



Treatment vs Companionship

Treatment Model

Companionship Model

To return the grieving child to a prior state of homeostatic balance (“old normal”)

Emphasizes the transformative, life-changing experience of grief (“new normal”)

Control or stops distressful symptoms; distress is undesirable

Observes, “watches out for,” “bears witness.” Sees value in soul based symptoms of grief.

Follows a perspective model where a counselor is perceived as expert

Bereaved child guides the journey; adopts “teach me” as the foundational principle.

A sustained relationship with the dead person is perceived as pathological

A shift in the relationship from presence to memory is seen as normal and healthy.

Positions the grieving child in a passive role

Recognizes the need for the grieving child to actively (in “doses”) mourn.

Quality of care judged by how well grief was “managed”

Quality of care monitored by how well we allowed the grieving child to lead the way.

Denial interferes with efficient integration of the loss and must be overcome

Denial helps sustain the integration of the loss from head to heart. It is matched with patience and compassion.

Assesses and creates a strategic plan of intervention

Shows up with curiosity, willingness, and a desire to learn from the child. Honors the mystery; searches for meaning; doesn't feel need to solve or satisfy the dilemma.



The Tenets of Companionship the Bereaved

Tenet One

Companionship is about being present to another person's pain; It is not about taking away the pain.

Tenet Two

Companionship is about going to the wilderness of the soul with another human being; it is not about thinking you are responsible for finding the way out.

Tenet Three

Companionship is about honoring the spirit; it is not about focusing on the intellect.

Tenet Four

Companionship is about listening with the heart; it is not about analyzing with the head.

Tenet Five

Companionship is about bearing witness to the struggles of others; it is not about judging or directing these struggles.

Tenet Six

Companionship is about walking alongside; it is not about leading.

Tenet Seven

Companionship means discovering the gifts of sacred silence; It does not mean filling up every moment with words.

Tenet Eight

Companionship is about being still; it is not about frantic movement forward.

Tenet Nine

Companionship is about respecting disorder and confusion; it is not about imposing order and logic

Tenet Ten

Companionship is about learning from others; it is not about teaching them.

Tenet Eleven

Companionship is about compassionate curiosity; it is not about expertise.



SIX RECONCILIATION NEEDS OF MOURNING

1. Acknowledge the reality of the death
2. Move toward the pain of the loss while being nurtured physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
3. Convert the relationship with the person who has died from one of presence to one of memory.
4. Develop a new self-identity based on life without the person who died.
5. Relate the experience of the death to a context of meaning
6. Experience a continued supportive adult presence in future years.