



Portland Institute

For Loss and Transition

Grief Therapy Learning Retreat

July 11-15, 2024 (Thursday-Monday)

Bon Secours Retreat Center

near Baltimore, MD, United States

Featured Presenting Faculty

Robert A. Neimeyer, PhD; Sharon Strouse, MA, ATR-BC, LCPAT;
Phyllis Kosminsky, PhD; Barbara E. Thompson, OTD, LCSW;
Darcy L. Harris, RN, RSW, MEd (Couns), PhD, FT; Sarah Vollmann, MPS, ATR-BC, LICSW;
Evie Lindemann, LMFT, ATR-BC, ATCS; Lara Krawchuk, MSW, LCSW, MPH;
Jakob van Wielink, MA; Doris C. Vaughans, PhD, LPC, NCC, TMHC;
and Carolyn Ng, PsyD, MMSAC, RegCLR

NOTE:

This Retreat offers you a range of Orientation, Techniques, and Practicum Modules leading to Certification in Grief Therapy as Meaning Reconstruction (GTMR), Certification in Art-Assisted Grief Therapy (AAGT), Certification in Grief Therapy for Non-Death Losses (NDL) or Certification in Grief Therapy for Suicide Bereavement (GTSB) offered by the Portland Institute. For more information, simply click: <https://www.portlandinstitute.org/certification>.



PI is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. PI maintains responsibility for this program and its content.

Grief Therapy Learning Retreat

July 11-15, 2024

Welcome to the *Portland Institute for Loss and Transition*, and our Grief Therapy Learning Retreat, a 5-day, 4-night immersion in experiential workshops designed to add conceptual clarity, hone process expertise, and provide learners practical tools to enhance their practice of grief therapy and bereavement support with a broad range of clients across many contexts of clinical practice. Alongside a rich menu of training options, learners can also explore many modalities for self-renewal as persons and professionals and explore the relevance of a generous offering of arts-assisted methods for engaging grief and loss as a creative context for growth.

Join Robert A. Neimeyer, and his colleagues Sharon Strouse, Phyllis Kosminsky, Barbara Thompson, Darcy Harris, Sarah Vollmann, Evie Lindemann, Lara Krawchuk, Jakob van Wielink, Doris Vaughans and Carolyn Ng for an international, interdisciplinary Institute that offers a new meaning-focused model of training in bereavement care.

Target Audience

Psychologists, social workers, counselors, art / music / expressive arts therapists, pastoral care personnel, healthcare professionals, grief coaches, and bereavement volunteers.

Note: To qualify for CE Credits, please kindly note that:

- *Full attendance of the respective sessions is required to receive CE credits. No partial credit is awarded.*
- *You are required to sign on a Sign-In/Out Sheet at the beginning and at the end of each session attended, as well as to complete an evaluation form at the end of the retreat.*
- *The Certificate of CE Credits will be issued to you after the retreat based on your signatures recorded on the Sign-In/Out Sheets collected.*

Thursday (July 11)

9:00-3:30 Eden Energy Medicine: Individual Restorative Sessions (Amy Griffin, RYT 200, EEM-CP, CCC-SLP; Natosha Marsh, QMHP-E, EEM-CP; Donna Naslund, RN, EEM-CP, E-RYT; Christina Soares, EEM-CP; Shannon Swift, RN, EEM-CP)

50-minute Eden Energy Medicine sessions offered by certified practitioners to help ground and balance your body, revitalize your energy, ease stress, and create a wonderful sense of well-being as you arrive and prepare for the retreat.

These sessions may include:

- Daily Energy Routine (DER): a series of gentle energy movements done to ground and clear the body in preparation for energy work. Opening the energy gates on the hands and feet.
- Tracing and balancing meridians to restore circadian cycles and ease jet lag. No needles!
- Quickie Energy Balance Routine to restore and balance energy in the body.
- An individualized technique matched to support any energetic dysregulation in your body that shows up during the session.

NOTE: DER will be done standing or seated. Remaining work will be done on a massage table. Wear loose comfortable clothing.

Retreat Discount Rate: \$75 (Regular session cost: \$125)

Sessions ran out fast last year, so book your session soon by calling, texting or emailing Christina at 508-284-2910 or inspiredenergyguide@gmail.com. Once your appointment has been scheduled, your practitioner will email you an informed consent form and details for payment.

4:00-5:30 A World of Meaning in the Wake of Loss: Cultural & Clinical Contributions (Robert A. Neimeyer, PhD)
1.5 CEs Available

A global interest in processes of meaning reconstruction in loss is finding an ever-widening range of expressions in the international scientific literature. This presentation summarizes several of these developments spearheaded by our research network in countries as diverse as Australia, Israel, Italy, Spain and Norway, all of which have direct relevance to clinical assessment and grief therapy.

