

Death, Dying Remain Difficult Topics

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Death and dying can still be taboo subjects, even for rehabilitation counselors in hospitals, nursing homes, and prisons who must accept the death of clients as an occupational fact of life.

"Most counselors do not come into the field to work with people who are dying, nor are they prepared to face the reality of client death," says Dr. Brandon B. Hunt, assistant professor of counselor education, counseling psychology and rehabilitation services at Penn State.

"Working with clients with severe disabilities increases the odds that rehabilitation workers will experience the death of a client," Hunt notes. "Moreover, the longer counselors work in the field, the greater the odds that they will experience client death. Unfortunately, the training of rehabilitation counselors to deal with such losses is minimal at best."

Hunt, a faculty member in Penn State's College of Education, and Dr. David A. Rosenthal, assistant professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, are co-authors of the paper, "Rehabilitation Counselors-in-Training: A Study of Levels of Death Anxiety and Perceptions About Client Death," which appeared in a recent issue of the journal *Rehabilitation Education*.

The researchers surveyed 160 rehabilitation counselor-in-training students about client death. Results revealed that 31 percent of the students would prefer not to work with dying clients, 83 percent thought death and dying training was needed for rehabilitation counselors and 34 percent had experienced the death of between 1 and 20 clients.

"Of the students we surveyed, only 36 had graduate courses, workshops, hospice training and on-the-job training that deal with death, dying and bereavement issues," Hunt says. "While they may not constitute separate courses themselves, grief and loss issues can be incorporated into a variety of existing courses."

For instance, topics such as euthanasia, a right to hospice and other services, and rational suicide (the deliberate decision to end life while still functioning) can be addressed in a course on legal and ethical issues in the field of rehabilitation. Grief and loss, as well as adjustment to a terminal or life-threatening illness or disability, can be covered in a course focusing on the medical and psychosocial aspects of counseling the disabled or terminally ill.

"Faculty and students in counseling programs should be encouraged to talk about their own experiences with client death, as well as strategies that helped them adjust to the loss," Hunt says. "This can help all counselors develop their own strategies for coping with client death, including talking to colleagues, and supervisors, taking time to grieve for the clients, reducing one's caseload for a period of time if needed and going to counseling themselves if necessary."

"Results from this and other research document that the majority of rehabilitation counselors will experience the death of a client during their careers," she notes. "Therefore, it is important to provide students with opportunities to explore their thoughts and feelings about their own death and loss experiences before they work with clients who are dying or people who are grieving."

busy nibbling for at least of couple of more weeks. To say nothing of us bird and squirrel fans who keep feeders stuffed with tasty seeds.

Folks who live in more-rural parts of the state, plagued with bears ripping up garbage bags, destroying feeders, and flattening large sections of cornfields, probably will get a chuckle out of us relative urbanites and the excitement stirred by the appearance of a bear. Most of us who live in heavily-populated areas see our bears in zoos, on videos, movies, and the Discovery Channel of cable. Lest we forget, bears passing through here are still wild animals, and not dancing teddy-cartoons out of a Disney film.

It brings to mind the experience of friends who began feeding a bear at their mountain hunting cabin, encouraging the bruin's visits to their retreat. Then came the morning when they were frying bacon for breakfast near a screened kitchen window. The bear attempted to join them, trashing the window screen in the process.

Frankly, I never thought I'd be writing about a bear in the backyard.

And actually I'm not. A quick glance in the binoculars revealed a long, wagging tail on the black blob. Just a neighborhood black labrador retriever, inhaling the enticing fragrance of goundogs in the field.

Our bear fact turned out to be a false alarm.

Wherever that northbound bear is headed, we wish it good luck and a reminder to look both ways before crossing highways.

On Being a Farm Wife (and other hazards)

Joyce Bupp



"C'mere!"

"C'mere, look at this!"

The voice of our son-in-law, standing outside the opposite end of the calf nursery, had an excited urgency. Hustling to the opposite end of the little barn, I noticed his gaze fastened on something in the distance. My eyes followed the direction in which his were followed the directions in which his were focused, but the object of attention wasn't immediately obvious.

"Is that the bear?"

Then I saw the small, trotting black body, on the north-facing slope of the ridge beyond the meadow pasture. The black animal was headed downhill, crossing from one to the corn fields onto the filed road which slices upwards at an angle across the hillside of contoured strips of hay, corn, and soybeans.

I'll get the glasses, "I said, turning to run to the house. And nearly smashed into our daughter, baby Caleb strapped on her back in a carrier, and field glasses already in her hands.

Bears have been big news around here after at least one or two have begun moving through southern York County. Apparently they've begun exploring territory beyond northern Maryland, where bear-sightings have been reported for the past few years. My initial reaction to the bear tales in our

neighborhood were that someone had jumped to some erroneous conclusions over something else, probably a dog traveling through.

Except that the reports were being made by too many people with too much experience about wildlife. Then, friends related seeing photos of the visiting backyard bears. And, the bear(s) reported whereabouts had put it very close to the farm, calculating the eyewitness locations where the bruin had been spotted. To get from this place to that place, if it was the same bear, the errant animals would have had to pass just on the opposite side of the interstate highway from us.

Having ever only seen one real wild bear in my life and that near the hunting camp my fascination with the visitor was growing. And, what could possibly induce a bear to be roaming around our fairly-heavily populated part of York County, taking its chances with lots of people and an ever-growing horde of cars on the numerous roads criss-crossing the area?

Garbage. That's what.

Or, just bear-food in general, garbage being only one handy possibility for finding goodies around this peopled part of the country. There are also lots of fresh berries around the woods and fence rows right now, enough to keep a hungry bear

Guess which of these women has osteoporosis?



She gets backaches from sudden jolts, like going over a bump while in her car.



She is small-boned and her mother had osteoporosis.



She has lost 2 inches in height over the past few years.

If you answered "all three," you are correct. If you have experienced any of these symptoms or have a similar family history, you could have osteoporosis, too.

There's good news. We're doing a study in which everyone will receive Fosamax, calcium and Vitamin D for 2 years, free of charge. You'll also receive a free screening test for osteoporosis.

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