

Complicated Spiritual Grief: When Grief Becomes a Spiritual Crisis

For many bereaved individuals, faith, religion, and spirituality can prove to be a supportive and comforting resource following the loss of anyone or anything that leaves a sense of deprivation and yearning. However, for some who are grieving, the relationship to their higher power or spiritual community is painfully wounded, leading to the secondary loss of his/her/their spiritual resources, connections, and spiritual crisis.

The painful religious and spiritual losses are referred to as complicated spiritual grief (CSG). CSG has been shown to exacerbate the bereavement experience for some religious and spiritually inclined grievers. Clinicians are confronted with religious and spiritual topics in psychotherapy, especially when working with bereft clients. Therefore, knowing how to identify the impact of CSG in the grieving process is imperative. Clinicians will be able to recognize the impact of CSG on the bereaved's grieving process, increasing skills in conducting a comprehensive clinical assessment and development of effective treatment plans. As a result, grief therapy will more effectively identify and treat all domains of the client's functioning following or anticipating a loss.

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. Define complicated spiritual grief, spirituality, and religion
 2. Compare and contrast the definitions of grief, regret, and shame
 3. Explain the differences between religion and spirituality
 4. Explain how grief is a spiritual crisis
 5. Identify how CSG Can Affect the Griever

Seminar Schedule

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

Outline

10-12:00pm

- How to make the distinction between religion and spirituality
 - Clarifying how religion and spirituality differ
 - Learn how religion and spirituality relate to one's self-concept and worldview
- Exploring how grief is a spiritual crisis
 - Why bereavement can lead to questioning one's faith or belief system
- How can grief can be a catalyst for spiritual growth?
 - Loss leading a person into a search for meaning and purpose
- Defining complicated spiritual grief
- How complicated spiritual grief is experienced and expressed
 - How does complicated spiritual grief actually affect the griever?
 - The impact of complicated spiritual grief on one's connection to a higher power or meaning
 - How one's spiritual community may exacerbate complex spiritual grief
 - Complex spiritual grief and the impact on religious practices
- How to help clients who are struggling with religious and spiritual crisis
 - Using the Inventory of Spiritual Grief 2.0
 - Clinical interventions

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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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