Counseling for Grief, Loss, and Trauma

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(Walk-in 3:30-4:30)

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Overview

This course explores psychological issues and skills in counseling people coping with loss, grief, and life-threatening illness. We will focus on both helper self-care skills and skills for intervening more effectively with patients/clients and family members. Topics will include specific counseling skills for grief, loss, and trauma; research and theory on coping with grief, loss, and trauma; burnout, secondary traumatization, and stress management for helping professionals; and our personal loss histories and how they can affect our counseling attitudes and awareness. The applicability of these concepts to everyday psychotherapy practice is emphasized. Varied materials and learning experiences will be used in the class: readings from our textbooks, Camino readings, class discussions, lectures, experiential exercises, written assignments; and a symposium the final day of the class featuring student presentations of their research work during the quarter. The hope is that this course will also provide opportunities for each student to develop a greater appreciation of life and living through an examination of death, dying, grief, loss, and trauma.

Objectives

- Exposure to contemporary clinical research, theory and skills related to counseling people coping with loss, grief, and trauma
- Explore personal reactions to the topics of grief, loss, trauma, and death
- Understand dynamics of grief, loss, and trauma in individuals and families
- Identify ways to incorporate these principles and practices into everyday counseling contexts and client issues

Requirements

- Final paper
- Participation in CPSY 291 Symposium
- Class attendance and participation
- Successful completion of additional assignments

Classroom Etiquette

- While in class please show respect to fellow students and the instructor by turning off wireless access for all electronic devices (e.g., laptop, tablet, phone, etc). All devices allow you to do this. You can use airplane mode if your device has that setting. For people in caregiving roles who must be available in case of an emergency, cell phones can be set to vibrate. Please advise me if you will need this exception. Violations of these requirements will lead to a grade reduction.

Texts

**CLASS MEETINGS**

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**GRADING**

**Participation and attendance**: Participation is not graded by the amount you speak in class, but by your presence and active engagement (even if this is simply engaged listening!). If you need to miss class, please let me know in advance so we can review materials that will be missed. More than one absence will result in losing all points for class participation. (10 points total).

**Assignments #1, #2, and #3**: 10 points for each successfully (i.e., grade of “Pass”) completed assignment. Each assignment must be completed following instructions in this syllabus. (30 points total).

**Final Paper**: Full points awarded for organization (10 points), clarity (10 points), interpretation of literature being reviewed (25 points), and use of APA style for references and in-text citations (5 points). (50 points possible).

**Symposium Presentation**: Quality of presentation (clarity, organization) and one-page summary (clarity, effectiveness conveying what you learned doing the research for your final paper). (10 points total)

Course grade by points: (A: 94-100) (A-: 90-93) (B+: 87-89) (B: 84-86) B-: 80-83) (C+: 77-79) (C: 74-76) (C-: 70-73)

**CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS**
Week 1

Topics: A First Look: Introductions, Overview of Course

Film: Gifts of Grief

Exercise: Calling Out

Week 2

Topics: Personal Loss Histories; Clinical Phenomena; Therapists’ Experiences When Confronting Grief, Loss, and Trauma: Burnout, Compassion Fatigue, Moral Distress, and Posttraumatic Growth

Readings: Texts: GCGT, pps. 1-9; Ch. 9; HJ, Chs. 1-3; TTB, Ch. 14.

Other Assignments: Assignment #1 Personal Loss History

Films: Pitch of Grief (28’)

Recommended: Grief: What Helps When It Hurts (HFA, Larson & Doka)

Week 3

Topics: Grief, Loss, and Trauma: Contemporary Models, Perspectives and Controversies

Readings: Texts: GCGT, Chs. 1-3; TTB, Chs. 1-2

Camino; IWG Op-Ed; Larson & Hoyt (2007, What has become of grief counseling?); Larson (2014, Taking stock)

Week 4
Topics: The Varieties of Grief, Loss, and Mourning: Culture and Context

Readings: Texts: GCGT, Ch. 7; TTB, Ch. 5
Camino: Rosenblatt (2008); Vazquez & Rosa (2011)

Films: Moyers, On Our Own Terms (22:47-38:38)

Week 5

Topics: Grief Counseling: Facilitating Uncomplicated Mourning

Readings: Texts: GCGT, Ch. 4; TTB, Chs. 7, 12; HJ, Chs. 5, 6
Camino: Larson (2013, A person-centred approach …; Larson (2014, Getting grief working); Techniques, Neimeyer, “Chair work”

Films: The Caring Helper: Microskills; Watson, Emotion-focused therapy in practice: Working with grief and bereavement

Experiential Exercise: Imaginal conversations

Note: Bring a photo of someone special you have lost or can no longer be in contact with.

