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AUTHOR Tramonte, Michael R.
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ABSTRACT

This workshop seeks to train persons interested in counseling those who have suffered traumatic loss. The training comes about in part by the participants' introspection into their own past trauma reactions and the coping strategies they used. They also learn from the shared experiences of other participants. The goals of this workshop are to 1) discuss the major dimensions of grief experienced by the participants, 2) have participants reflect on their own awareness of death, grief, and multiculturalism, 3) share experiences with other workshop participants, and 4) return home with more personal awareness of coping with traumatic loss. Multicultural issues are addressed in relation to trauma and how to counsel victims of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds. Inventories for use throughout the workshop are included. (ADT)

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**THE 22ND INTERNATIONAL DEATH, GRIEF,
AND BEREAVEMENT CONFERENCE**
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COPING WITH TRAUMATIC LOSS



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

Adjunct Instructor in Psychology
Middlesex Community College
Bedford, Massachusetts 01730

and

Retired School Psychologist
Lowell Public Schools
Lowell, Massachusetts 01850

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➤ **THE WORKSHOP'S MAJOR LEARNING PRINCIPLE:**

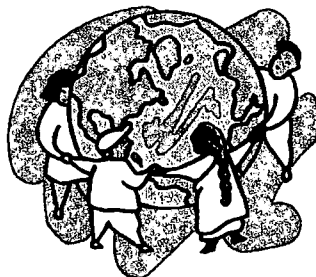
- Participants “learn more effectively when they relate new information to the things they already know” (Ormrod, 2002, p. 15). Consequently, that educational psychological principle will guide this workshop. There will be opportunities for participants’ introspection, for connecting personal grief experiences with information assimilated in the workshop. In addition, participants who so desire will be encouraged to share experiences.

➤ **GOALS OF THIS INTROSPECTIVE/INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP**

- Learn about the school psychology and American Red Cross crisis intervention experiences and coping reactions of the workshop presenter
- Discuss the major dimensions of grief by introspecting about your past trauma reactions and coping strategies
- Introspect about your personal awareness of death, grief, and multiculturalism
- Share experiences with the other workshop participants
- Return home with more personal awareness of coping with traumatic loss

➤ **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES OF THE WORKSHOP PRESENTER**

- Retired School Psychologist With 28 Years Experience
 - ⊗ Provided intervention after accidental, suicidal, and homicidal deaths
- American Red Cross Disaster Mental Health Volunteer
 - ⊗ Provided intervention after disasters: tornado, wildfire, aircraft, terrorist, tropical storm, flood, workplace shooting, fire, and school bus accident.



➤ **COPING WITH TRAUMATIC LOSS –
THE TRAUMA COPING INVENTORY**

In reacting to a traumatic experience as a survivor or as a co-victim, how did you cope? Or, if you were not a survivor or co-victim but helped others, how did you cope (i.e., any secondary traumatization)? Read each of the following characteristics and put a check mark under “Yes” if it applied to you and “No” if it did not. The information is cited from Pearlman and Saakvitne (1995) and from Rando (1988). The workshop presenter also added some of the characteristics to the partial and overlapping list. This workshop presenter selected and organized the information into the following question format:

▪ **HOW DID YOU COPE COGNITIVELY?**

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
○ Changed assumptions about the self and the world _____		
○ Distrustful _____		
○ Loss of safety _____		
○ Lessened power or control _____		
○ Loss of Independence _____		
○ Decreased self-esteem _____		
○ Blocked intimacy feelings _____		
○ Impaired concentration _____		
○ Impaired decision-making ability _____		
○ Self-blame _____		
○ Flashbacks _____		
○ Nightmares _____		
○ Dissociation (“spacey” feeling) _____		
○ Lowered self-efficacy _____		
○ Memory impairment _____		
○ Confusion _____		
○ Worry _____		
○ Fear of reoccurrence of the trauma _____		
○ Other _____		

▪ **HOW DID YOU COPE EMOTIONALLY?**

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
○ Internalized the stress (i.e., depression) _____		
○ Externalized the stress (i. e. aggression) _____		
○ Fear and anxiety _____		
○ Guilt _____		
○ Blame _____		
○ Anger _____		

