

AMBIGUOUS LOSS EXPERIENCES DURING REHABILITATION PROCESS

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Introduction. Usually experiences of loss are addressed when dealing with death phenomenon. However, people experience certain type of loss in other situations, including rehabilitation. P. Boss coined the term of Ambiguous loss which can be described as being of two types: the physical presence with psychological absence and psychological presence with physical absence.

The purpose of the presentation is to reveal how ambiguous loss phenomenon can be used as a framework in understanding the experiences of people who go through rehabilitation process and experiences of their family members as well.

Method. Literature review was applied in order to reveal as to how ambiguous loss phenomenon can be applied to the rehabilitation process.

Results. When people face injuries, sickness or any other event that constrain their functioning, they could experience a type of ambiguous loss which is not always recognized by mental health professionals. Ambiguous loss is usually not clear and not complete. People might lose an ability to perform certain tasks which can cause frustration, anxiety and depression. The loss of individual's ability to perform certain tasks influences family members as well. Whenever the rehabilitation does not comply with the perceived timeline, it can put a distress to the individual and the family system since an individual might not be able to resume personal, family and/ or social functions.

Conclusions. The ambiguous loss framework emphasizes the importance to include family members in the rehabilitation process and address the losses and gains of the individual. Thus, it might be beneficial for mental health professionals to understand the ambiguity of the loss during rehabilitation in order to assist individuals and families in finding support within and outside the family system.