

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## WELLNESS WORKSHEET 106

### Your Experiences and Attitudes About Death

Learning to accept and deal with death is a difficult but important part of life. Examine your past experiences with and attitudes about death by answering the questions below. Circle the answer that best describes your experiences or attitudes and fill in the requested information.

1. Who died in your first personal involvement with death?
  - a. Grandparent or great-grandparent
  - b. Parent
  - c. Brother or sister
  - d. Other family member
  - e. Friend or acquaintance
  - f. Stranger
  - g. Public figure
  - h. Animal
2. To the best of your memory, at what age were you first aware of death?
  - a. Under 3 years
  - b. 3 to 5 years
  - c. 5 to 10 years
  - d. Ten years or older
3. When you were a child, how was death talked about in your family?
  - a. Openly
  - b. With some sense of discomfort
  - c. Only when necessary and then with an attempt to exclude the children
  - d. As though it were a taboo subject
  - e. Never recall any discussion
4. Which of the following best describes your childhood conceptions of death?
  - a. Heaven and hell concept
  - b. Afterlife
  - c. Death as sleep
  - d. Cessation of all physical and mental activity
  - e. Mysterious and unknowable
  - f. Something other than the above
  - g. No conception
  - h. Can't remember
5. Which of the following most influenced your present attitudes toward death?
  - a. Death of someone close
  - b. Specific reading
  - c. Religious upbringing
  - d. Introspection and meditation
  - e. Ritual (e. g., funerals)
  - f. TV, radio, or motion pictures
  - g. Longevity of my family
  - h. My health or physical condition
  - i. Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. To what extent do you believe in a life after death?
  - a. Strongly believe in it
  - b. Tend to believe in it
  - c. Uncertain
  - d. Tend to doubt it
  - e. Convinced it does not exist
7. Regardless of your belief about life after death, what is your wish about it?
  - a. I strongly wish there were a life after death.
  - b. I am indifferent as to whether there is a life after death.
  - c. I definitely prefer that there not be a life after death.
8. How often do you think about your own death?
  - a. Very frequently (at least once a day)
  - b. Frequently
  - c. Occasionally
  - d. Rarely (no more than once a year)
  - e. Very rarely or never
9. If you could choose, when would you die?
  - a. In youth
  - b. In the middle prime of life
  - c. Just after the prime of life
  - d. In old age

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10. When do you believe that, in fact, you will die?
- In youth
  - In the middle prime of life
  - Just after the prime of life
  - In old age
11. Has there been a time in your life when you wanted to die?
- Yes, mainly because of great physical pain
  - Yes, mainly because of great emotional pain
  - Yes, mainly to escape an intolerable social or interpersonal situation
  - Yes, mainly because of great embarrassment
  - Yes, for a reason other than above
  - No
12. What does death mean to you?
- The end; the final process of life
  - The beginning of a life after death; a transition, a new beginning
  - A joining of the spirit with a universal cosmic consciousness
  - A kind of endless sleep; rest and peace
  - Termination of this life but with survival of the spirit
  - Don't know
  - Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_
13. What aspect of your own death is the most distasteful to you?
- I could no longer have any experience.
  - I am afraid of what might happen to my body after death.
  - I am uncertain as to what might happen to me if there is a life after death.
  - I could no longer provide for my family.
  - It would cause grief to my relatives and friends.
  - All my plans and projects would come to an end.
  - The process of dying might be painful.
  - Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_
14. In your opinion, at what age are people most afraid of death?
- Up to 12 years
  - 13 to 19 years
  - 20 to 29 years
  - 30 to 39 years
  - 40 to 49 years
  - 50 to 59 years
  - 60 to 69 years
  - 70 years and over
15. When you think of your own death or when circumstances make you aware of your own mortality, how do you feel?
- Fearful
  - Discouraged
  - Depressed
  - Purposeless
  - Resolved, in relation to life
  - Pleasure, in being alive
  - Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_
16. To what extent are you interested in having your image survive after your own death through your children, books, good works, and so on?
- Very interested
  - Moderately interested
  - Somewhat interested
  - Not very interested
  - Totally uninterested
17. If you had a choice, what kind of death would you prefer?
- Tragic, violent death
  - Sudden but not violent death
  - Quiet, dignified death
  - Death in line of duty
  - Death after a great achievement
  - Suicide
  - Homicide
  - There is no "appropriate" kind
  - Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_
18. If it were possible, would you want to know the exact date on which you are going to die?
- Yes
  - No

