



Portland Institute
For Loss and Transition

Director: Robert A. Neimeyer, PhD

**Certification Program in
Art-Assisted Grief Therapy (AAGT)**

AAGT Certification Overview (Approximately 60 Hours)

Required Components

- 1) Certification Core Courses: 6 modules / 3 credits
- 2) AAGT Orientation: 4 modules / 4 credits
- 3) AAGT Techniques Modules: 6 techniques / 6 credits
- 4) AAGT Case Studies: 2 cases / 2 credits
- 5) AAGT Practicum Studio: 4 studio sessions / 4 credits
- 6) AAGT Mentoring: 3 sessions / 3 credits
- 7) AAGT Session Evaluation: 1 portfolio submission / 1 credit

Note: All the above components can be taken in either online or onsite versions, in any combination and any sequence the learner desires.

Required Components

Note: All of the Portland Institute's diverse curriculum, both onsite and online, is informed by an **Experiential Learning Model**. Thus, in addition to systematic faculty instruction, each module includes opportunities for learners to hone their skills in case conceptualization, practice specific therapeutic techniques, and often apply the tools they are learning to their own life losses in order to gain first-hand acquaintance with them. Many also include video demonstrations of the use of particular grief therapy methods. In the online learning setting, learners who wish to pursue certification then complete and return a short **Responsive Journal** following a rubric provided for that specific module. Portland Institute faculty provide brief written feedback on each submission to continue the personal dialogue with learners.

1) Certification Core Courses (6 Modules / 3 Credits)

The Core Courses are offered as a series of 3-hour online modules, or onsite full-day workshops that can be taken in any of several locations around the world each year. All are required for AAGT Certification. Learners may complete these courses in any sequence they desire.

- a) *Grief and Its Complications (2 Modules)*: Contemporary models of grief, including conceptualization and diagnosis of complicated grief or prolonged grief disorder.
- b) *Grief Therapy – A Trauma-Informed Approach (2 Modules)*: Trauma-oriented interventions to help griever process the Event Story of the loss and integrate it into their larger self-narrative.
- c) *Grief Therapy – An Attachment-Informed Approach (2 Modules)*: Attachment-oriented interventions to help griever access the Back Story of the relationship and reconstruct the continuing bond with the deceased.

2) Orientation to Art-Assisted Grief Therapy (4 Modules / 4 Credits)

The Orientation to Art-Assisted Grief Therapy equips learners with a theoretical and conceptual scaffold for incorporating the expressive arts into meaning reconstruction grief work with individuals, groups, or communities. The principles and practices of the expressive arts, the architecture of an expressive arts session, and benefits of using multimodal expressive approaches in grief work will be examined in relation to the meaning making process. Consideration will be given to various factors in selecting a particular medium, including but not limited to the expressive qualities of various materials and categorical distinctions in the arts disciplines, developmental considerations, evidence for their use in practice, as well as the orientation and preferences of the therapist. Case examples will be used to examine the use of the expressive arts with various types of loss and populations, as well as various settings.

These Orientation Modules cover the following essential areas:

- Principles and Practices of the expressive arts
- Architecture of an expressive arts therapy

- Materials and methods for meaning making
- Expressive art therapy, trauma and neuroscience

These Orientation Modules are offered as 3-hour live webinars or online recordings, or onsite workshops that can be taken in any locations around the world each year. Learners are required to complete at least 4 Orientation Modules in any sequence they desire for AAGT Certification.