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
<input type="radio"/> Sadness _____		
<input type="radio"/> Loss of faith _____		
<input type="radio"/> Illegitimate, legitimate and/or survivor guilt _____		
<input type="radio"/> Separation pain, sorrow, and longing _____		
<input type="radio"/> Disorganization _____		
<input type="radio"/> Depression and despair _____		
<input type="radio"/> Diminished self-concern _____		
<input type="radio"/> Obsession with the trauma _____		
<input type="radio"/> Sense of vulnerability _____		
<input type="radio"/> Searching for meaning _____		
<input type="radio"/> Identification _____		
<input type="radio"/> Grief spasms _____		
<input type="radio"/> Shock _____		
<input type="radio"/> Terror _____		
<input type="radio"/> Irritability _____		
<input type="radio"/> Emotional numbing _____		
<input type="radio"/> Helplessness _____		
<input type="radio"/> Loss of interest in familiar activities _____		
<input type="radio"/> Avoidance _____		
<input type="radio"/> Other _____		

▪ **HOW DID YOU COPE SOCIALLY (INTERPERSONALLY)?**

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
<input type="radio"/> Restlessness _____		
<input type="radio"/> Little or no interest in usual activities _____		
<input type="radio"/> Lack of energy and motivation _____		
<input type="radio"/> Bored or impatient with others _____		
<input type="radio"/> Withdrawal from others _____		
<input type="radio"/> Decreased satisfaction _____		
<input type="radio"/> Preoccupied with one's grief _____		
<input type="radio"/> Fearful about being alone _____		
<input type="radio"/> Related to others to avoid thinking of the deceased _____		
<input type="radio"/> Distrustful of others _____		
<input type="radio"/> Increased relational conflict _____		
<input type="radio"/> Reduced relational intimacy _____		
<input type="radio"/> Alienation _____		
<input type="radio"/> Impaired work performance _____		
<input type="radio"/> Impaired school performance _____		
<input type="radio"/> Blaming others _____		
<input type="radio"/> Other _____		

▪ **HOW DID YOU COPE PHYSICALLY?**

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
<input type="radio"/> Fought, fled, or froze _____		
<input type="radio"/> Fatigue, exhaustion _____		
<input type="radio"/> Apathy _____		
<input type="radio"/> Lethargy _____		
<input type="radio"/> Sleep difficulties _____		
<input type="radio"/> Tearfulness and crying _____		
<input type="radio"/> Weight loss or weight gain _____		
<input type="radio"/> Teeth grinding _____		
<input type="radio"/> Nail-biting _____		
<input type="radio"/> Feeling that something was stuck in your throat _____		
<input type="radio"/> Heart palpitations, trembling, shaking _____		
<input type="radio"/> Shortness of breath _____		
<input type="radio"/> Dizziness _____		
<input type="radio"/> Unsteady feelings _____		
<input type="radio"/> Chest pain, pressure, or discomfort _____		
<input type="radio"/> Headaches _____		
<input type="radio"/> Gastrointestinal upset _____		
<input type="radio"/> Startle response _____		
<input type="radio"/> Hyperarousal _____		
<input type="radio"/> Nightmares _____		
<input type="radio"/> Exaggerated startle response _____		
<input type="radio"/> Reduced immune response _____		
<input type="radio"/> Vulnerability to illness _____		
<input type="radio"/> Other _____		

▪ **HOW DID YOU COPE BEHAVIORALLY?**

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
<input type="radio"/> Avoidance _____		
<input type="radio"/> Social withdrawal _____		
<input type="radio"/> Decreased intimacy and lowered trust in others _____		
<input type="radio"/> Aggression _____		
<input type="radio"/> Substance abuse _____		
<input type="radio"/> Regression _____		
<input type="radio"/> Dysfunctional behavior _____		
<input type="radio"/> Eating less or more _____		
<input type="radio"/> Sleep problems _____		
<input type="radio"/> Other _____		

▪ **HOW DID YOU COPE SPIRITUALLY?**

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
○ With no spiritual support _____		
○ God had nothing to do with it _____		
○ Loss of faith in religion _____		
○ Angry at God or other deity (religious founder) _____		
○ Blaming God or other deity (religious founder) _____		
○ The trauma was given as a punishment _____		

➤ **INNER AND OUTER COPING RESOURCES (STRATEGIES) –
THE TRAUMA COPING RESOURCE INVENTORY**

In reacting to a traumatic experience as a survivor or as a co-victim, how did you use resources to cope? Or, if you were not a survivor or co-victim but helped others, how did you use strategies to cope? Read each of the following resources and respond in three ways: (1) put a check mark under “Yes” if the strategy was a support for you, and “No” if it were not; (2) underline the specific resources you used for coping; and (3) circle the specific resource(s) you hope to use in the future. Feel free to comment on or add to each category, or create a new one. The information is cited from Rothschild (2000), Drescher & Foy (1995), and the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (retrieved February 2003). Also, the workshop presenter added some strategies to the partial and overlapping list and selected and organized the information into the following format:

