VON Virtual Bereavement Support Series

HOPE, RESILIENCE, & POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH

Heather Stang, MA, C-IAYT
Author, Mindfulness & Grief
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I feel the suffering of millions. And yet, when I look up at the sky, I somehow feel that everything will change for the better, that this cruelty too shall end, that peace and tranquility will return once more.

- Anne Frank
Session Objectives

- Review the 5 domains of posttraumatic growth.
- Explore the impact of meaning reconstruction on post-loss adjustment.
- Discuss techniques to cultivate posttraumatic growth.
How Grief Impacts Individuals

- Physical sensations
- Feelings
- Thoughts or cognitions
- Behaviors
- Social difficulties
- Spiritual searching
Four Tasks of Mourning

1. To Accept The Reality of the Loss
2. To Process The Pain of Grief
3. To Adjust to a World Without The Deceased
4. To Find An Enduring Connection With the Deceased In The Midst of Embarking On A New Life

Worden (2008)
“When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves.”

- Victor Frankl
5 Domains of Posttraumatic Growth

• Increased Appreciation of Personal Strength
• Sense of New Opportunities & Possibilities
• Deepened Sense of Connection & Compassion
• Appreciation of Life in General
• Spiritual or Religious Growth or Change

Calhoun & Tedeschi (2006)
How To Cultivate Posttraumatic Growth

• Reflect on where you are now & where you have been
• Practice Mindfulness & Compassion
• Reframe Your Response to Stress
• Move Your Body
• Practice Gratitude
• Accept Support & Offer Help
How To Cultivate Posttraumatic Growth

• Try Something New
• Get Clear & Act On Your Values
• Engage With Other People
• Legacy Projects
• Volunteer Your Time
• Share Your Story
• Guided Reflective Journaling
Meaning Making

• Reconstructing meaning is the primary goal
• Uses narrative and expressive arts therapies
• Questions include:
  • “What will my life look like now?”
  • “What did the deceased’s life mean”
  • “How can I feel safe in a world such as this?”
  • “Who am I now that this death has occurred?”

Acceptance in the mindful context means that even when the unthinkable happens, we honor our self and our experience with dignity and kindness. Rather than turn our back on our own suffering, we treat ourselves as we would a beloved friend.

Heather Stang
Mindfulness & Grief (2018, P. 15)
Heather Stang, MA, C-IAYT
Author, Mindfulness & Grief
& From Grief To Peace

MindfulnessAndGrief.com
heather@mindfulnessandgrief.com