

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 474 714

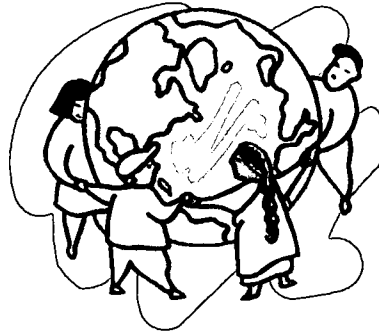
CG 032 313

AUTHOR Tramonte, Michael R.
TITLE Multicultural Death and Grief Awareness: An Intervention Tool.
PUB DATE 2002-04-00
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the National Association of School Psychologists' Convention (35th, Toronto, ON, Canada, April 8-12, 2003).
PUB TYPE Opinion Papers (120) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Bias; *Counselor Attitudes; *Counselors; *Cultural Influences; *Death; *Grief; Mental Health
IDENTIFIERS *Multicultural Counseling

ABSTRACT

The goals of this presentation were to help mental health professionals become more cognizant of cultural factors in the processes of death and grief and more introspect about their own personal and intercultural awareness of death, grief, and multiculturalism. Commonly reported counselor cultural biases are highlighted, as are factors to consider when providing competent cultural interventions. (GCP)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS' CONVENTION
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
April 11, 2003**

**Multicultural Death and Grief Awareness:
An Intervention Tool**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

- This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS
BEEN GRANTED BY

M. TRAMONTE

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

by

**Michael R. Tramonte, Ed.D., NCSP
Associate Professor in Education
Rivier College
Nashua, New Hampshire 03060
(603) 897-8487 (Direct)
(603) 888-1311 #8487 (Switchboard)
e-mail (mtramonte@rivier.edu)
fax-(603)897-8887**

and

**Retired School Psychologist
Lowell Public Schools
Lowell, Massachusetts 01852**

and

**Adjunct Instructor in Psychology
Middlesex Community College
Bedford, Massachusetts 01730**

TITLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
Title Page	1
Table of Contents	2
Goals of Workshop	3
Professional Experiences of the Workshop Presenter	3
Culture and the One-Way Mirror	3
The Six Cultural Borders with Checkpoints	3
The Ten Commonly Reported Counselor Cultural Biases	4
Eight Factors to Consider When Providing Competent Cultural Intervention	6
Death, Grief, and Multicultural Awareness Exercises	7
Death Awareness Introspective Exercise	7
Grief Awareness Introspective Exercise	8
Multicultural Awareness Introspective Exercise	9
Bibliography	10

➤ **GOALS OF WORKSHOP**

- Become more cognizant of cultural factors in the processes of death and grief
- Introspect about one's personal and inter cultural awareness of death, grief, and multiculturalism
- Return home with more cultural sensitivity awareness

➤ **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES OF THE WORKSHOP PRESENTER**

- Retired School Psychologist With 28 Years Experience
 - ⊗ Crisis intervention experiences include helping students, school staff, and relatives of the deceased after homicides, suicides, and accidental deaths.
- American Red Cross Disaster Mental Health Volunteer since 1999
 - ⊗ Disaster experiences include helping out after tornadoes, wildfires, floods, airline catastrophes, workplace shootings, and fires.

➤ **CULTURE AND THE ONE-WAY MIRROR**

- “Culture is akin to being the observer through the one-way mirror; everything we see is from our own perspective. It is only when we join the observed on the other side that it is possible to see others and ourselves clearly--but getting to the other side of the glass represents many challenges” (Lynch, 1992, p. 35).

➤ **THE SIX CULTURAL BORDERS WITH CHECKPOINTS (Rina**

Chittooran's 2002 NASP workshop)

- **Self-Examination and Self-Awareness:** School psychologists need to introspect, to become aware of how their culture has socialized them, and to eliminate stereotypes and prejudices.

