

**LOOKING FORWARD:
MOVING FAMILIES PAST CHAOS**

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LEARNER OBJECTIVES:

- ▶ Discuss the issues created in families with an adolescent or adult who is experiencing addiction;
- ▶ Identify family issues that the disease of Substance Use Disorder causes as it relates to moving forward with a healthy lifestyle;
- ▶ Identify family issues that the COVID-19 environment causes as it relates to moving forward with a healthy lifestyle;
- ▶ Review the grief process that is often primary in the process of moving forward to health for both the family and their loved one;

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SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

- ▶ **Chronic, relapsing brain disease that is characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use despite harmful consequences.**
- ▶ **It is considered a brain disease because drugs change the brain. They change its structure and how it works.**
- ▶ **Brain changes can be long-lasting.**

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THE RIPPLE EFFECT

- ▶ From 2009 to 2014, eight million children in U.S. lived in households with at least one parent with Substance Use Disorder. The majority were under five years of age.
- ▶ In 2015, there were 2.6 million grandparents responsible for grandchildren.
- ▶ In 2015, 26% of U.S. opioid deaths were adults aged 25 to 34 years of age.
- ▶ In 2015, 23% of U.S. opioid deaths were adults aged 34 to 44 years of age.
- ▶ Primary parenting years are 25 to 44 years of age.

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- ▶ **In 2015, there were 2.6 million grandparents responsible for grandchildren.** (The Ripple Effect: The Impact of the Opioid Epidemic on Children and Families, 2019)
- ▶ **In Illinois, 220,088 children under 18 years of age are living in a grandparent's home.** (Illinois Department on Aging, 2018)
- ▶ **This represents 101,951 grandparents who are responsible for their grandchildren and it continues to rise.** (Illinois Department on Aging, 2018)
- ▶ **The research has shown that parental substance abuse is the main reason grandparents are taking responsibility for their grandchildren.** (Illinois State Bar Association, 2018)

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FAMILY AND OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

- ▶ Primary Family Relationships:
 1. Spouse/Partner/Significant Other
 2. Parent
 3. Children
- ▶ People other than family members: They may be co-workers, supervisors, religious leaders, professors and FRIENDS.



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WHAT DO WE NEED TO KNOW?

- ▶ What is the chaos like for the family?
- ▶ What are family members feeling?
- ▶ What are family fears?
- ▶ What are the families survival skills?



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Feelings	Behaviors
Shame	Denial
Guilt	Set in ways/no flexibility
Confused/crazy	Perfectionism
Fear	Controlling
Betrayal	No self-disclosure
Anger	Vindictive self-doubt
Inadequacy	Many extreme emotions
Loneliness	Confusion
Not belonging	Isolation
Tired/exhausted	Living own life
Immobilized	Hyperactive over responsible
Helpless/hopeless	Enforces the no talk rule
Passive	Aggressive/withdrawn
Emotional pain	

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- Characteristics of Codependency in a Family with Addiction**
People with codependent tendencies often:
- Are "people pleasers" who put other people's needs and feelings above their own;
 - Suffer from low self-esteem;
 - Have difficulty setting and honoring boundaries;
 - Attempt to cover up, lie about, excuse, or take responsibility for a loved one's addictive behavior;
 - Try to control, change, or "fix" an addicted loved one;
 - Risk isolating themselves in an attempt to keep the "family secret;"
 - Have a fear of abandonment;
 - Have difficulty identifying their own feelings.

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WE HAVE IDENTIFIED FAMILY QUESTIONS TO ANSWER BUT WHERE DO THE FEELINGS OF LOSS FIT? AND FOR WHO?

- ▶ Person experiencing substance use disorder (SUD's)
- ▶ Issues of the 2020 Pandemic
- ▶ Family lifestyle change
- ▶ Incarceration
- ▶ Overdose/death
- ▶ What else?

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GRIEF AND LOSS: OFTEN LOST IN THE MIX

▶ Mayo Clinic states: Grief/loss is a strong, sometimes overwhelming emotion for people, regardless of whether their sadness stems from the loss of a loved one or from a terminal diagnosis they or someone they love have received.



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▶ Grief is the natural reaction to **loss**.