Week 6

Topics: Complicated Grief: Assessment and Treatment
**Readings:** Texts: *GCGT*, Chs. 5 & 6  
*Camino:* 1) Shear, *Complicated Grief: A Guidebook for Therapists* (This is one of the key readings in the class. It is the only manual like this and has an excellent framework for a host of interventions with grieving clients. Read it, think about it, and come to class ready to discuss it. Bring either a hard copy or a viewable electronic copy to class with you. Please do not distribute. 2) Diagnostic issues and instruments (bring to class!)

**Other Assignments:** Assignment #2

**Film:** Larson, *A Person-Centered Approach to Grief Counseling. vignettes*

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**Week 7**

**Topics:** Trauma and Trauma Treatment: CPT, PET, EMDR, and EFT for Complex Trauma; Post-Traumatic Growth

**Readings:** Texts: *TTB*, Chs. 8-11.  
*Camino:* Diagnostic issues and instruments (bring to class!)

**Films:** Grassman; Sandra Paivio, *Emotion-focused therapy for trauma*

**Tips for doing the reading:** There are many other resources provided in the module for this week. Do not feel overwhelmed or traumatized. Just look at everything you can and get a clear idea of what the resource offers so you can come back to it later in your clinical work and apply the concepts and skills then.

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**Week 8**

**Topics:** Clinical Cases and Skill Building

**Readings:** Review Worden (*GCGT*), Shear (Camino), and Pearlman (*TTB*) texts.

**Other Assignments:** Assignment #3

Note: Bring a photo of someone special you have lost or can no longer be in contact with. I suggest trying to make as much progress on your paper as possible this week.

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**Week 9**

**Topics:** Families Facing Grief, Loss, and Trauma

**Readings:** Texts: *GCGT*, Ch. 8
Recommended: *Camino*: Techniques: Gamino, Opening the family photo album’;

**Films:** Vignettes from *Legacy of Unresolved Loss* (MS # 4414)

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**Week 10**

**Topics:** Annual CPSY 291 Symposium

**Readings:** None

**Assignments:** FINAL PAPERS DUE! SYMPOSIUM!

**Food:** Bring food for celebration!
DETAILS ON ASSIGNMENTS

ASSIGNMENTS # 1, #2, and #3

Assignments 1, 2, and 3 are brief essays on course-related topics. The instructions for the assignments, and links to videos, are in the ASSIGNMENTS Camino module. Please turn in hard copies of the assignments on the days they are due.

SYMPOSIUM PRESENTATION

We will all participate as faculty in the Annual Santa Clara University CPSY 291 Symposium on Counseling for Grief, Loss, and Trauma. The symposium will consist of a series of panel or individual presentations on topics related to the course. In the past, symposiums have included a wide range of topics, as you will discover when you read through the list of topics and presenters from previous classes at the end of this syllabus. Members of the Santa Clara University community and friends and family of students in the class are invited to attend the symposium, though usually just a few join us.

Your topic should be in the same general area as your term paper; it can be exactly the same, of course, but your class presentation will of necessity (i.e., time limitations) only cover a part of what your term paper does. Presentations will be from 4-5 minutes in length, depending on the number of students in the class. The presentation should be the kind you would make if you were invited to speak on this topic to a community or professional group. You may have notecards to prompt you, but please do not read your paper (this soporific activity is now discouraged at all professional meetings).

Students very frequently underestimate how long it will take to complete their presentations. Please make at least one practice run at home in which you time yourself and things will go much smoother.

One-Page Handout: For your presentation develop a one-page handout (no more!) and on the night of the symposium bring enough copies of the handout for everyone in class (copies can't be made before class by Dr. Larson). Also, include a copy of this one-page handout with your term paper. Your grade drops one unit (e.g., from A to A-) if you do not have this one-page handout included with your paper. Put the title of your presentation and your name at the top of the page. The handout should include: 1) a list of your favorite references on your topic, maybe the top four or five, and 2) a bulleted list of any key ideas or information that you think would be helpful to other professionals seeking to learn about your topic. An example of a one-page handout from an earlier class is in the ASSIGNMENTS module. Think of this handout and your presentation as first steps toward lecturing on this topic in the world outside the University.

