

TITLE: The Rock as a Mourning Symbol

ETC: K/S, P/A, Sy, C

MATERIALS

A smooth rock 4"-6" across, river rock, which is rounded is ideal, but slate or limestone, which can have a smooth, flat surface works too.

Paint pens

PROCEDURES

- Light a candle at the beginning of the meeting, saying the name of the loved one(s).
- Blow the candle out at the end, with the client saying one thing he/she will leave behind as they transition out of the session, and back to regular life.
- Consider mourning customs, especially culture specific ones. Discuss some of the purposes of mourning symbols and rituals.
- Bring a photo or memento of the deceased to focus on during the intervention.
- Discussion Questions:

Which of these symbols seem most helpful or have the most meaning to you?

Why?

What do you think is the value of having these visible ways of showing grief?

Do you think it is helpful to take a "time out"? Why/Why not? If so, how long?

Using paint pens, decorate a rock in honor of the loved one. Discuss where the rock might be placed – on the grave, in a special place outdoors, or on an altar created at home.

RATIONALE

Symbols help us mourn:

- They provide structure or rules to help people get through a time that can be overwhelming and confusing.
- They give people "permission" to mourn – they are public, visible symbols of inner feelings of grief.
- They help others know what to do or say to support the grieving family.

- They mark not only the period of mourning, but also the end of a period of mourning.

ADAPTATIONS

Play the Byrds' *Turn, Turn, Turn (For everything there is a season)*, and provide a handout of the words. The client may write and/or draw a response to it.

This lab card is adapted from an activity of Hospice of the Bluegrass, Lexington, KY
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