We'll begin by considering a Spanish language version of a major multidimensional scale of meaning making in grief that can be used in the 20 countries in which Spanish

is the official language, as well as with Hispanic populations in the US. We then will review a pair of studies conducted with nearly 700 medical patients in Italy, which not only document the severe psychological impact of the pandemic, but also identify the crucial role of meaning in accounting for its heavy toll and for highly adaptive outcomes such as survivors' posttraumatic growth. The results strongly reinforce the practical relevance of meaning focused grief therapy and extend the reach of this perspective to other cultural contexts.

Still other studies we will review adopt a qualitative or mixed methods approach, documenting the impact of therapeutic creative writing groups to promote sense-making and reduce negative emotions, while tracing the distinctive themes in such writing for groups of bereaved fathers. And finally, we will discuss a creative drama therapy approach for promoting meaning reconstruction in older adults experiencing traumatic bereavement in their youth and illustrate the power of this work to activate mechanisms of change that resolve guilt, regret and shame, even several decades later.

Learning Objectives:

- Summarize the major findings of research using the Spanish translation of the *Grief and Meaning Inventory* (GMRI) and its potential utilization in cross cultural research;
- Explain the role of meaning making in mediating both adverse and adaptive outcomes in Italian medical patients contending with pandemic stressors and losses;
- Differentiate outcomes of Australian research on therapeutic writing groups for bereaved vs. non-death loss survivors;
- Describe three key themes encountered in therapeutic writing groups for Norwegian fathers who had lost young children; and
- List at least three possible mechanisms of change identified in Israeli implementation of drama therapy for long term survivors of traumatic loss.

Content Focus:

- Application of psychological assessment and/or intervention methods that have overall consistent and credible empirical support in the contemporary peer reviewed scientific literature beyond those publications and other types of communications devoted primarily to the promotion of the approach.

Instructional Level:

- Intermediate

Content Overview:

- The multifactorial measurement of meaning: Spanish validation of the GMRI (15 min.)
- Meaning as mediator: Post-pandemic psychological distress and growth in Italian medical patients (15 min.)
- Writing for wellbeing: An Australian open trial of a creative grief intervention (10 min.)
- Men's grief: A Norwegian writing group study (10 min.)
- Finishing unfinished business: An Israeli study using Playback Theatre (10 min.)

NOTE: This session confers 0.5 credit of Orientation Module for [All Certification Programs](#).

Friday (July 12)

9:00-10:30 Meaning Making through Use of the Creative Imagination & the Expressive Arts (Barbara E. Thompson, OTD, LCSW)
1.5 CEs Available

Expressive art approaches have been used across time and throughout the world's cultures as ways of responding to grief, loss, and trauma. If grieving involves a process of sense-making and meaning reconstruction, then engaging the senses in this fundamentally creative process of re-imagining one's life makes sense. The arts recruit the mind, body, and imagination in ways that promote self-regulation and co-regulation, while providing griever with alternative ways of communicating their experiences through use of somatic, symbolic, and metaphoric language that can create a bridge to verbal narration. Facilitating access to the creative imagination through sensory-rich activities assists griever in shaping and re-storying the loss narrative through action-oriented art making, which can restore a sense of agency. Both the art-making process and art form provide opportunities for creative expression, aesthetic reflection, and perspective taking that can prompt narrative revision. In addition, artmaking is pleasurable when approached as play, promoting access to internal resources, creative expression, and an experience of well-being.

This keynote address will examine the foundational principles and practices of the expressive arts as they apply to art-assisted grief therapy. Case examples and brief experiential exercises will be included to prompt consideration of how the arts can be integrated into psychotherapy practice with people experiencing a range of losses. A review of research on the efficacy of the expressive arts with the bereaved will be summarized.

Learning Objectives:

- Discuss three foundational principles and practices in the expressive arts: decentering, intermodal transfer, and aesthetic response;
- Describe how the expressive arts can be used for self-regulation and co-regulation in art-assisted grief therapy; and
- Compare and contrast two ways to integrate the expressive arts into grief therapy practice to foster the meaning making process that consider cultural, contextual, client, and therapist factors.

Content Focus:

- Application of psychological assessment and/or intervention methods that have overall consistent and credible empirical support in the contemporary peer reviewed scientific literature beyond those publications and other types of communications devoted primarily to the promotion of the approach.

Instructional Level:

- Introductory

Content Overview:

- Overview of the expressive arts: A cross-cultural perspective (15 min.)
- Principles and practices: The creative imagination (15 min.)
- The arts as embodied practice: Selected modalities (20 min.)
- The expressive arts and grief: The meaning making process (10 min)
- Research on the arts in bereavement: A summary (15 min.)
- Brainstorming on applications to practice: Case studies (15 min.)

NOTE: This session confers 0.5 credit of Orientation Module for [all Certification programs](#).

