

Case Study

Introduction

A grief is a necessary process, which cannot be considered as the manifestation of weakness as it is the way by means of which a person is restored after the death of a close relative. A grief is a process by means of which a person works with the loss pain, again finding the balance and completeness of life. A grief is a concept, more psychological than medical. The psychologists define a grief as a reaction to the loss of a significant object, a part of own identity or the expected future. The given coursework will discuss the case of Marilyn Andrews, who lost her son and whose psychological state is devastating.

1. The situation of Marilyn Andrews is rather complicated as it goes back to her teenage psychological traumas, when her parents divorced and she could not mend the bridges with her father before his death. Having experienced the burden of the woe in her young age, Marilyn again experienced the grief - one of her sons - Jacob - died in the collision with a drunk driver. The family was strongly shocked by the grief. However, each family member has his or her own way of the grief experiencing. Thus, the situation of Marilyn is complicated by her teenage psychological trauma and the present treatment of her family. Neither her another son nor her husband do not want to see how devastating Marilyn is and that she needs a serious psychological assistance as well as support of her family.

2. The behavioral and emotional manifestations of grief are individual. Being close to a grieving person, people around feel discomfort from the intense emotions and strong feelings of a loss of a suffering individual. The reactions of the grieving people to the death of a close relative are various. Some people enduring a loss try to avoid painful thoughts of grief. They can allow only positive, "pleasant" thoughts of the dead, up to the full idealization. It helps them to avoid the unpleasant experiences connected with the death of a close relative. In order to avoid the bad memories of the dead some grieving people starts

taking alcohol or drugs. The others use “a geographical way” - they continuously travel. The third group of people plunges into a continuous hard work, which does not allow them to think of something, except daily affairs. Thus, John belongs to the last group as he spends at work more time than usual, trying to substitute the emptiness caused by the grief with the work or any other activity. The same happens at home, when he stays in a yard working. In such a way, the man tries to overcome the grief. His psychological defense works in such a way. Moreover, he tries to avoid any communication with his wife, trying thus to forget the grief.

3. According to the Canadian Psychological Association, the death of close relatives is always a great grief. However, it is impossible to accept the fact of a loss without having endured it. The feelings of people in such situations are approximately identical, but for everyone are painted by those tones that are peculiar to the character of a person. It can be melancholy, the feeling of senselessness of existence, sense of guilt, anger, and in certain cases – shame. The reactions of people to grief are various: some people become more closed and do not want to see the other people, while the others become more communicative and try to forget their grief in the active communication with people around. Thus, the behavior of Philip is reflective of his grief work. He started to communicate with his friends more often, he tries to substitute the emptiness in his heart, caused by the death of his brother, with the active communication with other people. Communicating with friends, he absolutely forgot about his grieving mother. Trying to escape from reality and denying the truth of the happened, Philip spends as less as possible time with his mother, thus leaving her without any support.

4. A correctly chosen psychological therapy should be applied at the pathological reaction of grief. The case of Marilyn represents a complicated grief, as, firstly, her child died, and, secondly, it happened suddenly, without any psychological preparation like in the

case of a long illness. There are four main reactions to the loss: 1) an emotional shock or a protest; 2) melancholy and desire to return the lost person; 3) disorganization and despair; 4) reorganization. Marilyn is at the first stage of a shock. The diagnostics of her psychological state should be carried out not only taking into account clinical (mental, somatic, neurologic) symptoms, but also her psychological characteristics. The psychological component provides the specificity of the whole therapeutic process, shown in the impact on a grief. The purpose of the psychotherapy for Marilyn should include the eco-friendly incorporation of the lost son in her psychological space and her adaptation to the “new” life, life without the dead.

The case of Marilyn requires the professional psychological interventions. Thus, the psychotherapy should be based on the close cooperation “doctor - patient”. It is possible to influence a patient in two ways: the changes of the environment or interpersonal (doctor - patient) interactions. The correctly built interpersonal relationship in the system “doctor - patient” always brings positive results. From the synergetic point of view a poor control of open systems consists in imposing of a certain unusual and alien form of the organization of behavior. Using the principle of the positive and negative feedback, a doctor can control the therapeutic process, stabilizing or accelerating it if necessary. The impact should be both not strong, and accurate. Moreover, such ethical aspects as beneficence and nonmaleficence should be obligatory taken into account while applying the therapeutical measures for Marilyn. A doctor should exercise the control over the psychotherapeutic manipulations by means of a feedback. Over time, the medical influence should turn into the self-organization processes, carried out by a patient.

The psychotherapeutic purpose of the stage of crisis support for the Andrews’ family enduring a grief is the help in passing of the difficult period of the loss of a close relative. Each of them should endure the pain without having collapsed as a personality and without

having done an irreplaceable harm to own health. If it is not done in a due time, the therapy can be necessary later when the return to these experiences is even more painful.

If a person enduring a loss did not feel the pain of a loss, which is always, it has to be revealed with the help of a psychotherapist; otherwise, pain will appear in the other forms, for example, through the psychosomatic frustration of behavioral disorders. Listening is the main method at this stage. The patient's goal at the articulation of the experiences will be the main thing for a doctor. Each family member should verbalize the thoughts and transfer the emotional attitude to the event. It is also possible to reveal a suicide mood of a patient. The role of a psychotherapist is reduced to the creation of the empathic atmosphere of conversation and sympathetic listening. The organization of a new environment is an individual process, because it is not always clear what a loss is in any grief. Everything depends on the fulfilled role.

Conclusion

The death of a close relative is a real shock for the family. The example of the grief in the Andrews' family shows that different people experience different feelings in the struggle with a grief. The reaction of people to a grief is also different. However, each person should learn how to adapt for the new conditions of life without a close relative. It is also necessary to know at which stage of a grief a person is and which supportive measures should be taken in order to help to recover from a loss.