

Good grief

GRIEF COUNSELING FROM A JUDEO-CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE



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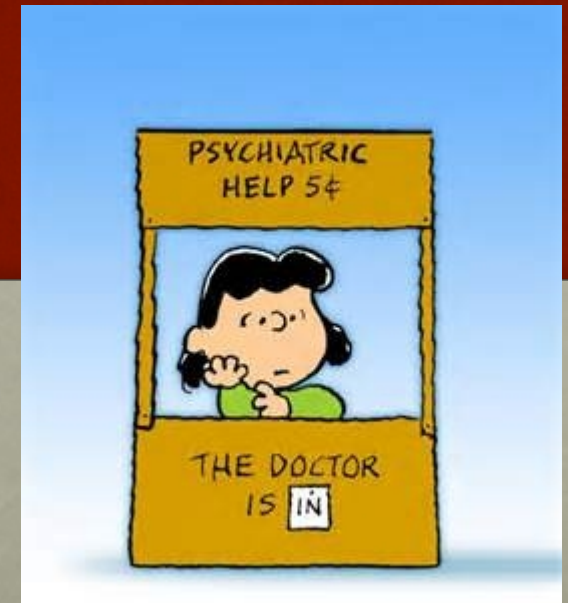
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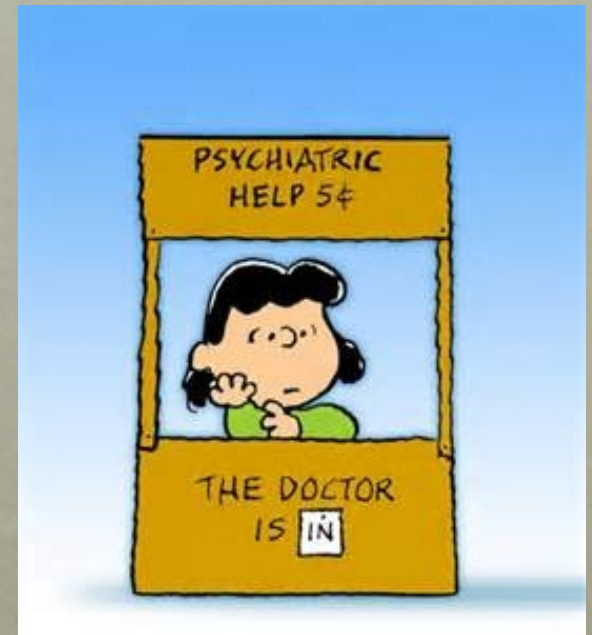
OVERVIEW

What is crisis?

Jewish law and traditions

Contemporary stage theory

Step by step counseling process



Crisis

- Dictionary definitions include:
 - turning point
 - period of temporary instability
 - point of change for better or worse
- An acute extraordinary reaction following the realization that ordinary coping strategies are not sufficient to manage life circumstances.
(Berman)

- Chinese:

The image shows the Chinese characters for 'Crisis', '危機' (Weiji), written in a bold, green, calligraphic style. The character '危' (danger) is on the left and '機' (opportunity) is on the right.

(Pronounced “way”)
DANGER

+

(Pronounced “gee”)
OPPORTUNITY

Crisis

- Crisis is temporary
- Acute emotional state typically lasts 4-8 weeks if circumstances unresolved
- Always transformed "for better or worse" (never restored to same)
- Goal of grief counseling:
 - facilitate "better"
 - restore "worse" to "better"

Jewish Law/Traditions

1. Death

2. Burial

- as soon as possible

3. Shiva

- 7 days of extreme intense grief

4. Sheloshim - 30 days of moderately intense grief

5. Avelut - 12 months of grief with progressive decrease in intensity

6. Yahrzeit - Anniversary of the burial

- Further mourning is prohibited

- Must resume normal functioning

- Must celebrate life ("*la-chiam!*") as a gift from God

- Psalm 118:24 ("*I shall rejoice and be glad in it*")



Therapeutic Benefits of Jewish Grief Laws & Traditions

1. Implied stages become a path to follow.
2. Test/retest reliability (over 3000 years) provides reassurance and hope.
3. Establishes a realistic timetable.
4. Establishes standard for determining pathological grief.
5. Emphasizes the need for a funeral.
(anticipatory v. real grief)



STAGES OF GRIEF

(Based loosely on the theoretical model of Kubler-Ross 1969)

Stage 1

Shock
Denial

Stage 2

Anger/Agitation
Depressed Mood

Stage 3

Planning
Acceptance

The First Grief Counseling Session

1. I do most of the talking.

- a. Catharsis is not therapeutic
- b. Brief Q & A for specific facts (cut off elaborations)
- c. Surgeon v. PCP

2. Rx the symptoms:

- a. Give permission to fail one another
- b. Give permission to act out of character (e.g., become dependent)
- c. Give permission to get angry with God
- d. Get worse before it gets better
- e. Normalize their not liking you, not wanting to attend sessions, etc.
This is not resistance!