11:00-12:30 Integrating Loss: An Experiential Workshop (Barbara E. Thompson, OTD, LCSW)

1.5 CEs Available

The creative arts can help the bereaved re-imagine and re-story narratives of loss through sensory-rich activities that help to modulate distress while re-contextualizing loss experiences, providing opportunities for aesthetic reflection and perspective taking that can prompt narrative shifts. The expressive arts provide symbolic, metaphoric, and somatic languages for experiences that may be difficult to be put into words, and ways of shaping experiences that are unwanted. Accessing the creative imagination and giving it form through the arts can also assist people in identifying and affirming inner resources and relationships with others that are essential for both loss-oriented and restoration-oriented coping.

No prior experience with the arts is necessary to participate in this workshop. As personal experience with artmaking is needed before it can be used with others, participants will have an opportunity to explore a personal loss through selected expressive activities that can support narrative reconstruction. The warm-up will involve movement-based activities, followed by a guided meditation intended to help people shift into an imaginal, de-centered state of awareness for the central activity of collage-making. After a period of collage making in silence, participants will work in pairs to dialogue with the image that has been created, with guidance on how to respond aesthetically to stay in the imaginal voice. In the closing discussion, we will harvest reflections on personal learning and potential applications for therapeutic use of the creative arts with others.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe how the creative arts can modulate distress and help people stay in their window of tolerance;
- Summarize what you learned about the decentering process, responding aesthetically, and intermodal transfer from an experiential perspective; and
- Identify one way that you can incorporate expressive art approaches into your clinical practice.

Content Focus:

- Topics related to psychological practice, education, or research *other than* application of psychological assessment and/or intervention methods that are supported by contemporary scholarship grounded in established research procedures.

Instructional Level:

- Introductory

Content Overview:

- Overview of workshop content and process: Opening circle (5 min.)
- Movement based warm-up activities (10 min.)
- Choosing two images and gathering material (5 min.)
- Guided meditation: Decentering process (4 min.)
- Collage-making in silence with guided instruction (25 min.)
- Working in dyads: Aesthetic response and gathering the emerging words (16 min.)
- A poetic response with instructions provided (10 min.)
- Group sharing and closing (15 min.)

NOTE: This session confers 0.5 credit of Practicum Module for [All Certification Programs](#).

1:30-4:30 Mini-workshops. Choose between:

A. *Embodied Dialogue: Analogical Listening to the Body of Grief* (Robert A. Neimeyer, PhD & Carolyn Ng, PsyD, MMSAC, RegCLR)

3 CEs Available

Especially when profound loss enters our lives suddenly, tragically or traumatically, the complex grief that results may be beyond words, residing more at the level of our embodied emotion than at a level expressible in conventional speech. But even when losses are more subtle, anticipated and comprehensible, much of their significance eludes literal language. In this silent space that is nonetheless resonant with meaning, an approach that goes beyond well-intentioned verbal grief counseling is required to help clients make a deeper sense of the loss and of themselves in its wake.

In this experiential workshop, we will begin by exploring the implicit meanings of loss as they reside within the lived body, using non-logical, metaphoric inquiry into the somatic felt sense of significant personal or relational transitions, which we will richly visualize and voice. The process is illustrated by video vignettes of *Analogical Listening* in both onsite and online therapy prior to personal experimentation with the method. Choosing the role of therapist, client or process observer, participants will have an opportunity to experience this form of embodied dialogue in small groups, supported by clear rubrics, as well as by guidance of the faculty. This three-hour module will conclude with *Conversing with the Canvas*, involving the symbolic depiction of the felt sense using simple artistic media, with which we then interact with the respectful prompting of a partner.

Learning Objectives:

- Summarize guidelines for use of *Analogical Listening* and its potential relevance for grief therapy;
- Describe alternative uses and outcomes of embodied dialogues in a clinical context; and
- Perform a *Conversing with the Canvas* interview to assist a colleague in processing an artistic depiction of a symbolically rendered felt sense of a loss encountered in the small group exercise.

Content Focus:

- Topics related to psychological practice, education, or research *other than* application of psychological assessment and/or intervention methods that are supported by contemporary scholarship grounded in established research procedures.

Instructional Level:

- Advanced

Content Overview:

- Listening to the body: Where and when (15 min.)
- Analogical listening: Clinical guidelines (15 min.)
- Embodied dialogue in clinical practice: Diverse case illustrations (50 min.)
- Going experiential: Small group practice (45 min.)
- Depicting the felt sense: From verbal to visual (15 min.)
- Conversing with the canvas: Pairing and sharing (25 min.)
- Taking perspective: Group discussion (15 min.)

NOTE: This session confers 1 credit of Techniques Module leading to [Certification in Grief Therapy as Meaning Reconstruction \(GTMR\)](#), [Certification in Art-Assisted Grief Therapy \(AAGT\)](#), or [Certification in Grief Therapy for Suicide Bereavement \(GTSB\)](#).

