

OUTLINE

THE JOURNEY OF GRIEF

- Models for understanding grief
 - Older, familiar models
 - Current theories and approaches
- Grief expressions
 - Emotional and cognitive
 - Physical manifestations
 - Behavioral
 - Social behaviors and societal reactions
- Predictors and mediators of the experience
 - Background: grief is highly individual
 - Personality and other vulnerability factors
 - Who died; quality of relationship
 - Social, contextual and cultural influences
 - Mode of death
 - Other influences
- Non-death losses

ASSESSMENT AND DIAGNOSIS OF GRIEF-RELATED SYMPTOMS

- Differential diagnosis between depression, grief and PTSD
- Persistent complex bereavement disorder
- Use of adjustment disorder diagnosis with grief clients
- Measurement/assessment of grief symptoms

WHEN GRIEF BECOMES COMPLICATED

- Common trajectories for grief
- What is “complicated” grief and how do you recognize it?
- Treatment interventions for complicated grief

TREATMENT STRATEGIES AND FUNCTIONAL INTERVENTIONS

- Grief counseling
 - How is it different from other types of counseling?
 - Who often benefits (and who may not)?
- Components of a general approach
 - The 3 Rogerian conditions
 - Power of presence
 - Being a companion/therapist for your grief clients
- Cross-cultural and other diversity considerations
- Dealing with emotional intensity
- Grief vs. trauma
- When clients’ grief is disenfranchised
- Working with couples or families who have experienced the “same” loss
- Preparing for grief “spikes”
- Post-traumatic growth

BEING A GRIEF COUNSELOR

- The risks and joys of this work
- Self-awareness
- Self-care
- Training opportunities in this field

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH AND POTENTIAL RISKS

- Disparity in results across studies for grief
- Risk factors for complicated grief

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- Discover recent research that upends everything we thought we knew about grief
- Differentiate between complicated grief, disenfranchised grief and non-death losses
- Explore factors influencing grief severity
- Identify whether symptoms indicate grief, PTSD, depression, or persistent complex bereavement disorder
- Apply a counseling approach adaptable for use with any grief client

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COUNSELING GRIEF CLIENTS:

FUNCTIONAL INTERVENTIONS FOR EVERYDAY USE

Clinicians often struggle to develop an effective approach to counseling grief clients due to the uniqueness of each individual’s grief. The last 10-15 years have seen an explosion of new research in the field and many new studies have turned what we thought we knew on its head.

Explore this new research about appropriate diagnosis of grief clients, ideas for how to assess grief severity and related constructs, and clarification about what is meant by “complicated grief.” Review the most commonly used current models for understanding grief and leave with tools, including 20 interventions, to more confidently assist clients in navigating the adaptive, yet confusing and difficult, grief process. The seminar will end with a focus on self-care, discussing how to appropriately manage and care for ourselves in this demanding, yet fulfilling, work.

SPEAKER

BETH ECKERD, PH.D., is a licensed psychologist in private practice in Medford, Oregon. She is an experienced educator who taught undergraduate- and graduate-level psychology and counseling courses for 15 years, and she is a professor emeritus at Humboldt State University in Arcata, CA. As an academic, her teaching and research focused on grief, death education, personality and psychopathology, and diagnosis. Dr. Eckerd’s research has appeared in *Death Studies* and other journals. Since transitioning to full-time private practice several years ago, she has presented frequently on psychotherapy with clients who are grieving, as well as on the revised DSM-5®. Dr. Eckerd is a certified thanatologist whose practice regularly includes many clients who are grieving the death of a loved one. Her aim for this presentation is to distill current research and theory into clinically useful information and do so with humor and fast-paced organization in order to establish an enjoyable environment for participants’ engagement and learning.

Speaker Disclosures:
Financial: Lizabeth Eckerd is an Associate Professor of Psychology at the Humboldt State University. She receives a speaking honorarium from PESI, Inc.
Non-financial: Lizabeth Eckerd has no relevant non-financial relationship to disclose.

OBJECTIVES

1. Articulate current models for conceptualizing grief and how these influence treatment planning.
2. Analyze and differentiate clinical symptoms to diagnose grief clients appropriately.
3. Implement functional interventions for grief counseling adaptable to use with any clients.
4. Demonstrate three new interventions to use with bereaved clients.
5. Determine when grief has become “complicated” and develop an appropriate treatment strategy.
6. Develop strategies of self-awareness and self-care for grief counselors as it relates to clinical practice.

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