

American Academy McAllister Institute

Program Title

“How Knowledge of Death and Dying Will Help Us Become Better Funeral Directors”

2 CEU's

AAMI Lecture

PRESENTATION OBJECTIVES AND OUTLINE

2 Contact Hours

Course Objective: The United States is a “death denying” society, which makes our ability to grieve and move through the mourning process more difficult than for those in other countries. We have no definitive rules to guide us as we grieve and no time period to assist us as we mourn.

We will examine death, dying, and bereavement practices as they relate to the development through the life cycle. At each stage of the life cycle, there is a change, or growth, as it were, which matches an individual's maturity. From birth to old age we are constantly changing. An unknown author wrote, “The only constant in life is change.” We will cover how we as funeral directors can help families through coping skills.

Course Outline:

- I. Introduction of Speaker and Topic
- II. Dying, Death, and Bereavement
 - A. First personal involvement with death
 - B. Positive attributes that you offer your families.
 - C. What qualities set you apart from your competitors?
- III. Events throughout time that effect or view of death.
 - A. 1600-1830 The agricultural period
 - B. 1830-1945 Funeral institutions emerged.
 - C. 1900- 2000 Palliative Care and Hospice.
 - D. 1945 The Atomic Bomb
 - E. 1968 Emergence in death in the media.
 - F. 1979 AIDS epidemic
 - G. 1986 Challenger Disaster
 - H. 2001-2002 World Trade Center Disaster
 - I. 2005-2006 The Tsunami and Hurricane Katrina
- IV. The mortality statistics:
 - A. Deaths by State
 - B. Deaths by Dates

- C. Annual Death Rates per 1000 Population
 - D. Life Expectancy by Age
 - E. Life Expectancy at Birth by Race and Sex
 - F. Deaths by Major Causes
 - G. 10 Leading Causes of Death in the U.S.
 - H. Infant Mortality Rates
 - I. Deaths Rates due to Firearms, Drugs, and Alcohol by Race and Sex
 - J. Deaths by Firearms
 - K. Deaths by Suicide
 - L. Deaths rate by Cause of Death
 - M. Children Killed by Guns
 - N. These are U.S. Statistics
 - O. The Time Lines Range from 1850 – 2004, and 1900-2004
- V. Stages of Death
- A. Kubler-Ross
 - B. Erikson
 - C. Newman-Newman
 - D. Lindeman
- VI. Assisting the Bereaved
- A. Create a safe environment
 - B. Understanding the mourner
 - C. Compassion and a genuine desire to help
 - D. Practice consistent stress relief and assessment of coping mechanisms
- VII. Helping the family cope with illness
- A. The Physical
 - B. The Social
 - C. The Spiritual
- VIII. Hospice
- A. 1st Hospice 1967
 - B. 1st US Hospice 1974
 - C. Hospice in medical institutions or in patient's homes.
 - D. Hospital and Nursing Homes provide Hospice
- IX. Palliative Care
- A. A life-limiting illness.
 - B. Focusing on the needs of the ill patient
 - C. Doctor must certify the life expectancy
 - D. Physical comfort of the patients
- X. Identify the variances of cultural diversity and death rituals.
- A. Christians
 - B. Islamic
 - C. Buddhism
 - D. Hinduism
 - E. Judaism
- XI. The role of the funeral professional
- A. Conduit for family
 - B. Communicator for the family.

XII. The steps that produce communication following a loss:

- A. Establishing contact;
- B. Notification;
- C. Providing Support;
- D. Catharsis;
- E. Establishing a network.

XIII. It is important to listen attentively:

- A. Maintain eye contact;
- B. Paraphrase what was heard;
- C. Ask questions for clarification;
- D. Ask open ended questions: How? What do you mean?;
- E. Avoid interrupting the flow of conversation;
- F. Avoid phrases that may or may not describe what is being said

XIV. As funeral service professionals, we can assist the bereaved by further:

- A. Giving reassurance, support, and comfort;
- B. Help them retain the capacity for pleasure;
- C. Help them dwell on themselves, rather than the deceased;
- D. Allow them to cry, or feel anger.
- E. Assure them that their sense of emptiness is temporary;
- F. Collects "raw data" for death certificates
- G. Caretaker of the dead as well as the caregiver of the living
- H. Is on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- I. He or she arrives within an hour to make the removal of the deceased.
- J. Engaged in crisis intervention daily
- K. Wears many hats: a mother, father, sibling, church officer, etc.

XV. Grieving and the Cycle of Life

- A. Helpful rituals to ease the grief of those families that we serve.
 - 1. Mass Card
 - 2. Support Groups
 - 3. Remembrances to the deceased:
 - 4. symbolic place setting at table during holidays
 - 5. ornament placed on tree with deceased name during the holidays
 - 6. offering by the priest on the anniversary of the death
 - 7. special place in the home for a picture
 - 8. revisit places that were shared with the deceased.
 - 9. Writing letters to the deceased; placing the letters in the casket for reading at the burial site.
 - 10. Rite of passage ceremony
 - 11. Planting a tree in the name of the deceased
 - 12. Gone but not forgotten: Family gathering on the anniversary of the death invite friends
 - 13. Healing Circle – circle of friends surrounding the survivor to give him or her their strength.

14. Letter exchange with other grieving family members.
15. Engage support of family, friends, colleagues, and associates creating a foundation for bereavement maintenance or in the name of the deceased.

XVI. Conclusion