B. Luminarias, Ex-Votos and Mandalas: Culturally Inspired Expressive Arts Practices in the Jungian Tradition (Evie Lindemann, MA, LMFT, ATR-BC, ATCS)
3 CEs Available

At the banquet table of life, there are times when the table is loaded with delicacies, full of sustenance to feast upon. There are other times when the table has been stripped bare of essential nourishment. Such is the state we find ourselves in when living with grief and loss, particularly in a secularized Western world. However, it is possible, through being attentive to the images that arise in the psyche, to bring them to the light of conscious life, and give them healing expression in culturally informed expressive arts practices in grief therapy.

This workshop introduces active imagination as a method of accessing a creative space of possibilities and navigating with tools that deepen the capacity to not only endure but also to grow. Through the use of visual art, body movement, expressive writing, and somatic awareness, we will enter as new arrivals into territory that returns us to the banquet table. This approach arises from a Jungian orientation, a dive into what Jung called the Self, the central healing archetype of inner work. We will enliven our images with active imagination techniques that investigate their implicit meanings, moving us to depth and sometimes, to action.

Alternating between self-exploration and expressive arts practice, three culturally-inspired approaches will be demonstrated and experienced during this workshop that are easily translated into clinical practice. Drawing on the Mexican folk-art traditions of *ex-votos* (small tin sculptures with religious significance), *luminarias* (paper lanterns), and *mandalas* (symbolic forms from Indian religious traditions), we will produce two- and three-dimensional expressions using a variety of art materials and explore their therapeutic application. No prior experience with art is needed in order to allow your hands to do the work. It can be playful, serious, quieting, and surprising.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify three Depth Psychological approaches that can benefit an imagined or actual client experiencing grief and loss;
- Create three culturally informed symbolic artworks that give expression to the psychic contents encountered using these three approaches; and
- Describe the constructive use of culturally inspired artwork in grief therapy.

Content Focus:

- Topics related to psychological practice, education, or research *other than* application of psychological assessment and/or intervention methods that are supported by contemporary scholarship grounded in established research procedures.

Instructional Level:

- Intermediate

Content Overview:

- Introduction: Cultural practices and the active imagination (10 min.)
- Ex-votos, luminarias, and mandalas: Significance and illustrations (20 min.)
- Guided search: A reflective exercise (10 min.)
- Constructing an *ex-voto*: Experiential practice (30 min.)
- Finding an entry: Demonstration of active imagination (10 min.)
- Constructing a *luminaria*: Experiential practice (30 min.)
- Limbic language: Writing a six-word poem (10 min.)
- Pairing and sharing: Selective disclosure (15 min.)
- Constructing a *mandala*: Depicting the Self (30 min.)
- Processing the work: Individually and collectively (15 min.)

NOTE: This session confers 1 credit of Practicum Module leading to [Certification in Grief Therapy as Meaning Reconstruction \(GTMR\)](#) or [Certification in Art-Assisted Grief Therapy \(AAGT\)](#).

Saturday (July 13)

9:00-10:30 The Brain Is Our Territory: Neuroscience Research as a Source of Insight into Grief & Grief Therapy [Part I]
(Phyllis Kosminsky, PhD)
1.5 CEs Available

Neuroscience research has expanded our understanding of the role of early caregiving in the development of emotion regulatory capacity, a capacity that has been identified as critical to healthy grief. This research has implications for working with bereaved clients who have limited regulatory resources. A second area of

neuroscience research focused on the grieving brain has illuminated the difficulties associated with adapting to relational loss and has given new meaning to the idea of grief as a learning process. In this keynote presentation, we will review these two areas of neuroscience research, consider implications for our understanding of grief and grief therapy, and suggest some ways in which insights from this research can be used in counseling bereaved clients. Case examples and videos will be used to illustrate the concepts that are introduced and there will be opportunities for group discussion.

Learning Objectives:

- Discuss research that links deficits in emotion regulation to problems in bereavement;
- Explain the current neuroscience-based model of grief as a learning process; and
- Describe how neuroscience findings can be of use in understanding grief and in providing counseling to bereaved individuals.

Content Focus:

- Application of psychological assessment and/or intervention methods that have overall consistent and credible empirical support in the contemporary peer reviewed scientific literature beyond those publications and other types of communications devoted primarily to the promotion of the approach.

Instructional Level:

- Intermediate

Content Overview:

- Introduction: The neuroscience of grief and grief therapy (30 min.)
- Developmental neuroscience: A review of the evidence (30 min.)
- Reconstructing the world: Grief as a learning process (30 min.)
- Counseling the cortex: Applications to grief therapy (1 hour)
- Bridging science and practice: An experiential exercise (30 min.)

NOTE: This session confers 0.5 credit of Orientation Module for [All Certification Programs](#).

11:00-12:30 The Brain Is Our Territory: Neuroscience Research as a Source of Insight into Grief & Grief Therapy [Part II] (Phyllis Kosminsky, PhD)
1.5 CEs Available

A continuation of the above workshop.

NOTE: This session confers 0.5 credit of Practicum Module for [All Certification Programs](#).

