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Main content

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ABSTRACT. This article is an adaptation of a chapter from the author's book, *The Living Stage: A Step by Step Guide to Psychodrama, Sociometry, and Experiential Group Therapy* (Dayton, 2005). The author proposes the use of psychodrama to help clients in recovery who are dealing with complicated grief issues associated with addiction and addiction-related trauma. She emphasizes the importance of grieving and recognizes the many causes for a client's grief, ranging from death to divorce to addiction issues. She suggests psychodramatic strategies that can help clients to resolve those issues and to move forward with their lives.

Key words: dealing with grief, psychodrama and grief, psychodramatic strategies for dealing with grief

GRIEF IS WIDELY ACCEPTED AS AN ISSUE that needs to be addressed during recovery. Although normal life losses do not necessarily benefit from therapy nor require it, complicated loss associated with addiction issues may be aided by professional help. Those developing treatment approaches are often legitimately concerned about whether addressing powerful issues of grief will undermine sobriety or open the door to relapse. Many addicts are themselves hurt people, who have relied on some form of self-medication to manage their emotional pain. Moreover, the unresolved grief issues that they have been self-medicating with drugs, alcohol, food, sex, or gambling may re-emerge during the recovery process. Clients may need to grieve for time lost, that is, the years that they spent mired in addiction, and for the pain that they have caused those they love. To complicate matters even further, they are likely to be grieving these issues with a compromised set of psychological and emotional tools. In early recovery from addiction, addicts may not benefit from revisiting painful, historical material that can trigger relapse, whereas in later recovery, the opposite can be true. Avoiding painful material can actually undermine the recovering person's ability to develop a consolidated sense of self, which can also lead to a relapse or a less-satisfying life and relationship. Generally speaking, addicts need to develop a solid enough recovery program along with sufficient ego strength to allow them to tolerate the difficult emotions associated with the grieving process without self-medicating. They also need to have their recovery supports, such as twelve-step programs and professional therapy, well in place.

Grief work in recovering populations can have both present day and developmental components. Psychodrama, with its unique ability to concretize virtually any moment along the developmental continuum of a client's life, offers a unique approach to working with the mental, emotional, and behavioral aspects of loss. Psychodrama allows for a therapeutic intervention that involves and engages the full psychological, emotional, and sensorial person in his or her appropriate relational world or social atom. Going to the status nascendi of a particular conflict or issue, allows the client to explore the roots of a loss experience and trace the impact that that loss has had throughout their development.

Moreno (1946) believed that the self emerges from the roles a person plays and that the function of the role...

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How children deal with grief and loss. Young children experience grief, loss and trauma in different ways, often depending on their age and circumstances. Learn here how to help them cope. Loss and Grief Feelings of loss and grief can be experienced after we lose someone or something we care about like; the death of a loved one; loss of a relationship; loss of a pet; loss of a job; a change to your way of life; or loss of important possessions. Read more on Lifeline website. Loss and grief. In the midst of trauma, loss and grief, children and families show remarkable courage, capacity to endure, hope and some way to get through or cope. Whilst there is trauma, loss, suffering and troubles that come out of adversity, there is also resilience that is seen in children, young people and families. Myths and facts about grief and grieving. Myth: The pain will go away faster if you ignore it. Fact: Trying to ignore your pain or keep it from surfacing will only make it worse in the long run. For real healing, it is necessary to face your grief and actively deal with it. Myth: It's important to "be strong" in the face of loss. Grief and Loss – A guide to preparing for and mourning the death of a loved one. (Harvard Medical School Special Health Report). Life after Loss: Dealing with Grief – Guide to coping with grief and loss. (University of Texas Counseling and Mental Health Center). Death and Grief – Article for teens on how to cope with grief and loss. Emotional and Psychological Trauma. Read More. Helping Someone Who's Grieving. Dealing with a Breakup or Divorce. Experiential Action Methods and Tools for Healing Grief and Loss-Related Trauma introduces innovative psychodramatic and creative expression methods for helping those affected by bereavement and trauma. Each section focuses on a particular acute or secondary grief issue, providing supportive and explanatory material that can be given to clients, and experiential action methods for providers. 1. Approaching the Grief Journey: Four Components to Healing: Acknowledge, Express, Act, Reconnect 2. Centre for Living with Dying Grief Program 3. Psychodrama and Sociometry with Grief Work 4. The Beginning: Sharing the Story 5. Tools for Coping 6. Loneliness 7. Fear 8. Sadness 9. Anger 10. Unfinished Business 11. Frozen Moments 12. Guilt 13.