3. Introduce Stages

The First Grief Counseling Session (cont.)

4. Medication is seldom necessary

- a. No grief pill has been invented
- b. Implies treatment of a disorder
- c. Short term PRN symptom reduction only

5. Help establish a support system

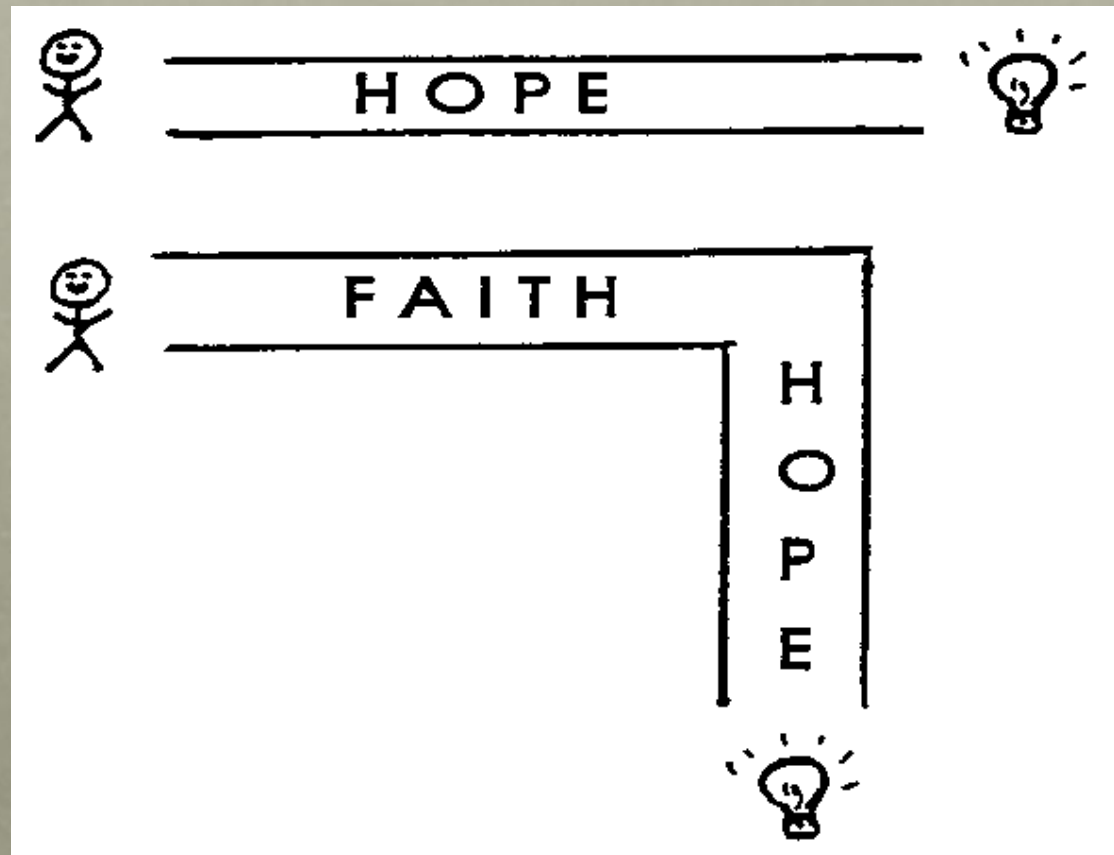
- a. Make sure your name is not included!
- b. Must include parties outside marriage/family but inside God's boundaries and have spouse/family's blessing

6. Rx "Grief Breaks"

Grief Therapist's Toolbox

1. Faith v. Hope (Best introduced early in treatment process)

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.
Hebrews 11:1



Grief Therapist's Toolbox

2. "Adhesions" metaphor

(In response to "*Will I ever get over this?*")



Grief Therapist's Toolbox

3. Perseverance scriptures

Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. *Romans 5:3-4*

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

James 1:2-4

And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. *1Peter 5:10*

Grief Therapist's Toolbox

4. *Phil 3:13-14* (Best introduced when ready to transition from stage 2 to Stage 3)

Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

5. Actions  Feelings