

How to Cope with Grief During the Holidays

For those who are grieving to loss of a loved one, the holidays can be an especially difficult and overwhelming time. Holidays are often associated with memories, traditions, and a sense of connection to others, all of which are impacted by the painful awareness that their loved one is absent. Surrounded by messages that we should give thanks, participate in joyful celebrations, spend time with others, and share memories, the bereaved are faced with painfully complicated, sometimes conflicting, emotions that have to be navigated during this time. During this presentation, we will explore how clients can manage the painful and mixed feelings that accompany grief, maintain physical health, and explore how new and old traditions and rituals can support clients during this tough time. Just as there is no right or wrong way to grieve, how one chooses to manage difficult emotions, social events, and relationships during the holiday season will be as unique as one's own experience of loss. This presentation aims to help clients reduce their suffering, remember loved ones, and even reconnect with the real reason for the season.

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 why the holidays are an especially challenging time for bereaved persons
2. Explain ways to navigate social engagements during the holidays
3. Design holiday rituals that interweave old traditions with new ideas
4. Explain which interventions clients find realistic and helpful
5. Describe multiple tips on how to cope with your own grief during the holidays

Seminar Schedule

The webinar outline is attached. See the Live Webinar page for the start and end times.

Outline

- 10:00 - 10:45 What is disenfranchised grief?
5 types of disenfranchised grief
How grief during the holidays can be disenfranchised
- 10:45-11:15 Anticipatory grief as it relates to holiday grief
Definition
Symptoms
- 11:15-11:45 What makes the holidays so difficult?
Traditions and rituals
Societal expectations
Decisions
Self-care
Needs
- 11:45 - 12:00 BREAK
- 12:00-1:15 Interventions to help the bereaved during the holidays
Planning
Boundaries
New traditions
Rituals
Things to avoid
Giving permission to be happy and joyful
** Case study**
- END 1:15

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Continuing Education Credit

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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., Laura Davie, LICSW, Tina Jenkins, Psy.D., and Loreen Yearick, MSN, RN. This approval expires on March 1, 2028.

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