

Healthy Grieving in Midlife and Beyond

Middle-aged and older adults experience the deaths of life partners, parents, siblings, friends, children, and beloved pets. Other losses can be related to poor health, moves, and loss of roles important to personal identity. Resilience increases with age, and most bereaved individuals cope well. In addition to greater suicide risk for some subgroups, however, bereavement can lead to increased morbidity and mortality in middle-aged and older adults. Behavioral health clinicians report limited training in grief-related assessment and interventions and describe this as a high need area for professional development. This webinar features clinical strategies to support healthy grieving processes in midlife and beyond. Advances in the neuroscience of grief suggest that the grieving process is a form of learning that can be supported with the use of evidence-based screening tools and intervention strategies. This webinar will enhance clinicians' confidence in differentiating among healthy grief reactions and prolonged grief disorder, clinical depression, and PTSD. Research-informed clinical strategies will be featured to help practitioners address the grief-related concerns of middle-aged and older adults, with case studies highlighting culturally congruent care across a range of clinical settings.

Target Audience

Psychologist
Teachers
Marriage and Family Therapists
This seminar is for intermediate to advanced level clinicians

Social Workers Counselors
Therapists
Nurses
Case Managers

Learning Objectives

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

1. Explain the current conceptualization of grieving as a form of learning, and why stage models of grief are problematic.
2. Identify methods for screening and differentiating among normative grief reactions, DSM-5-TR Prolonged Grief Disorder, Mood Disorders, and PTSD.
3. Describe at least three clinical strategies to support healthy grieving processes in middle-aged and older clients.
4. Identify the suicide risk for older adult males and females.
5. Define anticipatory grief and way to address it.

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Outline

Begin 2 PM EST

Background on Bereavement: Myths vs Facts

Neuroscience of Grief: Grieving as a form of Learning

Differential Diagnosis and Screening:

Healthy Grieving vs Prolonged Grief Disorder, PTSD, Suicidality

Break 3:30-3:45 PM ET

Risk Factors for Problematic Grief Reactions

Supporting Healthy Grieving Processes in Middle-Aged and Older Clients

Case Study and Discussion

Professional Development Resources

End 5:15 PM EST



Continuing Education Credit
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The Presenter

Ann Steffen, Ph.D., ABPP earned her Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Indiana University-Bloomington and was trained in interdisciplinary geriatric care teams as an intern at the VA Palo Alto Health Care System. She completed a postdoctoral fellowship in clinical geropsychology at Stanford University School of Medicine within the Older Adult and Family Center. Dr. Steffen is currently a professor of psychology and gerontology at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, where she has spent her career in teaching, research, supervision and direct clinical services focused on the needs of older adults and family caregivers. At UM-St. Louis, she has served as the director of Gerontology programs and as director of clinical training for the APA-approved doctoral program in clinical psychology. Dr. Steffen is a faculty clinician at the UM-St. Louis Community Psychological Service, and is dual board certified in Behavioral & Cognitive Psychology and in Geropsychology by the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP).

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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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