



Being in Charge of My Life: Managing my Illness

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August 16, 2014

Overview

- Bipolar Diagnosis...In relation to Grief
- Cultural Myths
- The Myth of Closure
- Acceptance
- Self-Love
- Coping Skills
- Resources

Receiving a Diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder

- The diagnosis of a mental illness is a loss.
- It can feel like a loss of an understanding of who are...
- It's a loss of how we see ourselves.
- Loss of normalcy – being forced to endure and cope with things that make no sense at all.

Definition of Grief and Processing...

- Grief is the conflicting feelings caused by the end of or change in a familiar pattern of behaviors.
- Grieving allows us to take away pain and unfinished emotional business.

Grief

- Grief is the normal and natural reaction to loss of any kind.
- We have been socialized to believe that these feelings are abnormal and unnatural.
- If we continue to not acknowledge the pain and we stuff it down, the pot will eventually boil over.
- Not processing grief can cause the emotions to manifest themselves in other ways that we might not recognize or understand as GRIEF.

Self Medication

Food

Alcohol and other Drugs

Anger

Exercise

Fantasy (movies, TV, books)

Isolation

Sex

Shopping (Retail Therapy)

Workaholism

Myths about Grief

- Don't feel bad
- Replace the Loss
- Just give it time
- Time heals all wounds
- Be strong for others
- Keep Busy
- Grieve alone (unspoken)
- “I know how you feel”

NO YOU DON'T!

The Myth of Closure

- Emotional Completion
- When we allow ourselves to go through the grieving process, we are completing our relationship to the pain caused by the loss...

Formerly used Stages of Grief

- Denial – I'm not sick. I'm fine.
- Anger – To hell with this illness and this medication.
- Bargaining – If I just go to therapy, I won't be sick anymore.
- Depression – I'm sick. I'll always be sick. What's the point?
- Acceptance – Ok, I'm sick. Now what?

“Grief is individual and unique. There are no stages. Grief cannot be neatly categorized.”

-griefrecoverymethod.com

Let the healing begin...

- We make different decisions and feel/live free.
- We regain trust...Unresolved grief causes us to lose out.
- We may gain/regain faith in our spirituality/religion/higher power.
- We are meant to be a processing plant, not a storage tank.

Acceptance

- Acceptance isn't a finite destination
- It's something we choose everyday.

Self-Love

- Loving Yourself...is having the willingness and acquiring the ability to allow yourself the right to make your own choices for yourself without the need for the approval of others.

Support for Grief Recovery

- Grief Recovery Institute – Grief Recovery Method
- Individual Grief Counseling
- Individual Counseling
- Completion Letter
- Ceremony
- Journal experience...
- Peers
- DBSA



The Grief Recovery Method®
by The Grief Recovery Institute®

Coping Skills Toolbox

- Journaling
- Support Network
- Relaxation
- Meditation/Guided Imagery
- Mindfulness
- Yoga
- Creative Outlets
- Individual Therapy
- Goal Setting
- Empowerment with Medication
- IPSRT (Interpersonal & Social Rhythm Therapy)
- DBSA



In closing...

- We need to feel our feelings. Hopefully, we learn to leave the guilt and shame behind...They weren't very helpful anyway.
- Processing our Grief makes Acceptance a reality.
- Support System and Resources are vital to our recovery.
- Coping Skills are more than just a cliché.

Resources and Citation

~ Books~

- The Grief Recovery Handbook – Russell Friedman and John W. James
- Moving Beyond Loss- Russell Friedman and John W. James

~ Web Resources~

- <http://natashatracy.com/>