Chapter 19 Study Notes

ABSTRACT:

*Almost everyone will experience the loss of a loved one at some point in their life resulting in a variety of confusing and difficult emotions called grief. Coping with death is never easy and is more difficult for some than others depending on a variety of factors. It is important that we understand death and its effects on people so as to give us the tools and knowledge we need to help those in need when tragedy strikes. The death of a loved one results in emotions called grief****.*** *Grief is a multifaceted reaction to loss, particularly to the loss of someone or something that has* [*died*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death)*, to which a* [*bond*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_bonding) *or* [*affection*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Affection) *was formed. Although conventionally focused on the emotional response to loss, it also has physical, cognitive, behavioral, social, spiritual, and philosophical aspects. |Not to be confused with bereavement, which refers to the state of loss, grief is the reaction to loss or the emotional suffering one feels when something or someone the individual loves is taken away. The grief associated with death is familiar to most people, but individuals grieve in connection with a variety of losses throughout their lives, such as unemployment, ill health or the end of a relationship. However, it is death of a loved one that results in a state of loss that is most difficult and painful to process. The grief process is non-universal, but it is in fact highly influenced by demography, personality and situational factors making it a unique experience to each person. Studies have shown that the manner in which a loved one dies, largely categorized as either a sudden or prolonged death, directly impacts how the people mourn the deceased. Additionally, people’s pre-dispositions and social status also contribute to this process further complicating our understanding of grief reactions. Only through our understanding of these interrelated factors can we better cope with this painful, but inevitable part of human development.*

**Study Definitions:**

**Grief:** The reaction to loss, includes physical and mental distress following the death of someone or something loved. Unresolved grief affects all phases of lifespan development.

**The Four Tasks of Mourning**: 1) To Accept the Reality of the Loss

2) To Experience the Pain of Grief

3) To Adjust to an Environment without the Deceased

4) To Develop an Inner Bond with Deceased and Move on.

**Sudden, Unanticipated Death**: A situational variation of death where the bereaved is given little or no time to prepare for the death. Common cases of sudden deaths are murders, suicide, war, accidents or natural disasters.

**Prolonged, Expected Death:** A situational variation of death where the bereaved has time to comprehend the death. May experience anticipatory grieving. Loved ones are less overwhelmed from the death, but experience more long term stressors, such as caring for the dying person and having to watch the person’s health deteriorate.