



Grief and the Healing Arts: Creativity As Therapy (Death, Value and Meaning)

Sandra L. Bertman

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For nearly three decades, Sandra Bertman has been exploring the power of the arts and belief symbols, metaphors, stories to alleviate psychological and spiritual pain not only of patients, grieving family members, and affected communities but also of the nurses, clergy and physicians who minister to them. Her training sessions and clinical interventions are based on the premise that bringing out the creative potential inherent in each of us is just as relevant perhaps more so as psychiatric theory and treatment models since grief and loss are an integral part of life. Thus, this work was compiled to illuminate the many facets that link grief, counseling, and creativity. The multiple strategies suggested in these essays will help practitioners enlarge their repertoire of hands-on skills and foster introspection and empathy in readers. Among the contributing authors are physician and nurse writers (Aaron Lazare, Bill Lamers, Laurence Schneiderman, and Cortney Davis), psychologists, photographers, and art and music therapists skilled with adult and child populations (Barbara M. Sourkes, Nancy Fried, and Elsa Dorfman). Essays on the art and thoughts of Kaethe Kollwitz and Edvard Munch, on traditional religious practices and the latest internet interventions, on puppets, music and film all enrich the dialogue. The four sections of this anthology are (1) The Arts, Personal Grievs, Professional Roles; (2) Some Ways Caregivers Use the Arts for Themselves and Those They Companion; (3) Lessons from Cultures Old and New; and (4) Basic Needs of Grieving People. This provocative array of insights and techniques is further punctuated with rich fiction, poetry, photography, and visual art meant to address the impasses the moments of disconnection encountered in the human acts of caring and is geared to refuel even the most seasoned therapist.

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