

Correspondence

In loving memory of 'us': facing grief during the time of COVID-19 through redirecting perception of life's realities

ABSTRACT

Recent correspondence highlighted the complicated process of grief in the time of COVID-19 where some family members and the dying person too are undergoing distress. New rituals can lighten the process of coping with grief or death, one may find it difficult to hurdle such situation and move on without first redirecting one's perception on the different realities of life. There are things that we can control but at the same time, things that are beyond our reach. With these realities, acceptance plays a key role to handle the situation. Acceptance is a person's assent to life's realities. Creativity in accepting grief or death is finding ways to lighten the heavy emotion of the 'ones left and the one leaving' through a preservation of memory. This is done through safeguarding and reliving the memories of the dead with various programs and advocacies.

To the editor

Death is inevitable! Even if we overcome every cause of death, we will still die in due time. In a recent correspondence published in this journal, the author pointed out the complicated process of grief in the time of COVID-19 where some family members and the dying person too are undergoing distress.¹ The author highlighted that it is important to acknowledge the loss and the feelings of grief by considering new rituals to stay connected with their loved ones. Grief is an emotional reaction that is felt when a loved one is taken away, and it is characterized by overwhelming pain and difficult emotions.² However, although it can be helpful that new rituals can lighten the process of coping with grief or death, one may find it difficult to hurdle such situation and move on without first redirecting one's perception on the different realities of life. This can be actualized through an attitude of creative acceptance.

As much as we want to live our life that is abundant and full of happiness, the reality is that life can be very difficult and challenging at times. Life's harsh realities such as pain, sorrow, suffering and death will eventually come to us regardless of who we are, what we do, or how hard we try to overcome them. There are things that we can control but at the same time, things which are beyond our reach. With these realities,

acceptance plays a key role to handle the situation. Acceptance is a person's assent to life's realities. It requires that a person tolerate experiences as they are given; otherwise, one simply pursues pleasure, flees pain and becomes more caught up in judging experiences than in having them.³ Although it is painful to not being able to perform final mourning rituals for the death of a family member, one must accept that public health policies are a priority during this time as a preventive measure. Now, it is also important to note that acceptance should be characterized as 'creative'. Creativity in accepting grief or death is finding ways to lighten the heavy emotion of the 'ones left and the one leaving' through a preservation of memory. Safeguarding and reliving the memories of the dead such as supporting the advocacy to fight COVID-19, joining a support group for the bereaved family, establishing assistance to the frontliners or health workers and many others. In this way, the pain of grief being felt by the affected family is diverted into something fruitful and helpful to the community. This in turn can have the capacity to transform sadness into fulfillment since the loss of a loved one paved a way to contribute something good for the community. For the one who left, the memory is somehow more dignified with such advocacies, thus, remembering that he or she had once lived a meaningful life and a legacy worthy of remembering.

References

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