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Dementia: Grief, Acceptance & Meaningful Interactions



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Kubler-Ross 5 Stages of Grief

Denial / Anger / Bargaining / Depression / Acceptance

Applying the Stages of Grief to Dementia

Patients / Caregivers

Types of Grief

Traumatic
Anticipatory
Absent
Prolonged / Unresolved
Delayed
Inhibited / Exaggerated
Protracted / Ambiguous

Grief at Each Stage of Dementia

Mild
Moderate
Severe
Special Consideration for different types of dementia

Maximizing Your Visits

Biopsychosocial approach
Strengths based approach
Mindfulness based approach
Team approach

General Approach Strategies

Timing is everything
Quality vs quantity
Moderating stimulation
Meet them where they are
Positive distraction / bump the “broken record”
Life Review
Multiple modalities
Music
Holidays / New Traditions
“Time Slips”
Improvisation
Mindfulness

Stress Management

- * Essential
- * You are your own tool
- * Don't take it personally
- * Communication
- * Be aware of & address your own feelings of grief and loss
- * Take care of yourself
- * Be aware of your strengths & weaknesses
- * Sense of Humor

Discussion Case:

Alma is an 92-year-old female who is living at home with her daughter and receives daily in-home care. She has the diagnosis of “dementia,” and her daughter often expresses, “thank goodness” she doesn’t have Alzheimer’s. Staff and her daughter have had intermittent problems with getting her to take her medications, and she often becomes agitated and increasingly confused in the evenings. (Of note, her 5 great grand-children are there in the evenings to do their homework.) More recently, she has had angry outbursts, has been much more disoriented, and has had apparent auditory and visual hallucinations. Her daughter is very upset and angry with her about her “behaviors,” and she persistently tries to re-orient and correct her mother when she is confused.

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Important Resources

ALZ.org/LEARN (Online, On-Demand Video Programs)
ALZnavigator.org (Develop a Personalized Action Plan)
800.272.3900 (Nationwide 24/7 Helpline)
ALZconnected.org (Online Community / Support)
ALZ.org/CRF (Community Resource Finder)



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