TERM PAPER
The term paper is to be an 8-10 page (maximum) double-spaced paper presenting the results of your research on your symposium topic. The paper should be an academic presentation of the information you have gathered in preparation for your symposium lecture. The paper can focus on clinical issues, theoretical issues, or both, but some research findings should be included regardless of the emphasis. Research work for the paper must go beyond the readings for the course and can include library work and an interview (in person or by phone) with a professional working with clients and families facing grief, loss, or trauma. If you have personal experiences that intersect with the topic you are writing about you can include some of those, but don’t let them become the focus of the paper. Instead use them (probably no more than 200-300 words) to illustrate the theory, research, and clinical points you are making in the paper.

Here are some additional suggestions: 1) For this paper and all others you write at SCU, I suggest you read Strunk & White's *The Elements of Style*, and *APA Publication Manual* (6th ed.). Your references at the end of your paper and your citations of references within the text of the paper must be in APA style (there can be some errors with more complex references (e.g., internet sources), but simple book, chapter and article references should be spot-on), and there will be an automatic half-grade reduction for your overall course grade if they are not. It is essential for you to learn this very simple aspect of professional writing, and you will be relieved once you do because you will see that every possible question about how to format your paper is answered in a precise way in the Manual. The body of the paper does not need to follow APA guidelines for the basic structure of the paper. Please do have an introduction, a main body for the paper, and a conclusion, and use subheadings to help organize the paper. The Manual also has lots of good ideas on how to make your writing more effective. Buy a copy of the Manual and read it at least once; you will return to it again and again throughout your career. You can also get the basics at the Purdue Online Writing Lab [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/2](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/2). Before typing your final draft, read your paper out loud to yourself. Does each sentence make sense and sound clear when you hear it? If it doesn't sound clear to you, it will be even less clear to others. 3) Three simple rules for good writing: a) one idea per sentence, and each sentence should directly connect to the preceding sentence within the first five or six words; b) the first sentence of a paragraph should tell the reader what the paragraph is about; and c) use subheadings to help orient the reader. Most people can dramatically improve the quality of their written products by following these three rules.

Put your name on all sheets, and make an extra copy for yourself (keep it somewhere safe!). This is extremely important. You are responsible for having an extra copy. Always make a backup of your file each time you finish working on it and keep your backups somewhere safe. If you would like the paper returned, include a heavy-duty SAS envelope with enough postage for your paper. Finally, remember to include a copy of the one-page handout you created for the Symposium with your final paper. GOOD LUCK!

**RESOURCES**


Finding Our Way: Living with Dying in America, the online course https://webpages.scu.edu/ftp/fow/

Five Wishes Website http://www.agingwithdignity.org/5wishes.html


Horowitz et al. (1979). Impact of Event Scale (IES)


This paper is one of my most influential publications.


Personal Death Awareness Form


Shear, K. *Complicated Grief: A Guidebook for Therapists*


**PARTIAL LIST OF MY FAVORITE 291-RELATED FILMS**

Films with Media Service (MS) numbers can be accessed through our library.

**Films**

*How Could I Not Be Among You?* The Poetry of Ted Rosenthal (MS# PS3568.0)

*Evolution of Hospice, a lecture by Dame Cicely Saunders* (MS # 5446)

Cicely Saunders lecture at Pennsylvania conference in 1999 (MS# 4340)

*Jack Frost* (MS# 4722)

*Pitch of Grief* (Dr. Larson’s personal library)

*Hospice Encounters: A Mental Health Training Film* (Dr. Larson’s personal library)

*Living Fully Until Death*: A film about Morrie Schwartz and two other dying people (MS# 4086)

*Shadowlands* (MS# 4250)

*Some Babies Die* (MS# 4410)

*Terms of Endearment* (MS# 4792)

*The Caring Helper: Skills for Caregiving in Grief and Loss* (MS# 1854-1859)

*The Legacy of Unresolved Loss: A Family Systems Approach*, with M. McGoldrick (MS# 04414)

*Ordinary People* (MS# 00483)
Marvin’s Room (MS#4724)
Sleepless in Seattle (MS# 2553)
Walk Me to the Water (MS# 05710)
Wit, a film by Mike Nichols with Emma Thompson
United 93 Interviews with family members
Gifts of Grief (MS# DVD – 00461)
OTHER BOOKS AND RESOURCES YOU MAY FIND HELPFUL

The Hospice Home Page: I have created and maintain a web page with “great ideas” from hospice programs throughout the United States. The URL for the Hospice Home Page is: www.scu.edu/Hospice Come visit! The site has not been updated recently.