1:30-3:00 Mini-workshops. Choose between:*A. Honoring Milestones of Mourning: Utilizing Rituals, Traditions & Culture in Grief Therapy (Doris C. Vaughans, PhD, LPC, NCC, TMHC)**1.5 CEs Available*

The grief journey presents a myriad of challenges for griever that can escalate around special days such as birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, and milestones that are a part of the human experience. The path through mourning is unique to each individual and commonly entails mourning and honoring many often-unpredictable finite losses as through the death of loved ones, and nonfinite losses through causes such as separation, incarceration, illness, and other unwelcome life transitions. This presentation provides a theoretical underpinning of meaning making and other relevant theories, and considers the role of symbolic rituals, spiritual traditions, and culture in grief therapy to promote positive outcomes for diverse clients, as well as their families and communities. After reviewing principles and procedures for designing and implementing a culturally attuned ritual, participants will have an opportunity to brainstorm a healing ritual of a kind that could be collaboratively planned in the context of grief therapy.

Learning Objectives:

- Review theories that undergird work with clients who present with grieving challenges related to special days and events;
- Discuss cultural competence and sensitivity regarding rituals, traditions, and ceremonies for helping grieving clients manage challenges that arise around special days; and
- Apply these principles and practices to a brief clinical scenario to devise an appropriate ritual that is theoretically based and culturally attuned to the needs of a specific grief client.

Content Focus:

- Topics related to psychological practice, education, or research *other than* application of psychological assessment and/or intervention methods that are supported by contemporary scholarship grounded in established research procedures.

Instructional Level:

- Intermediate

Content Overview:

- Mourning and meaning: Ritualizing loss and transition (15 min.)
- Culture counts: Harvesting the wisdom of tradition (15 min.)
- Designing therapeutic rituals: Principles and procedures (15 min.)
- From principles to practice: Constructing a ritual of transition (45 min.)

NOTE: This session confers 0.5 credit of Techniques Module leading to [Certification in Grief Therapy as Meaning Reconstruction \(GTMR\)](#) or [Certification in Family-Focused Grief Therapy \(FFGT\)](#).

B. Open Art Studio [Part I] (Sharon Strouse, MA, ATR-BC, LCPAT)

This Open Studio is a safe space for creative exploration, play and reverie. Art making, in the virtual company of others, invites learners into the world of imagination where the process of making and shaping what is given promotes a sense of wellbeing. It is a place to explore innermost feelings and thoughts in a community where relationships support the powerful medicine of being seen and heard. It is an opportunity for self-care. This informal yet energy-infused open studio offering will focus on the art making process, stimulate the relationship to art materials and serve to empower each learner as self-determined artist. This life affirming action of making, shaping and sharing is rooted in empathy and compassion. No artistic talent required, only curiosity, willingness and presence.

3:00-4:30*Open Art Studio [Part II] (Sharon Strouse, MA, ATR-BC, LCPAT)*

A continuation of the above studio.

1:30-6:00 **Eden Energy Medicine: Individual Restorative Sessions**
(Amy Griffin, RYT 200, EEM-CP, CCC-SLP; Natosha Marsh, QMHP-E, EEM-CP; Donna Naslund, RN, EEM-CP, E-RYT; Christina Soares, EEM-CP; Shannon Swift, RN, EEM-CP)

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- Tracing and balancing meridians to restore circadian cycles and ease jet lag. No needles!
- Quickie Energy Balance Routine to restore and balance energy in the body.
- An individualized technique matched to support any energetic dysregulation in your body that shows up during the session.

NOTE: DER will be done standing or seated. Remaining work will be done on a massage table. Wear loose comfortable clothing.

Retreat Discount Rate: \$75 (Regular session cost: \$125)

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Sunday (July 14)

9:00-12:30 Mini-workshops. Choose between:

A. Environmental Grief: A Relational Approach (Darcy L. Harris, PhD, FT & Barbara E. Thompson, OTD, LCSW)

3 CEs Available

Environmental grief, also known as ecological or climate grief, refers to the sense of loss that arises from awareness of the profound destruction and loss of ecosystems by natural and human-induced events. While people experience this sense of loss individually, there are many layers of this grief that are also felt collectively. At the root of environmental grief is a profound loss of connection to the land, the animals and plant life that share the planet with us, and with each other. This presentation will focus on weaving together our individual and collective loss experiences related to the world around us. While we grieve the profound losses that are currently happening on our planet, we can re-affirm the connections that we share and that nourish us, providing us with potential insights and ways of being with and responding to this difficult form of grief.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe the three pathways through which environmental grief can manifest;
- Summarize the relationship between constructions of self and place, and how disconnections affect meaning-making, well-being, and the environment;
- Discuss the impact of cultural belief systems in shaping perceptions and responses to environmental changes and grief; and
- Perform an experiential learning activity that uses multi-modal approaches to foster awareness of relationships, interconnectedness, and collective awareness of environmental loss and grief.

