close relationships with residents.
- Dying, death and grief are usual experiences in day-to-day working life.
- LTC only recently recognized as major locations of death (in health systems) and an important setting for HPC.
- Grief, loss and bereavement support are important components of holistic HPC as per CHPCA's model of care.

Marcella, J. & Kelley, M.L. (2015). "Death is Part of the Job in Long-Term Care Homes: Supporting Direct Care Staff with Their Grief and Bereavement."



Why is this important in LTC?

- Presently in ON, no policies in LTC that require grief and bereavement support for staff.
- Lack of support for staff grief contributes to compassion fatigue, burnout and poor retention.
- The (perceived) expectation of emotional distancing reinforces a culture of denial and silence about grief and leads to staff detaching from residents.

Marcella, J. & Kelley, M.L. (2015). "Death is Part of the Job in Long-Term Care Homes: Supporting Direct Care Staff with Their Grief and Bereavement."

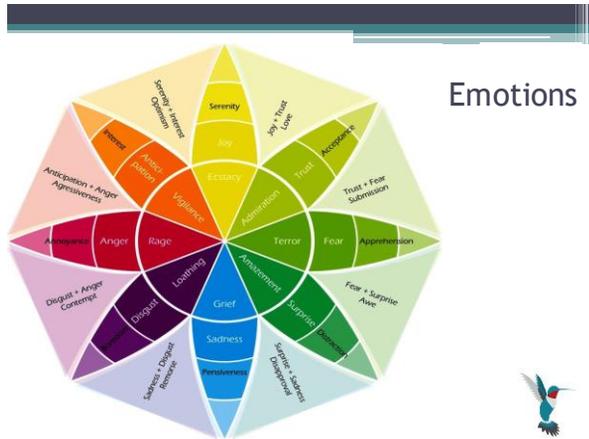


Grief Support Needs of Staff

- Education – awareness of grief and how to deal with it; grief and bereavement info posted
- Peer support – peer guides; mentoring for newer staff; talking about resident after death
- Formal support – peer-led staff debriefing; access to social worker; protocol after resident death

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Emotions

- Our emotions are labels for the sensations we feel in our bodies as a result of stimuli.
- Labeling emotions allows us to communicate our feelings with others for better relationships.
- Emotions move through us – when they get ‘stuck’ it is experienced as undesirable.
- Patience and acceptance helps, as our bodies process feelings.



Emotions at Work

- Emotions exist at work, we don't leave them at home.
- Reflective practice is a way of examining our thoughts and feelings about work and life.
- Reflection can include focused attention, analyzing, and writing.



Quiz

When I am experiencing grief, I prefer to -

1. Be alone
2. Call a friend and talk
3. Do something creative
4. Participate in a physical activity
5. Something else



Integration Exercise

Think about a memorable resident experience where you were touched deeply.

- What about the resident or situation touched you?
- How did it you experience this overall (body, emotions, sensations, thoughts)?
- How does this live with you now?



Self-Compassion

- **Compassion:** taking action to reduce suffering
- 3 elements of self-compassion
 1. Self-kindness (when we fail)
 2. Common humanity (suffering and personal inadequacy are a shared human experience)
 3. Mindfulness (feelings neither suppressed or exaggerated, impermanence)



Self-Compassion

Linked to well-being:
life satisfaction,
happiness, optimism
connectedness,
curiosity, gratitude,
caring, and
resilience.

YOU WERE
BORN TO
BE REAL,
NOT TO
BE PERFECT.



Group Activity: 6 word story

Writing –

Noticing: Awareness and presence.
Allowing the hidden to become visible.

Reflecting: Writing and sharing.
Connecting thinking with heart and soul.

Healing: Healing the vulnerable in
ourselves, as we touch vulnerability in
others.



Integrating Practices/Rituals

Sharing Ideas:

- What can be done to address individual grief in the workplace?
- What can be done to address collective grief in the workplace?



Thank you!



Questions?



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