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July 6, 2017

THE ROLE OF HOPE IN HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE

Objectives
 Define hope.
 Recognize three manifestations of hope.
 Identify the role of a medical care provider in nurturing hope for those who are dying and their families.

What is hope?
 It is abstract and means different things to different people.
 Nuland: “All definitions of hope have one thing in common: They deal with the expectation of a good that is yet to be, a perception of a future condition in which a desired goal will be achieved.”
 Hope is not optimism.
 Hope is also the living out of the purpose and meaning that is found in our shared suffering, which also gives us a common hope.
The First Manifestation of Hope

- The first manifestation of hope is the common understanding that is used in casual conversation.
  - Very optimistic
  - Looks to the future, and the future is a better place that the person who has hope will experience
  - It also includes wishful thinking

Benefits

- Some people believe that this kind of hope that the future will get better has a positive affect on our physical health as well as our spiritual and emotional health.
- It is a tool that helps people accomplish things they may not accomplish without it.

Challenges to the first manifestation of hope

- The brighter future may not be a possibility
- Barbara Ehrenreich starts her article by saying,
  - I hate hope. It was hammered into me constantly a few years ago when I was being treated for breast cancer. Think positively! Don’t lose hope! Wear your pink ribbon with pride! A couple of years later, I was alarmed to discover the facility where I received my follow up care was called Hope Center. Hope? What about a cure? F—- hope. Keep us alive.
This common manifestation of hope finds little to no value in the present.
- It is elitist.

Second Manifestation of Hope
- This is a manifestation of hope that provides for the greater good of community, country, or world.
- It is the hope of the poor and underprivileged and is embraced by liberation theologians who believe in the “preferential option for the poor.”
- It usually involves a charismatic leader who believes in the possibility of progress for the greater good, but understands that she/he may not see it in her own lifetime.
- This also looks to the future, but it is a future that other people will enjoy.

Martin Luther King, Jr
“I have a dream that my four little children one day will live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.”
Third Manifestation of Hope

- This is not about the future, it is about realizing the hopes of the past and present.
- This hope is about finding purpose and meaning in the present that fulfills the universal hopes of all generations.
- A key factor with this manifestation of hope is relationship.

Our Role

- By helping patients come to terms with their diagnosis, you are nurturing hope.
- By being present with them, you are nurturing hope.
- By helping families come together by making them comfortable, you are nurturing hope.

Examples

- Jerome Groopman
- Oscar Romero
- Heidi Neumark
Conclusion

“Paul Farmer, the renowned physician who has spent his life trying to cure the world’s sickest and poorest people, once quoted me something that the writer Thomas Merton said: ‘We are bodies of broken bones. I guess I’d always known but never fully considered that being broken is what makes us human. We all have our reasons. Sometimes we’re fractured by the choices we make, sometimes we’re shattered by things we would never have chosen. But our brokenness is also the source of our common humanity, the basis for our shared search for comfort, meaning, and healing. Our shared vulnerability and imperfection nurtures and sustains our capacity for compassion.’

—Bryan Stevenson, Just Mercy