



# Tough As Nails... But Feeling Hammered! Professionals' Grief

Cindy Stutzer, RN, MS  
Clinical Nurse Specialist – Oncology

Caron Strahlendorf, MD  
Pediatric Oncologist

British Columbia Children's Hospital  
Vancouver, BC

November 27, 2010



“You work in pediatric oncology?”

“I could NEVER do that!”

# Loss, Mourning, Grief, Bereavement


- Loss is absence of a possession/person
- Mourning is the outward, social expression of loss
- Grief is the emotional response to loss
- Bereavement includes grief and mourning
- Strongly influenced by culture

# Professionals' Grief

- Factors/Situations That Influence
  - At the time of death
  - Environmental
  - Intrapersonal
  - Interpersonal
- Responses to grief
  - Physical
  - Emotional / psychological
  - Spiritual

# Proposed Models: Professionals' Grief and Bereavement

- Traditional models that describe the loss of a loved one do not fit
- Several researchers have proposed models based on their research:
  - Kaplan, 2000
  - Papadatou, 2000
  - Saunders & Valente (1994)  
Valente & Saunders (2002)
  - Harper, 1994



In order to survive, a human being needs  
to live in a place furnished with hope.

*Maya Angelou*

# Personality, Occupational Style, Stress & Coping

- Empathetic component to the majority of HCPs personalities. Gottfredson and Holland (1996)
- HCPs engage in coping behaviours to protect themselves (Catalan 1996)
  - View work as a challenge
  - Sense of accomplishment
  - Organize tasks
- Coping preferences are influenced by personality

# Holland's Theory of Occupational and Personality Style (1985)


- Model for conceptualizing HCPs' grief and coping
- Insight into how inter-professional teams work
- Predict personality types that flourish in particular environments

# Coping Skills & the Typology

- No research on occupation, coping and burnout
- Typology can be a guideline for people-focused and emotion-focused ways of coping in an individual when stressed

# Inconsistencies

- Personality characteristics do not always predict coping strategies
- Dependent on situations, factors and experience
- Holland's typology and preference for certain tasks can serve as a guide for types of coping and understand why teams work or not
- Difference between highest and lowest score points to natural propensity and aversion

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- Few inventories that look at burnout and caregiver fatigue (Maslach)
  - Emotional exhaustion
  - Degree of depersonalization
  - Personal accomplishments

# Strategies for Dealing with Your Own Grief

- Name it
- Observe:
  - What has worked for you
  - What you have observed works for others
  - Develop a plan
- Tell your story
- Search for meaning
- Look at your practice in a new way: reflect



# Help!!!

- <http://www.practitionerrenewal.ca>
- <http://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/mbsr>
- <http://www.commonweal.org/ishi>
- <http://locator.apa.org>