

Lesson Aims

- List and explain the ten stages of normal grief according to Westberg.
- Place the ten stages of grief into three broad categories of shock, suffering and gradual recovery
- Discuss the concept of death
- Outline some skills required for relating to the terminally ill



Loss, Grief, Death & Dying

What is Death?



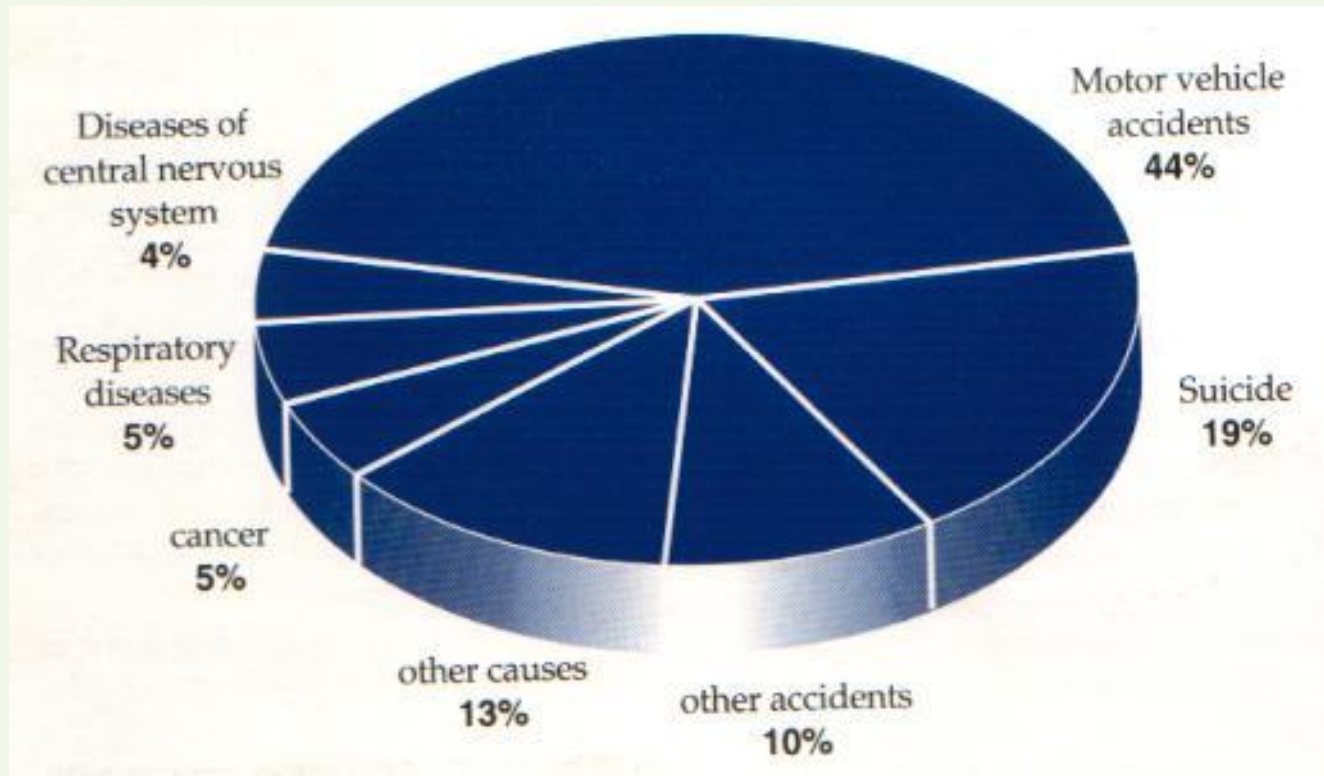
The Grief Apprenticeship

- Every parting is a little death
- Long before their actual death most people know what it means to die.
- Death marks an end to something, but often it also heralds the beginning of something else.
- The death of another can remind us of our limitations and mortality.