Content Focus:

- Topics related to psychological practice, education, or research *other than* application of psychological assessment and/or intervention methods that are supported by contemporary scholarship grounded in established research procedures.

Instructional Level:

- Intermediate

Content Overview:

- Definition of terms: Environmental loss and grief (15 min.)
- Pathways through loss: Manifestations of environmental grief (15 min.)
- Terror Management Theory: Environmental degradation and loss (15 min.)
- Research notes: Distress tolerance and environmental grief (30 min.)
- Experiential learning: From key concepts to interventions (90 min.)
- Relational contexts: To the land, to people, to plant life and self (15 min.)

NOTE: This session confers 1 credit of Techniques Module leading to [Certification in Grief Therapy for Non-Death Losses \(NDL\)](#) or [Certification in Art-Assisted Grief Therapy \(AAGT\)](#).

B. Traumatic Losses in the Internal Family System: IFS Inspired Meaning Making Concepts, Cases and Clinical Techniques (Lara Krawchuk, MSW, LCSW, MPH) *3 CEs Available*

Internal Family Systems (IFS) is currently the fastest growing model of therapy in the world. This evidence-based model can be safely used, in potent combination with Meaning Making practices, to support healing for diverse clients facing deeply traumatic losses. In IFS, clients are guided to gently explore “parts” of themselves who act as managers and protectors of more vulnerable parts of the inner world. A deeply welcoming stance is employed to discover the ways protective parts make sense of great loss and how they work tirelessly to protect clients from pain they consider too much to handle. Understanding the intersection of past and present grief and the ways in which internal parts impact outside daily life and relationships may also be topics of exploration. Clients and clinicians collaborate to appreciate parts activated by traumatic loss, understand unique worlds of meaning, build inner trust and expand access to the internal healing power of the client’s own “True Self,” which promises expansive qualities of compassion, calm, creativity and clarity.

You may be curious about how this model works in general or specifically for clients grieving significant losses. Together we will discuss key tenants of IFS and how it can seamlessly accompany the important work of Meaning Making. We will review two case studies where using IFS inspired Meaning Making effectively supported clients facing the traumatic deaths of loved ones. Finally, we will tenderly explore the

significant challenge of navigating the times when clients' grief triggers our own hurting parts. We will experience firsthand how to weave creativity into our IFS inspired Meaning Making work using the *Parts Cards* and *Art with Parts*. Participants will have ample opportunity to explore their creative IFS & Meaning Making processes in small groups.

Learning Objectives:

- Define three basic principles of the IFS model of treatment that can expand the clinician's current therapeutic approaches with a grief and trauma focus;
- Explain three ways that IFS and Meaning Reconstruction complement each other to promote sense-making, transformation and healing of loss and trauma;
- Describe three types of Parts and True Self and the roles each plays within the internal family system of a grieving person and also within the helping professional; and
- List three ways *Parts Cards* and *Art with Parts* can be used to identify parts and their relationship to each other, foster un-blending, and increase access to self-energy.

Content Focus:

- Topics related to psychological practice, education, or research *other than* application of psychological assessment and/or intervention methods that are supported by contemporary scholarship grounded in established research procedures.

Instructional Level:

- Intermediate

Content Overview:

- Introduction: IFS and the grieving self (45 min.)
- Principles and processes: An evidence-based approach (45 min.)
- Arts and parts: An experiential exercise (60 min.)
- Bringing it all together: Small group processing (30 min.)

NOTE: This session confers 1 credit of Techniques Module leading to [Certification in Grief Therapy as Meaning Reconstruction \(GTMR\)](#) or [Certification in Grief Therapy for Suicide Bereavement \(GTSB\)](#).

1:30-4:30 Mini-workshops. Choose between:

A. The Transformative Power of Mask-Making after Traumatic Loss (Sharon Strouse, MA, ATR-BC, LCPAT and Sarah Vollmann, MPS, ATR-BC, LICSW)
3 CEs Available

Survivors of traumatic death and non-death losses often struggle with derailed and shattered life narratives. Many need to relearn the self and the world, reinvent roles and identities, and rebuild self-esteem as they strive to construct a cohesive life narrative. This is a dyadic and experiential workshop that introduces mask making as an ancient, universal tradition with expressions in diverse world cultures, and an art therapy modality for those who are grieving a traumatic loss. Art therapy mask making can foster meaning reconstruction and assist with the daunting tasks of bereavement. As art therapy masks may simultaneously reveal, conceal, and memorialize, they provide a unique vehicle for the expression, exploration, containment, and integration of traumatic loss.

The visual arts are often incorporated into grief therapy as agents of positive change; they have been found to be particularly effective in the treatment of traumatic loss. Art therapy masks are a powerful modality for those who are traumatized and bereaved, as they can enable their creators to divulge their hidden, true selves or secret thoughts, exposing inhibitions, personality traits, and unconscious material that they ordinarily contain or feel unable to express.