Larson, D. G. (1986). Developing effective hospice staff support groups: Pilot test of an


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**SOME PREVIOUS SYMPOSIUM TOPICS AND PRESENTERS**

*Women's Struggles with Infertility and Loss*  Wren Grey-Reneberg

*Miscarriage and Disenfranchised Grief*  Bakir Abushhiwa
POLICY ON SELF-DISCLOSURE

As per 2004 APA ethics standards, a policy statement on Student self-disclosure is necessary. The following statement is the SCU statement on self-disclosure in our program.

The professional training philosophy of the Counseling Psychology Department is predicated on the notion that an effective counselor must be a whole person. Indeed, in the practice of counseling, it is the person of the counselor that is a major component of healing. As a counselor-in-training, then, self-reflection is a necessary and required part of the training that helps one better understand and empathize with his/her future clients' experience.

Such reflection is a significant component of one's personal and professional development as an effective and sensitive instrument of change. Thus, it is customary that in the CPSY Masters Program's classes at SCU, students are regularly assigned work that involves self-disclosure and personal study of the content of that self-disclosure. Students are expected to reflect on their past and present personal experiences in courses and program related activities, in oral and/ or in written assignments.

We respect students' rights to confidentiality, and do not require that any particular or specific information be disclosed. Moreover, we do not evaluate students' progress in the program based on the disclosure of any specific information (except as mandated by ethical codes or law). It is our experience that this philosophy and related formats in our classes provides a rich and superlative educational experience, involving more aspects of student experience than do standard lectures or written material which does not include the person of the therapist in training.

Academic Integrity

The Academic Integrity pledge is an expression of the University’s commitment to fostering an understanding of -- and commitment to -- a culture of integrity at Santa Clara University. The Academic Integrity pledge, which applies to all students, states:

I am committed to being a person of integrity. I pledge, as a member of the Santa Clara University community, to abide by and uphold the standards of academic integrity contained in the Student Conduct Code.

Students are expected to uphold the principles of this pledge for all work in this class. For more information about Santa Clara University’s academic integrity pledge and resources about ensuring academic integrity in your work, see www.scu.edu/academic-integrity.

Disabilities Resources

If you have a disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources, Benson 216, http://www.scu.edu/disabilities as soon as possible to discuss your needs and register for accommodations with the University. If you have already arranged accommodations through Disabilities Resources, please discuss them with me during
my office hours. Students who have medical needs related to pregnancy may also be eligible for accommodations.

(continued on next page)

While I am happy to assist you, I am unable to provide accommodations until I have received verification from Disabilities Resources. The Disabilities Resources office will work with students and faculty to arrange proctored exams for students whose accommodations include double time for exams and/or assisted technology. (Students with approved accommodations of time-and-a-half should talk with me as soon as possible). Disabilities Resources must be contacted in advance to schedule proctored examinations or to arrange other accommodations. The Disabilities Resources office would be grateful for advance notice of at least two weeks. For more information you may contact Disabilities Resources at 408-554-4109.

Accommodations for Pregnancy and Parenting

In alignment with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and with the California Education Code, Section 66281.7, Santa Clara University provides reasonable accommodations to students who are pregnant, have recently experienced childbirth, and/or have medically related needs. Pregnant and parenting students can often arrange accommodations by working directly with their instructors, supervisors, or departments. Alternatively, a pregnant or parenting student experiencing related medical conditions may request accommodations through Disability Resources.

Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct (Title IX)

Santa Clara University upholds a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct. If you (or someone you know) have experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, or stalking, I encourage you to tell someone promptly. For more information, please consult the University’s Gender-Based Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy at http://bit.ly/2ce1hBb or contact the University's EEO and Title IX Coordinator, Belinda Guthrie, at 408-554-3043, bguthrie@scu.edu. Reports may be submitted online through https://www.scu.edu/osl/report/ or anonymously through Ethicspoint https://www.scu.edu/hr/quick-links/ethicspoint/