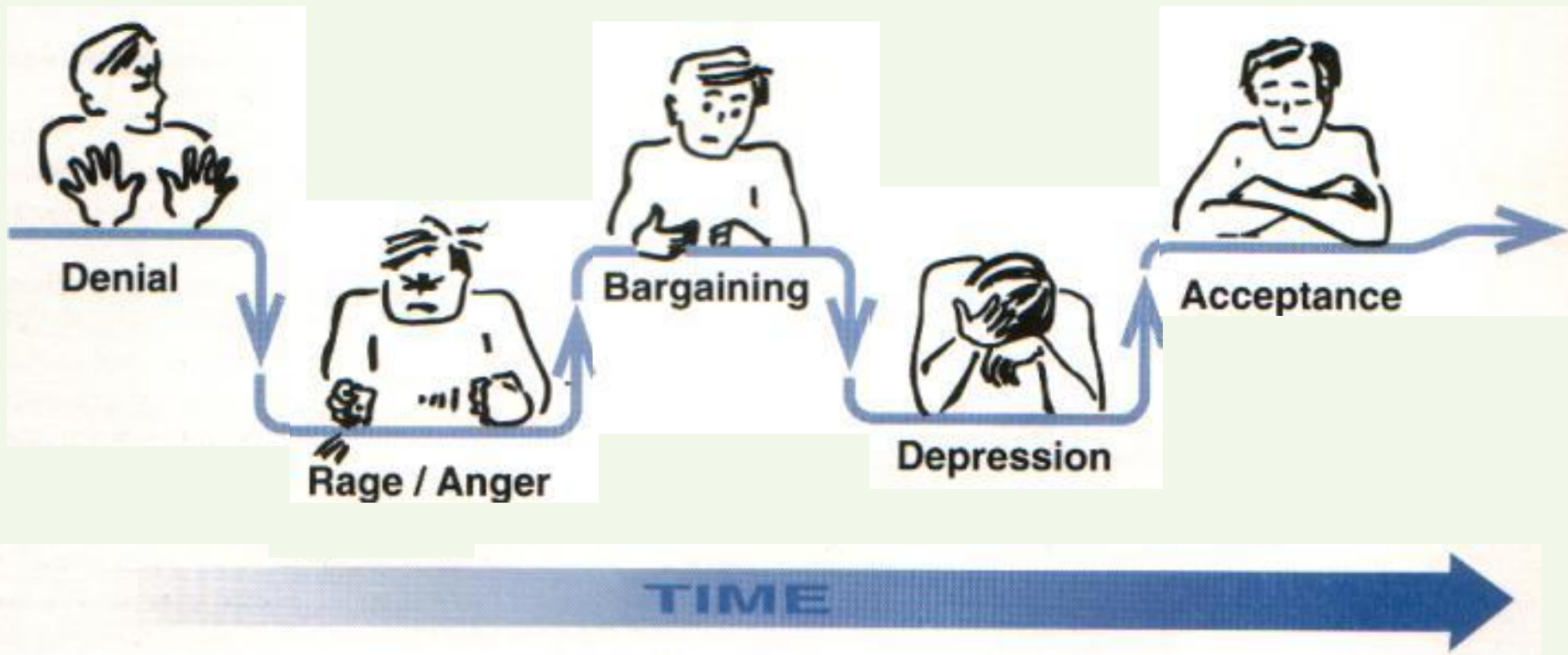
The Grief Apprenticeship

- Death can remind us of our humanity.
- In the face of illness or death, life becomes more precious.
- Depending on circumstances, although always sad, death can be regarded as the climax of a person's life.
- The only worthy preparation for death is to have lived life to its fullest potential.

Causes of Death: 15 - 24 (2004)



Stages of Grief - E. Kubler-Ross



Why do people fear dying?

- People have no personal experience of what will happen when we come to die.
- Even though we may have visited very sick people in hospital or at home, we may find it almost impossible to imagine ourselves so sick that we could die.

Visiting the dying.

- Make visits short.
- Sit down.
- Be authentic in what you say.
- Avoid criticism of the care the patient is receiving.
- Let the patient guide you in his or her needs or wants.

Visiting the dying.

- Be available.
- Treat the patient as a **person** not an **illness**.
- Be Sensitive
- Be yourself.

(Death in the First Person - p15)

Prayer Patterns of the Seriously Ill

- Prayer of Protest
- Prayer of Silence
- Prayer of Memories
- Prayer of Gratitude
- Prayer of Trust

Some Attitudes Towards Death

- **There has been a decline in religious Belief.**

Today many people are not sure about life after Death.

Many have no active involvement with Church.

At the core, many have no hope.

Some Attitudes Towards Death

- **Personal contact with death is not as common as it used to be.**

A generation ago large families were common. At the time, without modern medicine, tragedy touched most families.

Our great-grandparents were very familiar with death.

There is a decreasing use of outward signs of mourning

Some Attitudes Towards Death

- **New Zealand society has dehumanised death.**

90% of deaths occur in hospitals in 2003.

Families often feel the stress placed on them by a dying relative is more than they can handle.

Geographical dispersion is also a factor.

Cosmetic attention softens the reality of death.

Some Attitudes Towards Death

- **The reality of death is denied.**

In general, NZ society inhibits expression of emotion.

TV brings daily exposure to death and violence which increases a sense of separation from it as an actual human event. We generally don't like to talk about it.

Questions for you

- What “experience” of death do you have?
- What is your worst fear about your own death?
- What would reflect your ‘fullest potential’?
- What do you believe happens after death?
- Describe it?