In this workshop, art therapy theory and practices will be presented in tandem with current grief and bereavement models. We will begin with a broad survey of historical and contemporary expressions of mask making and suggest their ritual and spiritual significance. Case studies with evocative images then will illustrate essential elements of the art therapy process, one of deconstruction and reconstruction in service to healing, and highlight symbolism and metaphorical meaning. Participants will engage in their own mask making experience with the opportunity to explore as they choose, perhaps focusing upon a death or non-death loss. No artistic skill is required. We will conclude with a group discussion and an exploration of our shared creative experience.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify three cultural expressions of mask making that vary in their ethnic and historic origins and describe their function in their cultural context;
- Name two or more benefits of art therapy mask-making that are grounded in meaning reconstruction, particularly for clients facing traumatic loss;
- List two or more attributes of art therapy mask-making that support the tasks of the task model of bereavement; and
- Describe three principles from the transformative power of mask making that you could utilize to facilitate communication and connection with bereaved clients.

Content Focus:

- Topics related to psychological practice, education, or research *other than* application of psychological assessment and/or intervention methods that are supported by contemporary scholarship grounded in established research procedures.

Instructional Level:

- Intermediate

Content Overview:

- Mask making in cultural context: Diverse expressions and their significance (30 min.)
- On masks and mourning: Relation to contemporary grief models (30 min.)
- The art of masking: Therapeutic principles and procedures (30 min.)
- Mask making and me: An experiential exercise (60 min.)
- Clinical and personal implications: Group discussion (30 min.)

NOTE: This session confers 1 credit of Practicum Module leading to [Certification in Art-Assisted Grief Therapy \(AAGT\)](#), [Certification in Grief Therapy for Suicide Bereavement \(GTSB\)](#) or [Certification in Grief Therapy for Non-Death Losses \(NDL\)](#).

B. You Cannot Say Hello Before You Have Said Goodbye: Working with the Transition Cycle in Contexts of Loss and Grief (Jakob van Wielink, MA)
3 CEs Available

Every contact, every relationship, every connection we forge with others will eventually come to an end. The way we say goodbye, cope with loss, grieve, and give meaning to such events is a reflection of how we connect with one another and attach to people in a more general sense, as a function of everything from our cultural roots to our personal upbringing. The *Transition Cycle* provides insight into how themes of attachment, resilience, bonding, experiencing intimacy, loss, saying goodbye, grieving, integrating the loss, reconstructing meaning and (re)discovering one's calling are integral parts of this process.

On a macro level, the *Transition Cycle* is a representation of life from the cradle to the grave: from the moment that we are first welcomed into the world when we are born, through the way we meet and say goodbye, to the way we cope with loss, find meaning in old age and fulfill our calling. However, the *Transition Cycle* also represents the dynamics of every brief meeting in life on a micro level that activates our attachment pattern and every loss that resonates with separation anxiety, and our characteristic responses to them.

In this workshop, participants will conduct a spatial exploration in the *Transition Cycle* in movement, dialogue and meditative reflection, in order to explore the

relevance of these themes for our personal lives and link to our professional work with others. Addressing these cyclical themes explicitly during counselling allows people to gain an insight into attachment patterns that can be beneficial or problematic for integrating loss into their ongoing life stories.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe the *Transition Cycle* as a window for examining experiences of loss and grief at individual, relational and community levels;
- Explain the interplay between the themes of the *Transition Cycle*, including adaptive and maladaptive versions of each; and
- Apply the *Transition Cycle* as a tool to one's personal experiences to demonstrate preliminary competence with the method.

Content Focus:

- Topics related to psychological practice, education, or research *other than* application of psychological assessment and/or intervention methods that are supported by contemporary scholarship grounded in established research procedures.

Instructional Level:

- Intermediate

Content Overview:

- It started in the cradle: Being welcomed to fields of meaning (30 min.)
- On being and bonding: Attachment and secure bases across the lifespan (30 min.)
- A thousand pieces: Letting go and holding on (30 min.)
- From the micro to the macro: Opening to moments and meanings (30 min.)
- 'Hello, it's me' – Discovering calling: Finding consistency in the flux (30 min.)
- Stepping into the circle again: Moving through transition (30 min.)

NOTE: This session confers 1 credit of Techniques Module leading to [Certification in Grief Therapy as Meaning Reconstruction \(GTMR\)](#) or [Certification in Grief Therapy for Non-Death Losses \(NDL\)](#).

Monday (July 15)

9:30-11:00 Mini-workshops. Choose between:

A. Is the Concept of Prolonged Grief Disorder Applicable to Non-Death Loss and Grief? (Darcy L. Harris, RN, RSW, MEd (Couns), PhD, FT)

1.5 CEs Available

The concept of Prolonged Grief Disorder (PGD) and the criteria that identify it have, to this date, only been applied to losses from death. Thus, by definition, a diagnosis of PGD is not applicable to nondeath losses, such as those arising from chronic illness, injury, loss of work or relationship. However, if the exploration extends to the descriptive components of the concept of PGD, it becomes apparent that this type of problematic and painful presentation of grief may be manifested as a response to losses of all types. The remaining question is then whether it is helpful to consider the concept of PGD in situations of grief after nondeath losses.

