

How to Cope with Grief During the Holidays

The holiday season can intensify grief, making it an especially challenging time for those mourning the loss of a loved one or non-death related losses such as relationships, jobs, and potential futures. Traditions, celebrations, and seasonal expectations often highlight the absence of the person who has died or non-death losses, stirring up complex and conflicting emotions.

This training will provide mental health professionals with practical tools and insights to support clients during this emotionally charged time of year. Participants will explore ways to help clients navigate mixed emotions, maintain physical and emotional well-being, and adapt or create meaningful rituals and traditions that honor their loss.

Through discussion, reflection, and case examples, attendees will learn to help clients find personal, compassionate approaches to the season—reducing suffering, fostering remembrance, and supporting clients in reconnecting with purpose and meaning during the holidays.

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 – 10:30 AM
- I. What Is Disenfranchised Grief?
 - Overview and Definition
 - The Five Types of Disenfranchised Grief
 - How Holiday Grief Can Be Disenfranchised
- 10:30 – 11:00 AM
- II. Anticipatory Grief and the Holiday Season
 - Defining Anticipatory Grief
 - Common Symptoms and Emotional Impact
- 11:00 AM – 11:15 AM
- Break (15 Minutes)
- 11:15 AM – 12:00 PM
- III. Why the Holidays Are Especially Difficult for the Bereaved
 - The Role of Traditions and Rituals
 - Societal Expectations and Cultural Pressures
 - Decision-Making Around Participation
 - Identifying Needs and Practicing Self-Care
- 12:00 PM – 1:15 PM
- IV. Interventions for Supporting Clients Through the Holidays
 - Planning Ahead and Setting Boundaries
 - Creating New Traditions and Rituals
 - Avoiding Common Pitfalls
 - Giving Permission to Experience Joy
 - Interactive Activity and Discussion
- End 1:15 PM ET

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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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