

Working with Families on Fear of Death and Separation

Chronic and terminal illness affect both the patient and his or her family members. It will also induce an intense fear of death and separation. For people who are anticipating the end of life, such fear is so painful that people may find difficulty to tolerate with. Therefore, they may suppress their fear and develop various defense mechanisms to protect themselves. Defense is sometimes protective but it may also adversely affect the connectedness of a family, causing the family members to easily burst into distances, criticism, resentment, burnout and fatigue, which threatens the continuity of family bond and heightens of relational distress.

This workshop will introduce how family members are being trapped by the fear of death and the impact to their physical, psychological, and social well-being. The speaker will also share with the participants of some interventions on both casework and groupwork level on working with families who are facing death and separation in a family perspective.