Non-death losses differ from death losses in that there may be loss experiences that are ongoing in nature and that may be present to an individual and family for a lifetime. The unique grief that accompanies these living losses can be seen as a normal response to an ongoing loss, and not an indication that the grieving response has somehow gone awry. What may be more important is to consider the underlying rationale for identifying grief that requires a more structured form of support and more intense scaffolding. The focus shifts from criteria that need to be identified to the subjective experience of those affected in terms of duration, intensity, functionality, and availability of supports.

In addition, grief is experienced within diverse social and cultural norms and expectations that may further complicate the grieving process, especially in non-death losses. Therefore, it is important to be able to identify the social messaging and expectations that influence and shape the grieving process in the context of these types of loss experiences.

Learning Objectives:

- Distinguish between grief after death related losses and non-death loss experiences;
- Describe the four factors that guide the assessment of grief after non-death losses;
- Distinguish between chronic sorrow that occurs alongside living losses and Prolonged Grief Disorder after death losses; and
- Delineate how the social and cultural contexts and norms have an impact on the perception of grief and the identification of “problematic” responses to loss.

Content Focus:

- Application of psychological assessment and/or intervention methods that have overall consistent and credible empirical support in the contemporary peer reviewed scientific literature beyond those publications and other types of communications devoted primarily to the promotion of the approach.

Instructional Level:

- Intermediate

Content Overview:

- Grief and the assumptive world: Situational factors that shape grief and loss (10 min.)
- Types of non-death loss: Differentiating the grief experience (15 min.)
- Chronic sorrow and Prolonged Grief Disorder: Comparisons and contrasts (15 min.)
- “Problematic” grief as a social construct: Disorder in cultural context (20 min.)
- Assessing non-death losses and their complications: A case study (30 min.)

NOTE: This session confers 0.5 credit of Orientation Module leading to [Certification in Grief Therapy for Non-Death Losses \(NDL\)](#).

B. Transformed by Loss: Art Therapy Self-Portraits and the Redefined Self (Sarah Vollmann, MPS, ATR-BC, LICSW)

1.5 CEs Available

This presentation, grounded in Meaning Reconstruction theory, introduces the use of art therapy self-portraiture with clients who are grieving death and non-death losses. Most theories of grief highlight the effect of loss upon one’s identity, as any significant loss can cause a crisis of the self. The bereaved often need to construct a life narrative that is cohesive and inclusive of their pre-loss and post-loss identities as they strive to reconstruct meaning.

The presenter will share her experience as an art therapist of witnessing numerous spontaneous self-portraits created by clients facing loss. The creation of a self-portrait can be transformational, allowing the bereaved to explore a shifted sense of self while owning, expressing, and authoring a revised identity and life story. Art therapy case studies of a child, adolescent, and adult will be presented. Visually rich and deeply personal creations will highlight the expansive and varied potential therapeutic benefits of self-portraiture in the grieving process. Theoretical conceptions of the impact of loss upon one’s identity will be reviewed, and tenets of Meaning Reconstruction, including bracing, pacing, and facing, sense making, and benefit finding will be highlighted in the context of the case studies.

This presentation will additionally examine the use of self-portraiture across clinical disciplines to assess self-image and further treatment, and review art history examples from various cultures of self-portraits that were created to process loss. An experiential component, with no artistic skill required, will allow participants to engage as they choose in an exploration of the self through the creation of their own small self-portraits.

Learning objectives:

- Summarize the potential repercussions, as described in grief theory, of a significant loss upon the identity of the grieving client;
- Identify three unique functions of self-portraiture that foster therapeutic growth and processing; and
- Discuss the ways that self-portraits may be used to create a cohesive self-narrative as a central process of Meaning Reconstruction.

Content Focus:

- Topics related to psychological practice, education, or research *other than* application of psychological assessment and/or intervention methods that are supported by contemporary scholarship grounded in established research procedures.

Instructional Level:

- Intermediate

Content Overview:

- Self-image and mourning: Contemporary grief models and therapeutic principles (30 min.)
- Case studies: Art history and art therapy examples of self-portraiture after loss, and cultural contexts (30 min.)
- Art therapy self-portraiture: A brief experiential exercise (15 min.)
- Clinical and personal implications: Group discussion (15 min.)

NOTE: This session confers 0.5 credit of Techniques Module for [Certification in Grief Therapy as Meaning Reconstruction \(GTMR\)](#), [Certification in Art-Assisted Grief Therapy \(AAGT\)](#) or [Certification in Grief Therapy for Suicide Bereavement \(GTSB\)](#).

11:00-12:30 Closing Ceremony