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19. How important do you believe mourning and grief ritual (such as wakes and funerals) are for the survivors?
- Extremely important
  - Somewhat important
  - Undecided or don't know
  - Not very important
  - Not important at all
20. If it were entirely up to you, how would you like to have your body disposed of after you have died?
- Burial
  - Cremation
  - Donation to medical school or science
  - I am indifferent
21. What kind of a funeral would you prefer?
- Formal, as large as possible
  - Small, relatives and close friends only
  - Whatever my survivors want
  - None
22. How do you feel about "lying in state" in an open casket at your funeral?
- Approve
  - Don't care one way or the other
  - Disapprove
  - Strongly disapprove
23. Who do you feel should be the one to tell you that you are dying?
- Physician
  - Nurse
  - Family member
  - Close friend
24. Which aspect of yourself would you want to take time with if you knew you would die soon? Rate 1–10 for urgency, 1 being most urgent.
- Physical
  - Emotional
  - Activities and plans
  - Spiritual
  - Relationships
  - Playful
  - Financial and practical
  - Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
25. List four things you would most like to learn, change, or do before you die. Number 1 through 4 in priority.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
26. Which rituals or activities do you feel may be helpful for survivors and their grief process? Mark V = Very helpful, M = Moderately helpful, Q = Questionable, N = Not helpful, D = Detrimental
- Embalming, open casket
  - Viewing body, not embalmed
  - Memorial service
  - Getting rid of photos and belongings
  - Taking trip later
  - Remembering dead on anniversary, holidays
  - Talking about deceased a lot
  - New social activities, dating
  - Wearing black
  - Taking a trip right away
  - Restricting social activities
  - Keeping belongings
  - Moving, selling house (when not necessary)
  - Joining grief support groups
  - Grieving alone
  - Sharing grief with children
  - Suggested activities not mentioned:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
27. Most often, how do you feel you probably will die?
- Long illness
  - Stroke or heart attack
  - Auto crash
  - War
  - Violent encounter
  - Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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28. What is your most vivid experience with death?  
Age: \_\_\_\_\_
- Dream
  - Experience with close person
  - Animal
  - Experience with stranger
  - Story
  - News story
- If your answer was (a), (c), or (f), briefly describe: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
29. How is death talked about in your family at this time?
- Openly
  - Some discomfort
  - Only when necessary
  - Excludes children
  - Taboo
  - Never recall talking
  - Excludes dying person or survivor
30. At what age did you experience the most fear of death? \_\_\_\_\_  
Do you know what was on your mind then?  
\_\_\_\_\_
31. If you had a terminal illness, who would you want to talk with about your "difficult" feelings? (Number in preferential order):
- Spouse
  - Close family member
  - Physician
  - Another patient
  - Friend
  - Nurse
  - Therapist
  - Clergy or spiritual friend
  - Understanding third party
32. If a physician told you that an immediate family member was going to die, would you want them told?
- Yes
  - No
  - Depends
33. If your close friend was dying, felt depressed, and wanted to talk, how would you feel?
- Comfortable
  - Embarrassed
  - Distressed
  - Willing
  - Not sure
  - Would visit less
34. When thinking of dying, I mostly fear (Rate H = High fear, M = Moderate fear, L = Low fear):
- Being alone
  - Mentally disoriented
  - Pain
  - Disfigurement
  - Dependence on others
  - Loss of control over physical functions
  - What happens at/after death
  - Hospitalization for treatment
  - Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
35. When notified of a funeral—not immediate family—I usually:
- Decline
  - Hate to go
  - Happy to go
  - Attend if at all possible
  - Dread going
36. The cause of death I'm most afraid of is:
- Accident
  - Cancer
  - Bomb
  - Infection
  - Nerve disease
  - Heart failure
  - Kidney failure
  - Stroke
  - Violence
  - Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_