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The Spiritual Dimension of Suicide Prevention

We begin with the understanding of what makes people *want to live*. One's desire to live usually depends on many things, but the one thing that overrides all of this is the *experience of being loved; of belonging*.

We understand that love leads to a firm sense of *self-worth* that comes from and is nurtured by tangible experiences of and with the people who love us. Certainly, the lack of "being loved" can be damaging, even devastating. So, *wanting to live and to be loved while living* is an experience that can serve as a source of healing, especially when or wherever it is lacking.

The lack of love can cause the will to live, to be diminished or to cease all together. Love, when it is lacking, makes one unsure of the self, leading to self-doubting and to anxiety. Love, then, becomes not only necessary, but transformative. As a Priest, and as a retired Social Worker with 43 years of practice experiences, I know that God's love is made present to us in love; human love; love, one to another!

We end with "*the mystery of suicide*". But, so is love. At times it is a mystery; but life, as a mysterious reality, can also be healing and transformative, at every second, every minute, every hour....every day.

ADDICTION = an association with any number of physical and psychological problems.

Spiritual association = The “Why”, the “What’s happening”

- substance abuse
- emotional dysfunction
- relational accountability or lack thereof
- higher power; answers, turning over
- thoughts and ideations
- reason, meaning, fulfillment (“Here and now”); reality vs. artificial

Spirituality Risk Factors

- Meaning**
- Sense of place**
- Belonging**
- Faith**
- Peace**
- The “Self” and the “Other”**
- Relationship(s)**
- Well-being**
- Fulfillment**

A Spiritual Meaning of Suicide.

A dislike of (even “Disgust”) with, life that takes hold of an individual, without a plausible motive, is what we can start with. The effect can be from any number of personal emotional states, or from a lack of personal validation from society or others, or from a lack of “faith” in any number of surrounding environmental or relational realities.

The challenge is to find purpose and meaning and satisfaction in the relationships with the “self” and “others”, so that life is satisfying and fulfilling, through one’s emotions, ability, and willingness.

Suicide and Love

- Suicide = “Why” and not an answer; a “mystery” for all time

Related Questions

How can I die?

What is the best way to do it?

What does it feel like?

I just don't want to live anymore. Should I just “check out”?

I really want to die. Any reason why I shouldn't?

Can't I just choose not to live? I

I don't care anymore, does anyone else care?

AFFECTION (The Mystery of Love):

Let us understand the nature of *“skin hunger”*, which is both an acknowledgment that we don’t get as much *affection* as we need, and of our drive to get more. We normally associate hunger with food, of course—but we don’t feel hunger simply because we *want* food. We feel hunger because we *need* food, just as we feel thirsty because we need water, and tired because we need sleep. Our bodies know what they require to function properly, and research suggests that affection belongs on that list, right behind food, water, and rest.

Just as lack of food, water, and rest have their detrimental effects, so too does the *lack of affection*. There have been studies to construct *“skin hunger”* — and the social, relational, and health (emotional) deficits with which it is associated.

The results: Individuals with high levels of *“skin hunger”* are disadvantaged in multiple ways, compared to those with moderate or low levels. Specifically, compared to people with less *“skin hunger”*, people who feel more affection-deprived are:

- less happy
- more lonely
- more likely to experience depression and stress
- less healthy physically, emotionally, spiritually
- lacking in less social support and lower relationship satisfaction.
- have anxiety and related disorders
- have secondary immune disorders
- less likely to form secure attachments with others in their lives.