



Santa Clara
School of Education and
Counseling Psychology

Grief and Hope: Affirming LGBTQ+ Individuals in Challenging Times

2025 LGBTQ+ Affirming Mental Health Care Symposium

Brought to you by SCU ECP LGBTQ+ Emphasis and the ECP Center for Professional Development



Topics of Focus:

Working with Grief and Instilling Hope through Meaning-Making with Transgender and Neuroqueer Youth

Sean Garcia, LMFT

Using Internal Family Systems to Work with Grief and Hope with Transgender and Non-binary Clients

Sand Chang, PhD

Panel: LGBTQ+ Youth Voices: What Mental Health Professionals Should Know About Us

with LGBTQ+ youth, moderated by Chongzheng Wei, PhD

Working with Grief and Hope in Group Therapy with Transgender Clients during Social and Political Changes

Dean Jal Khambatta, LMFT

Friday, Nov. 7

9AM-5:00PM

Locatelli Center, SCU

In accordance with ADA/504, please direct all accommodation requests to Gregory Walswick at gwalswick@scu.edu.



Scan to RSVP:

Speakers:

6 Continuing Education Credits Available

ECP is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists and maintains responsibility for this program and its content. There is no known conflict of interest or commercial support for this program.

This symposium is intended primarily for Licensed Mental Health Professionals and those in training, and will be at an Intermediate Level of expertise. All participants must be 18+. CE credits and Certificates of Attendance are only awarded to licensed clinicians who attend the program in its entirety (all 6 hours) and complete the evaluations. No partial credit. Please, specify in your registration if you are seeking CEs.

For those who do not qualify for CE credit and attend the program in its entirety, a Participation Letter can be requested.



Sean Garcia, LMFT

Sean Garcia is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, working in private practice in San Jose. Given his personal and professional experience, he's created teen and family transgender support groups, served on gender-inclusive task forces at private and religious schools (elementary through college), facilitated diversity trainings and participated in speaking panels for legal, medical and tech audiences.



Sand Chang, PhD

Sand C. Chang, PhD (they/them) is a Chinese American nonbinary psychologist and trainer who has been in practice for over 20 years. They have a private practice in California specializing in eating disorders, trauma healing, and trans health. They are the co-founder of Queer and Trans Internal Family Systems (QTIFS) and a trainer with the IFS Institute.



Dean Jal Khambatta, LMFT

Dean (he/him) is a Queer, Trans, Parsi, first-generation Indian American, multi-racial man born and raised in the Bay Area. Dean has been serving the LGBTQIA2S+ community for the past 18 years—8 as a clinician, and 10 through queer focused sex-positive sex education and peer support groups. He is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist at UC Santa Cruz Counseling and Psychological Services.



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Presentation Descriptions



Working with Grief and Instilling Hope through Meaning-Making with Transgender and Neuroqueer Youth, by Sean Garcia, LMFT

This presentation explores the unique experiences of grief and transformation within gender transition and neurodivergent identity. It examines how loss—whether of relationships, vision, identity, or societal acceptance—can be part of the journey toward authenticity. The presentation offers clinical frameworks and tools for supporting patients through the grief process to attain meaning, hope and integration of their authentic Self.



Using Internal Family Systems to Work with Grief and Hope with Transgender and Non-binary Clients, by Sand Chang, PhD

Internal Family Systems (IFS) is a therapy approach that allows for and recognizes multiplicity of experience. It is a model that offers potential for healing with people whose experiences do not align with dominant culture expectations, including trans, nonbinary, and queer communities. Dr. Chang will discuss the application of IFS with respect to gender identity, trans experience, and living in a ciscentric world, as well as navigating being trans and/or nonbinary providers in the IFS community. The presenter will highlight the ways in which “all genders welcome” and “all parts welcome” must apply across the intersections of race, class, age, and other cultural identity markers.



Working with Grief and Hope in Group Therapy with Transgender Clients during Social and Political Changes, by Dean Khambatta, LMFT

This session will help participants gain an understanding of interpersonal process group therapy with trans and nonbinary clients. It will explore how this modality can be used to create a sense of belonging that allows group members to collectively process grief and cultivate hope. As trans and nonbinary folx face increasing political and systemic threats, group therapy can offer an important space to build community, process grief, and nurture resilience and hope. In this session, we will explore interpersonal process group facilitation from a trauma-informed, intersectional, and gender-affirming lens and learn practical strategies for group formation, facilitation, and repair. By centering connection, shared experience, and collective healing, this session offers clinicians additional tools and interventions to support their trans and nonbinary clients.

LGBTQ+ Youth Voices: What Mental Health Professionals Should Know About Us, moderated by Chongzheng Wei, PhD

This youth panel centers the lived experiences, insights, and hopes of LGBTQ+ youth. As part of the LGBTQ+ Affirming Therapy Summit, this session invites therapists and mental health professionals to listen deeply and learn directly from youth about what truly affirming and supportive care looks like. Panelists will share personal stories, identify common gaps in care, and offer practical guidance for fostering trust, safety, and affirmation in therapeutic spaces. Rooted in the summit's theme of Grief and Hope, this conversation highlights both the challenges LGBTQ+ youth face and the ways mental health providers can be a source of healing and resilience.