- **A Flexible and Open Attitude:** School psychologists need to maintain openness toward others and flexibility in thinking.
 - **Phenomenology :** School psychologists need to try to open themselves to others' direct experiences, to see things through their eyes.
 - **Awareness of Ethnocentrism:** School psychologists need to be conscious of how they perceive reality through their cultural lens and how interpreting reality only through their cultural perspective can impede multicultural interpersonal relationships.
 - **Verbal and Nonverbal Cultural Communication:** School psychologists need to possess verbal skills such as active listening and nonverbal skills such as signs and symbols, chronemics, proxemics, silence, kinesics, haptics, paralanguage, clothing, and physical appearance.
 - **Consciousness of Individuality Within Groups:** School psychologists need to recognize individual uniqueness within cultural groups.
- **THE TEN COMMONLY REPORTED COUNSELOR CULTURAL BARRIERS (Pedersen (1987))**
- **Normal Behavior Is Universal:** Normalcy is assumed to be the same in all societies, and it is not the case.
 - **Emphasis on Individualism:** Counseling assumes the individual needs to change rather than changing the family or society.
 - **Fragmentation by Academic Disciplines:** Different disciplines use artificial boundaries to separate themselves from each other, and this ultimately prevents interrelated discussions.

- **Dependence on Abstract Words:** Western culture, a low-context culture assumes that abstract concepts carry their own meaning. Some other cultures may be high-context and use the context to give a concept meaning.
- **Overemphasis on Independence:** Western society socializes the individual to be reliant and not dependent. Other cultures may stress dependencies as necessary and healthy.
- **Neglect of Client's Support Systems:** In Western cultures, counseling is formal. However, because formal counseling is not as accepted in some cultures, counselors need to mobilize family and peer support systems to help a client.
- **Dependence on Linear Thinking:** This is the belief that every effect has a cause. In some cultures, however, cause and effect are not considered as polarities but are viewed as two aspects of the same reality, such as Ying and Yang.
- **Focus on Changing Individual, Not System:** This is the assumption that counseling attempts to change the individual to fit into society instead of society changing to fit the individual.
- **Neglect of History:** Counselors concentrate on a client's immediate events to the neglect of past history.
- **Dangers of Cultural Encapsulation:** Counselors need to be aware of their closed, biased, and cultural perceptions of reality in order to relate openly to individuals from other cultures.

➤ **EIGHT FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN PROVIDING COMPETENT CULTURAL INTERVENTION (Ross, 1994)**

- **Values:** All cultures must solve common human problems that include time, activity, relational orientation, person-nature orientation, and the basic nature of humankind.
- **Concept of the family:** The family is defined differently across various cultures. It can be described narrowly or broadly.
- **Religious beliefs:** Religions give meaning to the human conditions of life and death and can include myths, doctrines, ethical teachings, and rituals.
- **Attitudes toward the body:** Culture determines how the body will be cared for and determines practices such as transfusions, transplants, amputations, autopsies, embalming, and cremation.
- **Attitudes toward death:** Death is perceived differently. Some cultures believe that death is the end of one's life; others believe that it is the beginning of a new life.
- **Bereavement, grief, and mourning practices:** Culture prescribes how individuals will outwardly display grief after loss.
- **Funeral practices:** Practices during a funeral are prescribed variably across cultures.
- **Communication:** Culture may socialize its members to be silent in conversation and in grief while others may condition their members to be expressive.

➤ **DEATH, GRIEF, AND MULTICULTURAL AWARENESS EXERCISES**

○ **Death Awareness Introspective Exercise (Answer the following questions)**

- What was the first death that you can remember? What kind of death was it?

