A desire to die can develop without progression of the mental state into definite clinical depression, although in many patients, demoralization syndrome and clinical depression will eventually co-exist.

In this workshop, background research on hopelessness across the past 25 years will be drawn together to delineate the evidence for validity of Demoralization Syndrome.

Recent research suggests prevalence rates of between 8.5% and 31.7% in populations of medically ill patients. One pertinent issue for palliative medicine is the capacity of a demoralized patient to give informed consent. Having a disordered relationship to their future, the demoralized's appreciation of the significance of key clinical facts is coloured by their altered assumptive world.

A number of clinical approaches to the treatment of demoralization will be explored, including meaning-based therapies that explore the role, sense of purpose, beliefs, the value of relationships and the worth of the self. Folkman's research on the contribution of meaning-based coping to the development of resilience and positive affect states informs these therapies. All members of the multidisciplinary palliative care team need some skill in restoring or sustaining morale and fostering hope.

Grief Therapy: Current Status and Future Directions

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Recent controversies about the effectiveness of grief therapy arise in part from previous reviews of small samples of studies, which make inferences about the evidence base for bereavement interventions precarious at best. Drawing on a new and comprehensive analysis of over 60 controlled studies, we offer a more definitive view of the efficacy of psychosocial treatments for those who have lost loved ones, and discuss moderators associated with more effective interventions. Finally, we conclude by considering one theory-based approach that holds promise for the further refinement of evidence-based therapies for bereavement complications, one premised on the idea that grieving entails reaffirming or reconstructing a world of meaning that has been challenged by loss.