

## HPN EAP Newsletter for Employees



### Grief and Loss

No amount of knowledge can prepare us for bereavement. Grief is the most intense and enduring emotion we can experience. No quick fix. No short cut. An ancient African saying is: "There is no way out of the desert except through it."

Knowledge of the grief process gives us a very generalized map of the terrain we have to cover. Each of us will take a different route. Each will choose his or her own landmarks. Each of us will travel at our own unique speed and will navigate using the tools provided by culture, experience and faith. Knowledge helps us avoid the major pitfalls of grief. A knowledge of what is known of grief assures us that we have not lost all sense of sanity.

Grief Work, Stages and Phases: Several blueprints or theories about grief have been proposed.

Sigmund Freud began with the concept of having to do 'grief work'. That is, a specific job should be finished before the next job begins.

Elizabeth Kubler Ross defined five overlapping stages as Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, and Acceptance.

J.W. Worden refers to four tasks of mourning: Accepting the reality of the loss, experiencing the pain, adjusting to a life without your loved one and finally being able to invest your emotional energy into a new life.

Grief or bereavement theories are generalized maps. Each theory is an attempt by a caring investigator to understand and guide us through our pain. However, humans are unique and cannot be forced into patterns of behavior.

*\*Excerpts from "Swallowed by a Snake" by Tom Golden LCSW*

**Call Health Promotion Northwest at 360-788-6565 for more information and services.**