- What do you remember about your reactions to it? _____

- What was the most recent death that you can remember? What type of death was it? _____

- What were your reactions to it? _____

- As a school psychologist, what type of death would be difficult for you to cope with and would be a problem for your service delivery? _____

- Why would that kind of death affect you? _____

- **Grief Awareness Introspective Exercise** (Answer the following questions)
- Do you believe that children and adolescents grieve through linear, sequential stages? Explain. _____

- Should children be shielded from grief and death? Why or why not? _____

- Do children grieve like adults? Why or why not? _____

- When a student dies, should you move and remove his/her school desk from class? Explain. _____

- If a child experiences the presence of a loved one after the death, would you consider that a part of the expected grieving process? Why, or why not? _____

- After providing intervention during a school/community tragedy, would you, as a school psychologist, participate in a defusing or debriefing? Why, or why not?

- **Multicultural Awareness Introspective Exercise** (Answer the following questions)
 - How many individuals from cultural, racial, or religious backgrounds very different from your own have you personally or professionally known who have died? Explain. _____

 - In relating to an individual from another culture, are you aware of how your expectations and biases may affect the relationship? If so, in what way? _____

 - Do you prevent yourself from lumping together individuals from different ethnic minority groups, and are you aware of the important individual differences within each group and within each person within the group? Explain. _____

 - When intervening as a school psychologist, do you avoid applying Western ethnocentric concepts to understand and help individuals from other cultures? Have you experienced this? If so, how? _____

 - Are you aware of using culturally sensitive verbal and nonverbal communication? What experiences have you had? _____

 - Are you cognizant of the meaning the culture applies to trauma, death, grief, and treatment? What intercultural experiences have you encountered? _____

Note: The previous three Death, Grief, and Multicultural Awareness Introspective Exercises were constructed by this workshop presenter and were modeled after D. P. Irish, K. P. Lundquist, & V J. Nelsen's (Eds.) 1993 book, Ethnic Variations in Dying, Death, and Grief: Diversity in Universality, published by Taylor & Francis in Washington, DC.

○ **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Baird, B. N. (1999). The Internship, Practicum, and Field Placement Handbook: A Guide For The Helping Professional (2nd ed.). New York: Prentice-Hall

Irish, D. P., Lundquist, K. F., & Nelsen, V. J. (Eds.) (1993). Ethnic variations in dying, death, and grief: Diversity in universality, pp. 29-47. Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis.

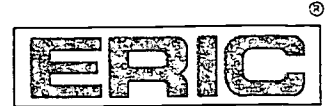
Lynch, E. W. (1992). Developing cross-cultural competence. In E. W. Lynch & M. J. Hanson (Eds.), Developing cross-cultural competence (pp. 35-61). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Pedersen, P. B. (1987). Ten frequent assumptions of cultural bias in counseling. Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 16-24.

Ross, H. M. (1994). Societal/cultural views regarding death and dying. In G. E. Dickinson, M. R. Leming, and A. C. Mermann (Eds.), Annual editions: Dying death, and bereavement (2nd ed.) (pp. 83-90). Guilford, CT: Dushkin.



U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)



REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: Multicultural Death and Grief Awareness: An Intervention Tool	
Author(s): Michael R. Tramonte	
Corporate Source: National Association of School Psychologists - Convention	Publication Date: April 11, 2003

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Level 1



Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

Level 2A



Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

Level 2B



Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.

If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here, →
release

Signature: Michael R. Tramonte	Printed Name/Position/Title: Associate Professor of Education
Organization/Address: Rivier College - Main St., Nashua, NH	Telephone: (603) 897-8487 FAX: (603) 897-8887
	E-Mail Address: mtramonte@rivier.edu Date: 4/21/03

03060

NASP ~~1999~~ 2003

(over)

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:	ERIC/CASS University of North Carolina at Greensboro 201 Ferguson Building, PO Box 26171 Greensboro, NC 27402-6171
---	--

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Processing and Reference Facility

1100 West Street, 2nd Floor
Laurel, Maryland 20707-3598

Telephone: 301-497-4080

Toll Free: 800-799-3742

FAX: 301-953-0263

e-mail: ericfac@inet.ed.gov

WWW: <http://ericfac.piccard.csc.com>