3) AAGT Techniques Modules (6 Techniques / 6 Credits)

Each module is focused on a specific AAGT technique. Learners pursuing AAGT Certification are required to learn at least six Techniques through live webinars or online recordings, or onsite workshops at any location in the world in which such training is offered. The following are examples of AAGT Techniques Module offerings:

- Altered Books
- Art Therapy for Children and Teens
- Collage: two and three dimensional
- Creative Writing
- Dance and Movement
- Doll Making
- Drama Therapy, Performative Work
- Dreamscaping
- Kintsukoroi: Golden Repair
- Mask Making
- Medicine / Prayer / Talking Sticks
- Memory Boxes
- Music and Song
- Photography
- Shrine Making
- Watercolor Books and Restorative Retelling

4) AAGT Case Studies (2 Cases / 2 Credits)

The AAGT case study sessions will be divided into faculty presenting cases and learners' case presentations. Faculty case presentations will consist of a case conceptualization exercise or videotaped session with close attention to the therapist's clinical reasoning process and reading of the client's need and readiness to engage in art-assisted meaning reconstruction activities. Learners' case presentations will engage group participants in reflective analysis, with coaching from Portland Institute Faculty. Learners pursuing AAGT Certification are required to complete at least two Case Studies through live webinars or online recordings, or onsite workshops at any location in the world where such training is offered.

5) AAGT Practicum Studio (4 Studio Sessions / 4 Credits)

Learners work individually or in small groups in order to examine the meaning making process using different artistic modalities, with Portland Institute faculty serving as coaches. Art materials will be provided in the onsite AAGT Practicum Studio to facilitate creative engagement with the materials, both familiar and unfamiliar, in an environment that prompts experimentation and deep personal process work to widen learning. In the online learning setting, instructions related to material preparation will be given to the learners prior to the Studio sessions. A variety of losses, including traumatic loss, will be examined. Learners are required to complete at least four Studio sessions for AAGT Certification.

6) AAGT Mentoring (3 Sessions / 3 Credits)

Learners are required to fulfill at least three 1-hour individual Mentoring sessions in Art-Assisted Grief Therapy for grief and loss with one of the Portland Institute faculty in a shared language. These sessions may be conducted in face-to-face mode, or via phone or videoconference.

7) AAGT Session Evaluation (1 Portfolio / 1 Credit)

Following the completion of all the above Components, learners need to submit a portfolio of their work, including a case analysis demonstrating use of AAGT in meaning reconstruction in the aftermath of a significant loss. Learners are encouraged to incorporate various forms of representation, such as photographs, audio or video recordings of AAGT for meaning reconstruction. The Portfolio is then evaluated for demonstration of competency in working with grieving clients from an art assisted, meaning reconstruction perspective. It also provides students with an opportunity for a creative representation and reflection on their learning.

Note:

Completion of all the required components leads to a Certification in Art-Assisted Grief Therapy (AAGT). All licensed or registered counselors or therapists completing AAGT Certification will be listed on the Portland Institute website as part of our Global Provider Network.

Fee Structure

AAGT Certification Enrollment

All learners interested in pursuing AAGT Certification pay a **one-time Enrollment Fee of USD \$100** at the Store on the Portland Institute website and enter their profile of relevant professional background information. The Institute will then open a personalized Progress Tracker to monitor their progress toward completion of certification requirements.

Pricing

All required components (except Mentoring and Session Evaluation) may be delivered either in (a) convenient virtual **Live Training** or recorded **Online Training** modules of 3 hours each or (b) single or multi-day onsite **Workshops, Training Institutes or Retreats**. Online training

modules are a uniform USD \$99 each, whereas the cost of onsite training is established with PI's various partner organizations around the world and therefore varies somewhat in pricing depending on local economic conditions, costs of facilities etc. Mentoring and Session Evaluation, which are tailored to each individual learner, carry fees of USD \$495 and \$345 respectively. Thus, the overall **cost of certification may range between USD \$3,200-\$4,000** (excluding the cost of travel and accommodation in the case of onsite training), well below the cost of many certification programs in the health and mental health professions.

Availability

Virtual **Live Training** and recorded **Online Training** modules are available through the PI website for learners throughout the world. **Onsite** learning opportunities in each major world region (e.g. North America, South America, Europe and Asia) are announced on the Portland Institute website and are continually being updated as new training programs and partner organizations are added.

Have further questions? Simply email us for more details:
devotion5@hotmail.com or carolyn@portlandinstitute.org