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
○ Functional/practical resources – shelter, food/nourishment, water, safety/protection, clothing, sleep, communication with loved ones, etc.		
○ Physical resources – health, physical strength and agility, exercise, body awareness, somatic memory, body psychotherapy, medication, etc.		
○ Psychological resources – high, intelligence, sense of humor, curiosity, creativity, resiliency, relief at surviving the tragedy, greater self-worth, changes in the way the client views the future, feelings of ‘growing’ from the experience, dual awareness, “telling your story,” calming images (attentive oasis activities such as a new hobby, and concrete anchors such as a person, animal, safe place, object, or activity), verbal psychotherapy, debriefings, active coping style, mental health, good self-regulation of emotion, appealing and sociable, positive self-efficacy, positive self-confidence, positive self-esteem, internal locus of control, and task-oriented.		

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Interpersonal (social) resources- spouse or partner, living with family member, extended family relations/guidance, connections with other family members, friends, pets, and recollections of significant people from the client's past, making contact with loved ones, access to positive role models, connection with pro-social institutions, altruism (helping and comforting others), and participating in cultural beliefs and rituals. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Spiritual resources- belief in a higher power, following a religious figure, adherence to religious practice, regaining a sense of faith, hope, purpose, and meaning, spiritual autobiographies, meditation, prayer, guided imagery, yoga, involvement in religious rituals, mind-body disciplines, service to others, community spirit, and communing with nature, discussion of the key theological and existential issues, i.e., reconciling the existence of God with the presence of evil and suffering in the world, reading spiritual literature, i. e. Bible, meeting with others in a "spiritual fellowship," and forgiving self and others. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Other resources _____ 		

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

○ **Death Awareness Questions**

- What was the first death that you can remember? _____

Explain your reactions: _____

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

Explain your reactions: _____

- What was your most effective coping resource? _____

- Did you experience other types of personal losses other than the deaths of important individuals in your life? Yes ___ No ___ Explain _____

- Did you enter therapy after important persons in your life died? Yes ___ No ___

If so, were you also coping with other personal losses simultaneously? Explain

○ **Grief Awareness Questions (for Trauma Survivors or Co-Victims)**

- Do you know if your body remembered a traumatic experience that was unknown to your conscious mind? Yes ___ No ___ Explain _____

- Were you able to recognize that the experience happened in the past even though it felt as though it was happening in the present? Yes ___ No ___ Explain _____

- Did you respond to the trauma by fighting, fleeing, or freezing? _____

Explain _____

- Did you experience a later internal state that replicated the internal state produced during a previous traumatic event? Yes ___ No ___ Explain _____

- In responding to trauma, did you consider your inner and outer resources as well as the trauma? Yes ___ No ___ Explain _____

- If you participated in therapy after experiencing the trauma, did you select verbal psychotherapy, body-psychotherapy, or both? _____ Explain _____

○ **Grief Awareness Questions (for Helpers of Survivors or Co-Victims)**

- Did you help a client's whose body remembered a traumatic experience that was unknown to his/her conscious mind? Yes ___ No ___ Explain. _____

- Did you help a client whose experience happened in the past even though he/she felt as though it were happening in the present? Yes ___ No ___ Explain _____

- Did you help a client who reacted to trauma by fighting, fleeing, or freezing? Yes ___ No ___ Explain _____

- Did you help a client whose later internal state replicated an internal state produced during a previous traumatic event? Yes ___ No ___ Explain. _____

- In helping a client, did you consider his/her inner and outer resources as well as the trauma? Yes ___ No ___ Explain _____

- As a helper, do you believe in verbal psychotherapy, body-psychotherapy, or both? _____ Explain _____

○ **Multicultural Awareness 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 diverse groups, and are you aware of the important individual differences within each group and within each person within the group? Yes ___ No ___ Explain.

- Do you avoid applying Western ethnocentric concepts to understand and help individuals from other cultures? Have you experienced this? Yes ___ No _____

If so, explain _____

Are you aware of using culturally sensitive verbal and nonverbal communication?
Yes ___ No ___ What experiences have you had? _____

- Are you cognizant of the meaning the culture applies to trauma, death, grief, and treatment? Yes ___ No ___ What intercultural experiences have you encountered?

Note: The previous Death, Grief, and Multicultural Awareness Introspective Questions' exercise has as its models (1) 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; and (2) J. W. Worden's 1991 book, Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy: A Handbook for the Mental Health Practitioner (2nd ed), published by Springer in New York.

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Organization/Address: <u>Rivier College, 420 South Main Street, Nashua, NH 03060</u>	Telephone: <u>(603) 897-8487</u>	Fax: <u>(603) 897-8887</u>
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