▶ **Often we do not realize why we are grieving or recognize what we are feeling is grief.**



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▶ Delayed grief;
▶ Exaggerated grief;
▶ Complicated grief;
▶ Disenfranchised grief;
▶ Anticipatory grief;
▶ Ambiguous loss.

TYPES OF GRIEVING



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A person is physically present but psychologically absent (as in dementia or drug addiction)

A person is physically absent but psychologically present (as in foster care/adoption).

AMBIGUOUS LOSSES

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▶ "Covid-19 has upended our sense of normalcy and safety in many homes across the world. In addition to the loss of security we are experiencing, people coping with loss before the pandemic are living in a very vulnerable position. For the first time in our lives, we are grieving in isolation."

"ARE YOU LIVING IN 'GRIEF LIMBO'?" HOW TO COPE WITH AMBIGUOUS LOSS

By Beth Tyson

(Theory developed by psychologist Pauline Boss)

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▶ These losses typically occur without rituals and social validation due to the unconfirmed nature of the loss that has happened.

- *SUBSTANCE USE
- *MISSING PEOPLE
- *MILITARY DEPLOYMENT OR WORK-RELATED ABSENCES
- *CANCELED MILESTONES/EVENTS
- *EMOTIONAL DETACHMENT/ABANDONMENT
- *DIVORCE
- *MEMORY PROBLEMS
- *CHRONIC MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS
- *MISCARRIAGE/INFANT DEATH
- *INCARCERATION
- *CHILD/PARENT ALIENATION

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▶ Because most of the world is quarantined, many people across the globe have lost their loved ones without being able to say their goodbyes. This experience leaves the bereaved isolated in their grief, and without an outlet for expression of these emotions.

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Experience of loss is an individual experience. However there are symptoms many people share after suffering personal loss:

- Shame
- Hopelessness
- Intrusive, racing thoughts
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Anger/irritability
- Confusion
- Preoccupation with thoughts of their loved ones



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- Difficulty committing to decisions
- Inability to move forward with everyday tasks
- Emotional overwhelm – frequent crying or outbursts
- Insomnia
- Difficulty accepting the new family role
- Sabotaging relationships



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- ▶ Lack of energy;
- ▶ Change in appetite;
- ▶ Anxious, restless;
- ▶ Thoughts of death and suicide;
- ▶ Unexplained physical problems;
- ▶ Other health changes/challenges.



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7 Stages of Grief

(Modified Kubler-Ross Model)

Shock*	• Initial paralysis at hearing the bad news.
Denial	• Trying to avoid the inevitable.
Anger	• Frustrated outpouring of bottled-up emotion.
Bargaining	• Seeking in vain for a way out.
Depression	• Final realization of the inevitable.
Testing*	• Seeking realistic solutions.
Acceptance	• Finally finding the way forward.

*This model is extended slightly from the original Kubler-Ross model, which does not explicitly include the Shock and Testing stages. These stages however are often useful to understand and to facilitate change.

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- ▶ Grief without guilt;
- ▶ Celebrate twice;
- ▶ Get practical stuff done;
- ▶ Talk about feelings;
- ▶ Practice acceptance.

LOST CELEBRATIONS:

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- ▶ Recognizing experience;
- ▶ Connect with others with ambiguous loss;
- ▶ Give mind a break;
- ▶ 10 min for medication;
- ▶ Trust your grief;
- ▶ Discuss new roles;
- ▶ Find meaning;
- ▶ Remember not alone!

AMBIGUOUS LOSS:

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LOOKING FORWARD:

- ▶ Give yourself "grief time;"
- ▶ Journal/write;
- ▶ Have a good cry;
- ▶ Ask for/seek help; (counseling, education)
- ▶ Recognize you are not alone even though you may feel lonely; (12-step groups, support groups, grief support groups)



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- ▶ Get legal assistance if appropriate;
- ▶ Gather documents and create a "three ring binder";
- ▶ Make regular physical activity part of your life;
- ▶ Make "to do" lists (and follow them);
- ▶ Choose activities the whole family can enjoy;
- ▶ Have some fun;
- ▶ Tell stories;



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- ▶ Make special happy memories;
- ▶ Be a good role model (become a sponsor, mentor);
- ▶ Be an active listener;
- ▶ Strive for an optimistic attitude;
- ▶ "Forgive and forgive again!!!"



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