

**Death: Coping and Comfort for
Survivors of Victims of Crime -
- Treating Asian/Vietnamese
Americans**

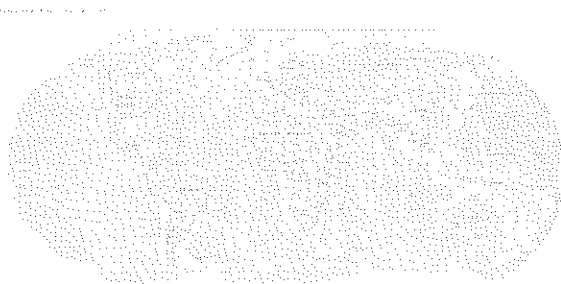
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Things to Remember

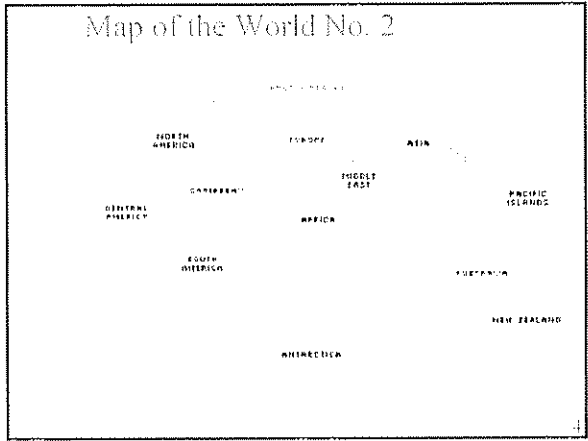
- Turn off cell phone pager
- If you have to leave early, please have consideration for others
- The materials in this presentation are open for discussion
- Self-introduction

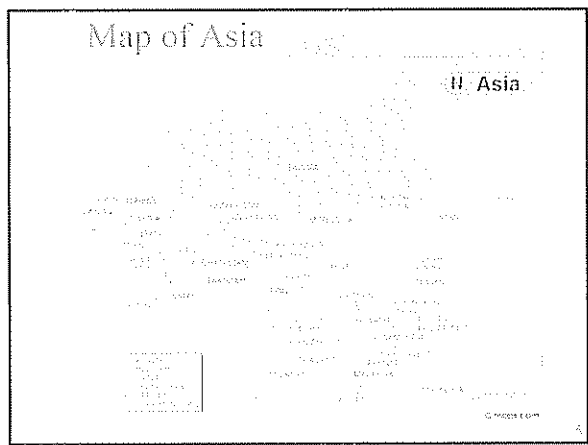
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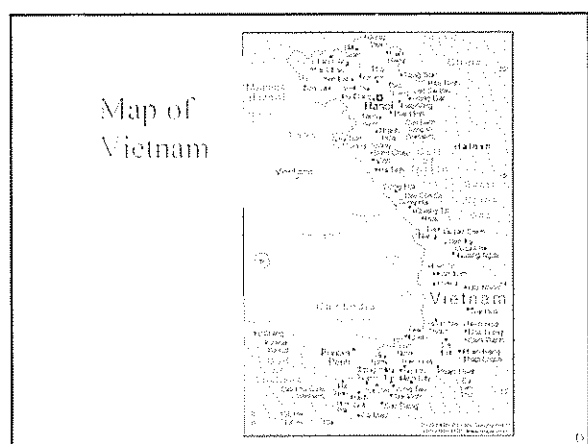
Map of the World No.1



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Main Religions (Tam Giáo)

- Buddhism (Đạo Phật)
- Taoism (Đạo Lão)
- Confucianism (Đạo Khổng)

Other Religions ...

- Ancestor Worship (Đạo Ông Bà) is derived from filial piety (hiếu)
- Cao Daiism: fusing the secular and religious philosophies of both East and West
- Hòa Hảo Buddhism: reformed Buddhism is based on the common people and embodied in personal faith
- Catholicism as introduced in the 16th century by the Portuguese, Spanish, and French missionaries
- Protestantism, Islam, and Hinduism

Traumatic Events

- Accidents/Natural Disaster
- Witnessing Violence
- Assaults (e.g., sexual, physical)
- Loss of a loved one due to violence / victim of crime

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Coping

- Denial & suppression → mental disorders (e.g., Depression, PTSD)
- Development of somatic problems → physical problems (e.g., heart condition)
- Internalization → self-destruction → both mental and physical challenges
- Externalization → development of substance, behavioral and anti-social problems

