

Praise Hong

MFT 603: Individual & Family Development

Week 10 Reading Points

While there are some studies that suggest that anticipatory grief can help with postdeath bereavement, withdrawing emotionally from the ill family member can also have a negative impact on the surviving family. The caretakers can experience burnout, turmoil and guilt over wishing to be able to move on, especially when the person expected to pass is in a seriously deteriorated condition for a long period of time. The grief process is not universal; it does not only occur in the season following a loss but can happen before, as well as years after the loss took place.

Middle adulthood is often a crossroads of both growth and decline, and gains and losses. Midlife adults are likely to have multiple caregiving responsibilities between their adult children who may still be dependent on them financially and/or emotionally and their aging parents whose health is fast declining. Contrary to popular beliefs in the western culture, midlife is less about crisis than quest and its outcome of personal discovery. The U-curve of life satisfaction in the United States indicates both low and high points of life can take place between the ages of 45-65.

Both/and thinking is necessary when there is no perfect solution to handling a significant loss. It can provide the momentum to move one forward toward adjusting to life without the lost person. Learning to balance the negative with the positive can help an individual move in some direction, rather than be immobilized by stress and pain.