



Nipawin Bible College
CM421: Foundations in Christian Counselling:
Complexities of Grief in Congregational Care
Instructor: Fay Wuthrich, MA, CGRS
Fall 2018
3 Credit Hours
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

100% of people over the age of two who sit in congregations today are grievors. In fact, we are surrounded by them; they can be found in our towns, on our streets, in our families. They are our brothers, sisters, co-workers, friends. No one is immune. Many people equate an experience of grief only with death or perhaps a painful divorce, stating that "thankfully they have not suffered any grief in their life yet," not realizing that there are 43 loss events that can cause grief in our lives.

In this course, students will lean into the uncomfortableness of their own grief events by working through a series of guided action choices, which will give a personal knowledge and skill-set to offer congregational grievors hope of a fuller life by helping navigate with grace and dignity the pain, isolation, and loneliness caused by unresolved grief.

Students will also delve into the Psalms of Lament through Brueggemann's scheme of movement from orientation → disorientation → new orientation and how our soul cries for God's presence/justice/love/judgement from within the depths of our grief and sorrow.

COURSE TEXTBOOKS and SELECTED READINGS

Blakley, Theresa L. "Murder and Faith: A Reflected Case Study of Pastoral Interventions in Traumatic Grief," *The Journal of Pastoral Care & Counselling*, (Spring-Summer 2007, Vol.61, Nos.1-2): 59-69. **10 Pages**

Brueggemann, Walter. *Spirituality of the Psalms*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press. 2002. **75 Pages**

Devine, Megan. *It's OK That You're Not OK: Meeting Grief and Loss in a Culture That Doesn't Understand*. Louisville, Colorado: Sounds True Publishing, 2017.
(Part 1) - 64 Pages

Dokka, Kenneth J., Editor. *Disenfranchised Grief: New Directions, Challenges, and Strategies for Practice*. Champaign, Illinois: Research Press, 2002. (Selected Readings) - **40 Pages**

James, John W., and Russell Friedman. *The Grief Recovery Handbook: The Action Program for Moving Beyond Death, Divorce, and Other Losses Including Health, Career, and Faith, 20th Anniversary Expanded Edition, Updated – How Grief Recovery Addresses Trauma and PTSD*. New York, New York: HarperCollins, 2010. **193 Pages**

Jones, Logan C. "The Psalms of Lament and the Transformation of Sorrow," *The Journal of Pastoral Care & Counselling*, (Spring-Summer 2007, Vol.61, Nos. 1-2):47-58.
11 Pages

THE BIG QUESTION

Do we have to unlearn societal norms (within and outside the church) regarding grief before we can fully step forward in confidence to accompany those who are experiencing it?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 1) Define grief and demonstrate understanding of its uniqueness to individuals.
- 2) Label, analyze and deconstruct myths associated with grief.
- 3) Recognise how societal constructs influence the experience of grief.
- 4) Acquire and apply support skills necessary to facilitate recovery from unresolved grief.
- 5) To utilize and encourage the use of lament as a voice of faith within deep sorrow and grief.

IN-CLASS COURSE WORK

In-class discussion and participation including all in-class assignments – 40% of final grade.

This assignment will comprise of two parts.

A full set of instructions will be explained when reviewing the syllabus on the first day of class.

Part A:

Working from the Textbook, *The Grief Recovery Handbook*, by John James and Russell Friedman, 3 pages.

- a) Listing Short Term Energy Reducing Behaviours
- b) Loss History Graph
- c) Relationship Graph

Part B:

A 4-6-page reflective paper of your own personal response to the process of the Grief Recovery Method after the final two requirements are completed after class.

DUE DATE: 19 October 2018

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

1. A 6-page term paper – 15% of final grade.

A reflective review of the movies listed below. This review will include an overview of the movie and a personal response to the lessons of loss and what it teaches us about our own grief journey. Note: this is not a critical movie review.

Inside Out (2015) Animated. Story by Pete Docter & Ronnie del Carmen, Produced by Pixar Animated Studios. Run time: 95 min

The Shack (2017), Based on the book by Paul Young, Produced by Gil Netter, Brad Cummings, et al. Run time: 132 min

The Way (2010), written by Emilio Estevez, Produced by David Alexanian & Emilio Estevez. Run time: 128 min

DUE DATE: 26 October 2018

2. This is a 12-page Final paper – 45% of final grade.

This final paper will comprise two parts:

Part A – Disenfranchised Grief and Its Impact

A 4-page reflective response of the narrative texts; *It's OK if You're Not OK*, by Megan Devine and the selected readings from *Disenfranchised Grief* by Kenneth Dokka, Editor. This reflective will include an overview of the subject matter and response to the question, "How does society dictate one's response to grief?"

Part B: Lament and the Transformation of Sorrow

An 8-page report including the following:

- A reflective review of the narrative text; *Spirituality of the Psalms*, by Brueggemann and the *Psalms of Lament and the Transformation of Sorrow* by Jones. Note: This is not a critical book/article review
- Select a narrative/story from your life in which you lived into Brueggemann's scheme of orientation → disorientation → new orientation; this could be a significant event, a tangible or intangible loss, or a time of uncertainty in your life.

- Select a story/narrative from scripture which relates to the experience in your story.
- Respond to the question, “Using Brueggemann’s scheme of orientation – disorientation – new orientation and the Psalms of Lament, how can one walk alongside those who are grieving within our congregations?”

DUE DATE: 9 November 2018

All Grading: Pass/Fail

All written assignments are to be typed in accordance with the NBC Study Guide for papers. Assignments will be graded on the basis of content, clarity, grammar, and spelling. Assignments will be due **no later than 5:00 pm** on the day that they are assigned.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

- Refer to the NBC Handbook for the 2018-1029 Academic Year

LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY:

- Refer to the NBC Handbook for the 2018-2019 Academic Year

Reading: 393 Page

Writing: 27 Pages

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Blakley, Theresa L. "Murder and Faith: A Reflected Case Study of Pastoral Interventions in Traumatic Grief," *The Journal of Pastoral Care & Counselling*, (Spring-Summer 2007, Vol.61, Nos.1-2): 59-69.
- Brueggemann, Walter. *Spirituality of the Psalms*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002.
- Deits, Bob. *Life after Loss: A Practical Guide to Renewing Your Life After Experiencing Major Loss*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Da Capo Press, 2004.
- Devine, Megan. *It's OK That You're Not OK: Meeting Grief and Loss in a Culture That Doesn't Understand*. Louisville, Colorado: Sounds True Publishing, 2017.
- Dokka, Kenneth J., Editor. *Disenfranchised Grief: New Directions, Challenges, and Strategies for Practice*. Champaign, Illinois: Research Press, 2002.
- Hill, Harriet, Margaret Hill, Richard Bagge, Pat Miersma. *Healing the Wounds of Trauma: How the Church Can Help*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: American Bible Society, 2016.
- James, John W., and Russell Friedman. *The Grief Recovery Handbook: The Action Program for Moving Beyond Death, Divorce, and Other Losses Including Health, Career, and Faith, 20th Anniversary Expanded Edition, Updated – How Grief Recovery Addresses Trauma and PTSD*. New York, New York: HarperCollins, 2010.
- Jones, Logan C. "The Psalms of Lament and the Transformation of Sorrow," *The Journal of Pastoral Care & Counselling*, (Spring-Summer 2007, Vol.61, Nos. 1-2):47-58.
- Yehl Marta, Suzy. *Healing the Hurt, Restoring the Hope: How to Guide Children and Teens Through Troubling Times of Divorce, Death, and Crisis, Using the Rainbows Approach*. USA: SawRobin Press