



Light After Loss PostVention Convention Session Descriptions

Morning Keynote

"Impact of Suicide on Families, Communities and Workplaces"

Dr. Julie Cerel will describe how suicide bereavement affects those left behind, and outlines findings from research looking at how many people know someone who has died by suicide and how it affects their life. She will examine different groups of people who are differentially impacted by suicide and ways postvention can help.

Morning Breakout Sessions

"A Road Map for Clinicians Working with Suicide-Loss Survivors"

This presentation aims to provide risk and protective factors for suicide-loss survivors. Those factors include demographics, loss-related, intrapersonal, and interpersonal factors. Additionally, the presentation focuses on increasing the knowledge of professionals regarding the contemporary grief models such as two-track, dual-process, and meaning-making models in clinical work with suicide-loss survivors. By attending this presentation, mental health professionals will increase their understanding of the role of closeness, social support, attachment, self-disclosure, suicide stigma, religious/spiritual identity in the grief process, and its effects on individuals who experienced suicide loss. Clinicians also will learn how individuals' social identity shifts after the significant loss due to suicide. Finally, clinicians will learn how to apply the information gathered from the clients to help them process their emotions and grow after their loss by making meaning of the loss.

"L.O.S.S. Teams and Follow Up Postvention Care: How Peers and Professionals Work Together"

L.O.S.S. Teams are peer-based supports for others in the immediate aftermath of a suicide. This presentation will describe the components and logistics of a L.O.S.S. Team, including how team members are trained. Additionally, attendees will learn about how on-scene L.O.S.S. Team outreach is conducted, including how they are contacted to respond. Examples of how L.O.S.S. Teams positively partner and collaborate with licensed mental health professionals will also be reviewed.

"Spirituality After Suicide Loss"

Spirituality is a complex dimension of human experience. Spirituality is impacted when loss or crisis occurs. Suicide loss is a profound crisis that impacts spiritual functioning (Wolfelt, 2006). However, spirituality is not often viewed as a domain impacted by suicide loss. This training seeks to provide participants with various definitions of spirituality. Additionally, professionals attending will discuss and become acquainted with how spirituality may be impacted by suicide loss. Lastly, participants will be given various interventions they could use with suicide survivors that incorporate elements of ritual and spirituality.

Afternoon Plenary

“L.O.S.S. Teams and the Postvention Plan for Ohio”

Afternoon Breakout Sessions

"Am I a Loss Survivor? Mental Health Professionals as Part of the Community Impacted by a Suicide"

The focus of this presentation will include information about postvention including statistics around those impacted by suicide. Common reactions to a suicide death will be shared, including from a personal perspective to aid professionals as they journey with their clients who are grieving a suicide loss. The concept of 'There's no "closure" or "fixing" this, there is integration' will be discussed. Also, how mental health professionals have been - or may be in the future - impacted by a clients suicide and how mental health professionals can engage in self-care and seek support.

"Postvention After the Suicide Loss of Our Client"

The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention (2015) estimated that every year there are 5.3 million Americans are suicide loss survivors, 40-50% population has lifetime exposure to suicide, and each suicide death impacts 135 people - including mental health workers. Meyers (2015) found that 23-25% of Counselors had lost clients to suicide, 1/5 are counselors in training. However, the majority of existing training and literature only focus on suicide assessment and interventions but pay far less attention to postvention, especially how to support clinicians after a loss of their client due to suicide. This presentation aims to open a discussion of challenges of mental health workers as suicide loss survivors, as well as provide resources and recommendations for individual professionals and organizations. Multicultural aspects and supervision implications are also discussed.

"Write to Heal: Therapeutic Writing Tools to Support Survivors of Suicide Loss"

During this experiential workshop, participants will learn theory and research that supports using therapeutic writing for healing grief and trauma. The benefits and risks of writing about painful experiences will be explored, as well as strategies to mitigate the risks. Participants will be invited to engage in a series of short writing exercises to demonstrate how they might implement these tools in their practice as well as to develop a sense of how the process can feel for participants.

Afternoon Keynote

“Reflections of Hope After 25+ Years of Working with Suicidality”

For over 25 years, Dr. McGlothlin has researched, published, consulted, and presented on suicide. In addition, his practice focuses specifically on suicidal clients and the families who have lost a loved one to suicide. After more than 25 years of working with suicidality, Dr. McGlothlin shares stories of hope, resilience, and sustainability in client care and clinician care.