

**HLT07 Health
Training Package V2.2**

HLTEN619A

**Manage clients and others
experiencing loss and grief**

Learner Resource

Flexible delivery

Version 2

**Training and Education Support
Industry Skills Unit
Meadowbank**



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Topic 1 Manifestations and effect of grief and loss

As an endorsed enrolled nurse, you will require the knowledge and understanding of many aspects of loss, grief, dying, death and bereavement.

There are many ways to define loss. The Macquarie Dictionary (1997) defines it as being deprived of, or coming to be without something that a person has had. Loss can be actual or perceived, temporary or permanent and occurs when something can no longer be seen, heard, felt or experienced.

The death of a loved or valued person is the most common way we think of loss but many other important changes in one's life can involve loss and therefore grief. Losses relate to many factors such as relationships, health, freedom, and independence, spiritual and cultural matters and status. Loss could also occur in the normal life developmental processes.

Examples include the loss experienced by:

- separation
- divorce or relationship breakdown
- children leaving home
- the adoption of or relinquishment of a child
- unemployment, retrenchment or retirement
- loss of a pet
- infertility, still birth, miscarriage or abortion
- the loss of a person who is missing
- ageing
- dispossession of land
- when adolescent relinquishes dependency on parents
- life threatening illness or chronic illness
- death of a loved one – sudden, expected
- due to natural disasters, e.g. flood, fire, cyclone, etc.

Loss can be classified as either maturational or situational. Maturational loss occurs as a result of normal life transitions whereas situational loss occurs in response to sudden, unpredicted and specific events.

Activity 1



Write a response

Using the examples of loss above, state whether they are maturational or situational.

Maturational

Situational

(Potter & Perry, p.560)

Grief is a normal reaction to a loss and is a process through which a person passes in order to recover from a loss. Grief has the potential to impact on every aspects of a person's existence including physical, emotional, social, cognitive, behavioural and spiritual. Grief will not solely impact on a person's life but also their significant others. The grieving person may experience a range of feelings dependent on where they are in the lifespan, developmental stages of life, their lifestyle and cultural background.

When multiple losses occur intense grief is experienced. Multiple losses may occur within one family at the same time (such as in a car accident) or many deaths in a short period of time such as in bushfires, shootings, train crash, earthquake, tsunami. They can have an immense impact on the survivors as well as on family and the wider community.

Elisabeth Kubler Ross after her work with terminal cancer patients proposed 5 stages of grief.

1. Denial
2. Anger
3. Bargaining
4. Depression
5. Acceptance

Activity 2



Using a relevant text book or the internet familiarise yourself with these five stages.

Suggested Website:

http://changingminds.org/disciplines/change_management/kubler_ross/kubler_ross.htm

http://www.businessballs.com/elisabeth_kubler_ross_five_stages_of_grief.htm#elisabeth_kubler-ross_five_stages_of_grief

Over time these 5 stages of grief were not exclusive to death and dying but were related to any loss a person had experienced.

It is important to remember that each person is unique and as such so will their reactions to loss and grief.

Grief does not have to follow rules or theories. Grief is neither sequential or predictable.

Activity 3



Write a response

Under the following headings, describe the impact that grief may have on the clients and their significant others:

1. PHYSICAL:

2. EMOTIONAL:

3. COGNITIVE/BEHAVIOURAL:

Topic 2 Client assessment

As an endorsed enrolled nurse your scope of practice will require you to extend your traditional role into the *assessment and management* of clients experiencing loss and grief.

When assessing a client experiencing grief and loss, for the first time or as part of an ongoing process, the nurse will need to obtain information about the client through a variety of methods. This will include therapeutic communication with the client and significant others, discussion with members of the multi disciplinary team and reviewing of current and past medical records.

When engaged in communication with the client, whether during formal interview or informal interactions the nurse will be able to elicit details on the client's current health status, lifestyle, activities of daily living and psychosocial history. Discussion with members of the multi disciplinary team such as social worker, and psychiatrist will enable the nurse to gain a holistic view of the client. In reviewing a client records the nurse will be able to compare their current condition/health status with previous interactions and to review the current management strategies and therapies implemented for the client and their effectiveness.

To support the nurse in the assessment of the client an understanding of the concept of phases of grief can be useful in assisting the nurse to recognise and support the grieving person and consequently assist in identifying the individual needs of the clients. Nurses need to remember that individuals experience different aspects of the grieving process at different times and need to implement this information in their management of the client. The nurse must also take into account the individual's cultural, religious and spiritual beliefs and value system as these will influence their grief reactions. Other factors that need to be considered are the stage of a growth and development of the client, support networks, familial influences, previous losses and personal coping mechanisms.

Nurses need to remember that all clients are unique and should be assessed as such to avoid stereotyping and inappropriate management of the client.

AS an endorsed enrolled nurse it will be within your role to identify situations where there is a risk of an abnormal grief reaction.

The majority of people experience healthy, uncomplicated grief and bereavement and this process can takes months to years.