

CNL-518 Topic 8: Bereavement Across the Life Span

Directions: One's understanding of death and the bereavement process changes over the life span. Using the matrix provided below, summarize how individuals perceive the loss of a loved one throughout the lifespan. Create a short vignette for each age group and include the role of spirituality and/or Christian principles in the process. Include developmentally appropriate, ethical, and culturally relevant counseling interventions for promoting resilience and optimum development and wellness. Each stage should include at least one scholarly citation. Write in complete sentences. The first stage has been completed for you as an example. Include at least two peer-reviewed, scholarly sources and an APA formatted reference page.

Age Group	Perception of Grief	Vignette Provide an example of loss, and include the role of spirituality and/or Christian principles in the process.	Counseling Interventions Include developmentally appropriate, ethical, and culturally relevant counseling interventions for promoting resilience and optimum development and wellness.
Baby and Toddler	Perception of grief: Based on Piaget's theory that characterizes children's concepts as egocentric, a baby's perception or cognition of grief would be limited to a sense of fear and loss due to separation anxiety (Slaughter, 2005).	Vignette: The baby's mother unexpectedly dies after a short illness. The baby had bonded and was feeling safe with their primary caregiver; however, the loss creates stress and confusion for the child. The brother and sister of the mother become the baby's guardians, but the baby is not bonding well with them. The new guardians seek support at their local church by requesting prayer and seeking fellowship.	Counseling interventions: To support the family system, structural family therapy would provide opportunities for conceptualization and restructuring of the new family system through a family therapy map. The family therapy map is different from a genogram because it considers intrafamily dynamics, social and life context stressors (Calapinto, 2019). The family therapy map provides a visual representation to better explore patterns of behavior, interactions, and possible protective factors.

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Preschool Age	Perception of Grief: Preschoolers may not fully understand the permanence of death. They may believe the deceased will return or might see death as reversible (Bowlby, 1980). Their reaction to grief often includes confusion, anxiety, and regressive behaviors.	Vignette: A five-year-old girl loses her grandmother, who lived with the family. She asks her parents repeatedly when her grandmother is coming back and begins wetting the bed. Her parents comfort her by explaining heaven and telling her that grandma is with God. They incorporate nightly prayers for the grandmother as a way of honoring her.	Counseling interventions: Play therapy could be a useful tool to help the child express her emotions. Faith-based practices, such as praying together or talking about heaven, can offer comfort, as children often respond to concrete expressions of spirituality (Malone & Dadswell, 2018). The counselor can work with the parents to encourage open communication about death in an age-appropriate and culturally sensitive way.
Grade School Age	Perception of Grief: Children in this age group begin to understand that death is final, but they may struggle with the emotional and existential implications of it. They may also have feelings of guilt, thinking they somehow caused the death (Worden, 1996).	Vignette: A 10-year-old boy's father dies in a car accident. He feels responsible because he argued with his father before the accident. The child starts withdrawing from his friends and is distracted at school. His mother, a Christian, emphasizes that the father is now in heaven, and they talk	Counseling Interventions: Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) could help the child work through feelings of guilt and understand that he did not cause his father's death. Christian counseling could integrate the family's beliefs by discussing concepts such as forgiveness and eternal life. Supporting

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		about God's forgiveness.	the child's emotional development and helping him express his grief through faith-based coping strategies could be effective (Marek & Walulik, 2021).
Adolescence /Teenage Years	Perception of Grief: Adolescents have a mature understanding of death but may struggle with its emotional intensity. They often face existential questions, wondering about the purpose of life and death (Erikson, 1963).	Vignette: A 16-year-old girl loses her best friend to cancer. She starts questioning her faith, asking why God would allow such suffering. She becomes angry and distant from her family and the church.	Counseling Interventions: Grief counseling that addresses both existential concerns and emotional regulation is key. Faith-based approaches could offer discussions about suffering and the Christian belief in eternal life. Engaging in group therapy with peers who have experienced similar losses may help her feel less isolated (Stroebe & Schut, 2010). Encouraging her to explore her spirituality at her own pace, while providing space to express doubts, can promote resilience.

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Adulthood	Perception of Grief: Adults in this stage understand death but often focus on how it impacts their current and future roles, such as being a parent or partner. They may grapple with how to manage responsibilities while grieving (Erikson, 1963).	Vignette: A 30-year-old man loses his wife suddenly. He is left to raise their two young children alone. While struggling to manage his grief, he also feels the pressure of being the sole caregiver. He leans on his church for support, finding solace in his faith and community.	Counseling Interventions: Counselors can introduce stress management techniques to help balance parenting responsibilities with the grieving process. Family therapy may provide a space for him and his children to grieve together, while Christian counseling can emphasize themes of community support and faith in times of hardship (Malone & Dadswell, 2018).
Late Adulthood	Perception of Grief: Individuals in middle adulthood often face multiple losses, including parents and peers. They may reflect on their own mortality and life's meaning (Neimeyer, 2000).	Vignette: A 50-year-old woman loses her mother, which triggers reflections on her own aging and death. She begins to worry about leaving her children behind. Her Christian faith provides comfort, but she seeks deeper understanding about the afterlife.	Counseling interventions: Narrative therapy could help her explore life's meaning and connect with spiritual beliefs. Discussing Christian views on death and eternal life may provide comfort. A focus on creating a legacy for her children could promote resilience and help her see continued purpose in her life (Stroebe & Schut, 2010).

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