

Detailed Chapter Outline with Key Terms

Chapter 19: Dealing with Death and Bereavement

Focus: Louisa May Alcott, Devoted Sister

THE MANY FACES OF DEATH

The Cultural Context

- *Shiva*: Jewish custom in which mourners vent their feelings and share memories of the deceased.
- *Mummification*: Early form of embalming to preserve a body so the soul can return to it.

The Mortality Revolution

- **Thanatology**: Study of death and dying.

Care of the Dying

- **Hospice care**: Warm, personal patient- and family-centered care for a person with a terminal illness.
- **Palliative care**: Care aimed at relieving pain and suffering and allowing the terminally ill to die in peace, comfort, and dignity.

FACING DEATH AND LOSS: PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES

Confronting One's Own Death

- **Terminal drop**: A frequently observed decline in cognitive abilities near the end of life. Also called *terminal decline*.

Kübler-Ross's Five Stages of Coming to Terms with Death:

1. *Denial (refusal to accept the reality of what is happening)*
2. *Anger*
3. *Bargaining for extra time*
4. *Depression*
5. *Acceptance*

Patterns of Grieving

- **Bereavement**: Loss, due to death of someone to whom one feels close and the process of adjustment to the loss.
- **Grief**: Emotional response experienced in the early phases of bereavement.

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The Classic Grief Work Model

- **Grief work:** Common pattern of working out of psychological issues connected with grief, in which the bereaved person accepts the loss, releases the bond with the deceased, and rebuilds a life without that person.

The Three Stages of Grief Work:

1. *Shock and disbelief*
2. *Preoccupation with the memory of the dead person*
3. *Resolution*

Grieving: Multiple Variations

- *Commonly expected pattern:* Grief pattern in which the mourner goes from high to low distress.
- *Absent grief:* Grief pattern in which the mourner does not experience intense distress immediately or later.
- *Chronic grief:* Grief pattern in which the mourner remains distressed for a long time.
- *Ambiguous:* Referring to a death that is unclear, such as a report of someone missing in action and presumed dead.
- *Resilience:* Grief pattern in which there is a low and gradually diminishing level of distress, with the mourners accepting death as a natural process.
- *Chronic grievers:* Mourners who become depressed following their loss.
- *Chronically depressed:* Mourners who had been depressed before their loss and became more so afterward.
- *Improved during bereavement:* Mourners who are depressed before their loss and tend to improve during the bereavement.

Grief Therapy

- **Grief therapy:** Treatment to help the bereaved cope with loss.

DEATH AND BEREAVEMENT ACROSS THE LIFE SPAN

Childhood and Adolescence

- *Irreversible:* Child's understanding that death is permanent and cannot be undone.
- *Universal and inevitable:* Child's understanding that all living things die.
- *Nonfunctional:* Child's understanding that all life functions end at death.

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Adulthood

- *Integrity versus despair*: According to Erikson, the eighth and final critical alternative of psychosocial development, in which people in late adulthood either achieve a sense of integrity of the self by accepting the lives they have lived, and thus accept death, or yield to despair that their lives cannot be relived.
- *Life review*: Reminiscence about one's life in order to see its significance.

SPECIAL LOSSES

Surviving a Spouse

Losing a Parent in Adulthood

Losing a Child

Mourning a Miscarriage

- *Mizuko kuyo*: Buddhist rite of apology and remembrance for miscarried children (*mizuko* means "water child," the Japanese word for a miscarried child).

MEDICAL, LEGAL, AND ETHICAL ISSUES: THE "RIGHT TO DIE"

Suicide

Aid in Dying

- **Active euthanasia**: Deliberate action taken to shorten the life of a terminally ill person in order to end suffering or to allow the death with dignity; also called *mercy killing*.
- **Passive euthanasia**: Deliberate withholding or discontinuation of life-prolonging treatment of a terminally ill person in order to end suffering or allow death with dignity.
- *Voluntary*: In referring to euthanasia, whether it is done at the direct request or to carry out the expressed wishes of the person whose death results.
- **Assisted suicide**: Suicide in which a physician or someone else helps a person take his or her own life.

Advance Directives

- **Advance directive**: Document specifying the type of care wanted by the maker in the event of terminal illness.
- *Living will*: One type of advanced directive which may contain specific provisions with regard to circumstances in which treatment should be discontinued, what extraordinary measures--if any--should be take to prolong life, and what kind of pain management is desired.

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- *Persistent vegetative state*: State in which, while technically alive, the person has no awareness and only rudimentary brain functioning.
- **Durable power of attorney**: Legal instrument that appoints an individual to make decisions in the event of another person's incapacitation.
- *Medical durable power of attorney*: Legal instrument that appoints an individual to make decisions about health care in the event of another person's incapacitation.

Assisted Suicide: Pros and Cons

- *Ethical arguments*: Arguments for assisted suicide that are based on principles of autonomy and self-determination: that mentally competent persons should have the right to control the quality of their own lives and the timing and nature of their death.
- *Medical arguments*: Arguments for assisted suicide that hold that a doctor is obligated to take all measures necessary to relieve suffering.
- *Legal arguments*: Arguments for assisted suicide, which say that legalizing assisted suicide would permit the regulation of practices that now occur anyway, out of out of compassion for suffering patients.

End-of-Life Decisions and Cultural Attitudes

End-of-Life Options and Diversity Concerns

FINDING MEANING AND PURPOSE IN LIFE AND DEATH

Reviewing a Life

- **Life review**: Reminiscence about one's life in order to see its significance.

Development: A Lifelong Process