

Healing the Grieving Heart:

Effective Strategies for Helping Clients Heal from Grief, Trauma Break-ups, and Other Losses While Creating Renewed Meaning in their Lives

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Learning Objectives

- Identify 2 new discoveries that have led to better treatments for grief and loss.
- Explain factors that can complicate the grief process and how to manage them.
- Outline a simple 6-step process for guiding clients through the journey of grief.
- Demonstrate how mindfulness, imagery, ritual, and music can relieve grief.
- Describe strategies that help clients cope with relationship break-ups and divorce.
- Explain how to help children process loss with age-appropriate strategies.
- Recognize ambiguous or disenfranchised losses and ways to help clients cope.
- Identify spiritual and cultural values that impact the grief and loss process.

Program Outline

Breakthroughs in the New Science of Loss

- Waves, tasks, or stages– Rethinking grief’s journey
- Wired for grief– the 7-primary emotional systems
- Evidenced-based grief therapy models
- DSM 5 position on grief
- Continuing bonds, meaning-making, and resilience

Anticipatory Grief

- The rollercoaster of protracted illness and death
- Understanding the needs of the dying
- Tools for managing caregiver burnout
- The “Good Death”: facilitating peaceful transitions

Transforming Traumatic Grief

- Dealing with suicide, homicide, or accidental deaths
- Responding to natural disasters and terrorist attacks
- Clearing traumatic memories, flashbacks, and nightmares
- Tools for diffusing panic, guilt, resentment, and despair
- Comforting clients who have lost a child

Uncomplicating Complicated Grief

- What factors prolong and complicate grief?
- When it’s not okay to “move on”
- Creating healthy attachment bonds
- Resolving unfinished business with the deceased

Breakups, Betrayal, and Divorce

- Helping clients manage difficult emotions
- Revising the break-up narrative
- Rebuilding trust in relationships
- Healthy co-parenting

Helping Children Cope with Grief and Loss

- Talking to children about death, divorce, and loss
- Preserving healthy attachment and continuing bonds
- Appropriate interventions for each age group
- Creative tools that are healing for the whole family

Ambiguous and Disenfranchised Losses

- Infertility, miscarriage, stillbirth, and abortion
- “There, but not there”- coma, missing persons
- Coping with the loss of a job, home, or pet

Spiritual and Cultural Considerations

- Mindfulness, prayer, and grief
- Rituals, ceremonies, and memorials
- Deathbed experiences and afterlife communication