

Uncomplicated and Complicated Grief

Mental health and healthcare professionals are faced with the often misunderstood and misdiagnosed symptoms of uncomplicated and complicated grief. Formal education rarely, if ever, provides extensive enough training to accurately identify and treat those who are grieving. Often grieving clients present with other diagnoses because symptoms can mimic uncomplicated or complicated grief. The grieving process is often pathologized, or misdiagnosed, resulting in potential exacerbation of the presenting issues because inappropriate interventions are utilized. As a result, those who are grieving are often inadvertently disenfranchised by providers, which can make the professional support they sought to reconstruct their previously shattered identities and worldviews ineffective. It is essential to be versed in identifying grief related constructs that may underlie, or even cause, mental health difficulties.

This presentation aims to provide current information on the grieving process, clarify misconceptions of outdated theories, and differentiate between uncomplicated and complicated grief, and also examines the changes in conceptualization, differential diagnosing, treatment planning, and interventions used with grieving individuals. Attendees will leave with an improved clinical skill set they can immediately use to identify and treat their clients.

Target Audience

Psychologists Social Workers Counselors
Therapists Psychiatrists Nurses
Course level: Intermediate

Learning Objectives

At the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the psychological, physiological, behavioral, spiritual, interpersonal, cognitive, and emotional responses to loss
2. Define both "complicated" and "uncomplicated" bereavement
3. Define disenfranchised losses and work more effectively with individuals experiencing disenfranchised loss
4. Describe why the stage model of the grieving process is no longer utilized to inform treatment planning or develop interventions
5. Identify changes to the DSM-V as it relates to uncomplicated and complicated bereavement

Seminar Schedule

Begin 10AM EST and end 5:00 PM, with 15 minute breaks at 11:30 and 3:30, and a half hour lunch break at 1PM

Outline

BEGIN 10 AM ET
Definitions
Uncomplicated grief
Disenfranchised grief

BREAK 11:30-11:45 PM ET
Grief theories
Cultural considerations
Attachment
Complicated grief

LUNCH BREAK 1-1:30 PM ET
DSM-V and differential diagnosing
Assessment

BREAK 3:30-3:45 PM ET
Treatment Planning
Interventions

END 5 PM ET

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The Presenter

Christina Zampitella Psy.D., FT is a licensed clinical psychologist, Fellow of Thanatology, and founder and owner of The Center for Grief and Trauma Therapy. She often works as an adjunct professor and professional speaker, and especially enjoys training emerging mental health professionals. Dr. Zampitella is the host of her podcast, Phoenix Rising with Dr. Z. She focuses her clinical practice, research, course development, and teaching on bereavement studies, spirituality, nature-based therapy, and integrative psychology. She served as the chair for the Continuing Education Committee for several professional institutions and is an advisory board member of the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS). She is the former resident psychologist for Fox 5 News in San Diego, and often appeared on NBC News. She has been featured in Elle Magazine, BuzzFeed, The Huffington Post, New York Post, and several Delaware Magazines and newspapers. Dr. Zampitella happily lives with her husband, three-bonus sons, and three cats in Delaware.

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This seminar has been reviewed and approved by Keith Hannan, Ph.D., Phil Rich, LICSW, Daphne Fatter, Ph.D., and Loreen Yearick, MSN, RN. This approval expires on March 1, 2025.

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