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Treatment

- Open communication, listen, avoid pathologizing
- Alert for re-enactment
- Tolerate avoidance and resistance
- Be open, respectful, honest, and clear
- Avoid reinforcement of rationalization or internalization (e.g., cause of death)
- Be prepared to discuss uncomfortable issues and deal with feelings of guilt/shame
- Make distinctions between grief and mourning

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Forms of Treatment

1. Cognitive - retraining
2. Behavioral
3. Psycho-dynamic
4. Existential
5. Cultural and Spiritual Focus: life altering after trauma - the journey you embark upon once you have suffered from trauma

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Beliefs (e.g., misfortune, illnesses or traumas)

- Buddhist doctrine: life = process of 4 stages: birth, old-age, illness, and death; thus, illness and death are accepted
- Taoism: imbalance of Yin and Yang, disharmony in nature and environment
- Confucianism: virtue of moderation is not achieved and the 5 cardinal relations (emperor-minister; father-son; husband-wife; siblings; friends) are not being honored

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Life After Death

- All religions: there is a belief of life after death
- Christianity (Western): there is heaven and hell
- Tin Giào: after death all souls are to enter the gate of hell and be sentenced accordingly to the 18 levels of hell to pay for your earthly wrongdoing
- Reincarnation: takes place once your earthly debts are paid – a new life form is granted

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Soul and Body

- When death occurs (especially in the case of a victim of a crime), the soul does not leave the body – linger of earthly life; thus the soul is buried along with the body and the tomb is well-protected, with a fence, from any intruder (e.g., bad spirits)
- After 3 days in peace, the fence is broken and an incision is made on top of the tomb; when the rooster crows, the soul is awakened and released (sien thoi) to embark upon the journey to and reincarnation
- Also the 49 and 100-day rituals celebration

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Unjust

- For victims of crime: death may be viewed as unjust – their souls would not take the journey (e.g., the movie *Ghost*) to enter hell; therefore, they cannot go through the normal transformations toward reincarnation → lost souls or wandering souls (tồn hồn và cô hồn các đảng)

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Unjust Cont'

The death of Chinese people – in their quest for freedom – may be viewed as unjust → lost souls or wandering souls

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Find Justice (postmodern; narrative)

- Importance of recognizing/acknowledging clients' rituals to attempt to find justice for *cô hồn các đảng* through chanting and mediums in order to assist and communicate with their loved ones (the dead) through the transitions and acceptance of coping with reality (e.g., your death may have been unjust, but leave it to the living to find justice; do not delay your process toward reincarnation)

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The Journey

The journey to hell is a dangerous one where your loved ones may be endangered by other lost souls (cô hồn các đấng) or the evilness of the devil.

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The Journey Cont'

The journey to hell is a dangerous one for your loved one. Rituals of spending burning money of the underworld along with valuable objects (môdel) to bribe the devil and the wandering souls.

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Provide Comfort:

- Sending personal belongings to comfort the dead by offering burning, pouring incense, water or white wine, rice & food, money, clothes, and other important items – the belief of life of the underworld.
- The souls without relatives will not have any offering → may assault, threaten, bully and harass your loved ones → rituals of free offerings for the lonely souls (cô hồn mồ côi) = All Souls Day.

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Grief

"Grief is a psychospiritual process . . . People do not get 'back to normal' after a child dies, or after any profound loss. . . . We don't choose grief, it chooses us. But we do have a choice in how we deal with it. We have the choice to let it be, not to rush it, to honor it in the way that we are called to."

Greenspan, 2003

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Multiculturalism

- Our awareness of cultural/spiritual values helps to ensure clients that their loved ones were able to move on: *that's for you, clients you move on*
- Able to understand and honor the religious, cultural and spiritual beliefs of our clients → foster compassion, comfort and encouragement for the living to:
 1. Continue living
 2. Cope, transition and triumph
 3. Be transformed

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Transformation Across Cultures

- Allow your clients to teach you about their cultures, their beliefs, and their ways of life
- Accept and honor your clients' values: key ingredients to your clients' recovery
- As you transform your clients, prepare to be transformed !!!

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The Listener

"Without a listener, the healing process is aborted. Human beings, like plants that bend toward the sunlight, bend toward others in an innate healing tropism. . . . Listening well to another's pain is. . . capable of healing even the most devastating of afflictions. . . . Children speak their pain automatically when there is a listener, but learn to hide it when there is no ear to hear." (p. 14)

Greenspan, 2003

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Transformation/Renewal

- "Grief is the process of moving from losing what we have, to having what we've lost."
Stephen Fleming
- Help your clients to re-own their memories!!!
- Operate from your client's worldviews, not yours.

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Spiritualizing Suffering

"It is by those who have suffered that the world has been advanced"

Felstoy

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