
Families Surviving Loss

Thursday, October 12, 2006
Messiah College, Grantham, PA

Conference Schedule

- 8:30 - 9:00 a.m. **Registration and Continental Breakfast**
Student Poster Presentations
- 9:00 - 9:15 a.m. **Greetings and Introductions**
Raeann Hamon, Ph.D., CFLE, Messiah College
Chair, Department of Human Development & Family Science
Distinguished Professor of Family Science & Gerontology
- 9:15 - 10:15 a.m. **Keynote Address**
Kandy Ferree, President and Chief Executive Officer,
National AIDS Fund, Washington, D.C.
- 10:25 - 11:15 a.m. **Concurrent Workshops, Session 1**
- 11:15 - 11:30 a.m. **Student Poster Presentations / Break**
- 11:30 a.m. - 12:20 p.m. **Concurrent Workshops, Session 2**
- 12:20 - 1:40 p.m. **Lunch**
- 1:45 - 2:35 p.m. **Concurrent Workshops, Session 3**
- 2:35 - 3:05 p.m. **Human Services Fair / Break**
- 3:10 - 4:00 p.m. **Concurrent Workshops, Session 4**
- 4:00 p.m. **Adjourn.** Pick-up professional certificates and return evaluation forms to the registration desk.



2006 BUILDING STRONG FAMILIES CONFERENCE FAMILIES SURVIVING LOSS

Keynote Address - 9:15-10:15 a.m.

▪ *Denial, Loss and Resilience: The Impact of HIV/AIDS on Individuals, Families, Communities and Nations*

Kandy Ferree, MCP, President & Chief Executive Officer, National AIDS Fund, Washington D.C.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is arguably the most significant public health pandemic and social justice issue of modern time. There are now 40 million people worldwide living with HIV/AIDS. The staggering numbers of people affected by HIV in the developing world has led to significant attention being paid to the *international epidemic*, while treatment advances and declining death rates in the United States have lulled many into believing the *U.S. or domestic epidemic* is "under control." The fact remains that HIV/AIDS has and continues to be ONE Epidemic that is fueled by universal set of social and structural inequities across the globe: poverty, disparate access to HIV prevention and treatment, inadequate education, gender norms and the relative financial dependence of women, homophobia and the marginalization of ethnic and racial minority groups.

The result is a growing pandemic that is delivering an unprecedented and multi-level plague of loss. The presence of such wide-spread loss is challenging the health, stability and, in some cases, the very existence of individuals, families, communities and nations. The HIV/AIDS pandemic and its consequences are neither inevitable nor unsolvable, but the choice is ours.

This presentation will educate attendees about the impact of HIV/AIDS and provide concrete strategies for how helping professionals, social scientists, teachers, community leaders and policy makers can empower families and communities toward a different future.

Session 1: Concurrent Workshops - 10:25-11:15 a.m.

A. Helping Teenagers Cope with Grief

Joyce Shriner, M.S., CFLE

With the dramatic increase in school shootings and youth violence, interest in teenage bereavement is growing. Because most teenage deaths are human-induced, they tend to be sudden, unexpected, traumatic and violent. News of the death of a teenager is especially difficult and upsetting. It often disrupts entire communities. Although research shows that social support helps bereaved teens deal with loss; many professionals and youth group volunteers find themselves unprepared to help. This program resulted from findings of research aimed at discovering what helps and hinders the grief process of teenage survivors.

B. What about Me? Managing Your Own Grief while Caring for Your Child

Gerald Gaugler, M.S.

This presentation will help families survive loss by strengthening the adults in the family while educating them about the grief of their children. It will discuss complicated grief and identify signs and symptoms that they might see in their children or in themselves or their spouse. It will also discuss available resources for grieving adults.

C. A Peaceful Village: An Intervention to Help Families Cope with Violence in their Communities

Linda M. Oravec, Ph.D.

This workshop will share findings from a study examining factors that might increase the resilience of African American preschoolers in urban neighborhoods by examining the role of two potential protective factors, positive parenting and informal social support, and two potential risk factors, direct exposure to community and family violence, in predicting the children's social skills and behavior problems. Implications of analyses findings for fostering resilience among young African American children in urban communities will be discussed.

Session 2: Concurrent Workshops - 11:30-12:20 p.m.

D. Homeless and No Place to Go: Assessing and Understanding Rural Homelessness

Elizabeth Fisher, Ph.D., MSW, LSW

The workshop will include a brief introduction to homelessness and near-homelessness, particularly related to families in rural areas, and how homelessness can be described in terms of loss. Homelessness and near-homelessness will be defined, according to the McKinney-Vento Act. The unique characteristics and problems related to rural homelessness will be presented. Root causes of homelessness will also be presented (i.e. lack of affordable housing and poverty). The process and results of a needs assessment study will be highlighted allowing the participants to understand not only the process and results of the study, but also how to engage in community-university projects and research. Finally, the workshop will end with an interactive discussion as well as a question/answer session.

E. Teens and Grief

Gerald Gaugler, M.S.

This presentation will begin by distinguishing between grief and mourning, and will continue by delineating the developmental tasks of adolescence (establishing one's own identity, physical and sexual changes, taking on new roles, and being emotionally intense). Discussion will include factors that influence teen's grief, the needs of grieving teens, and the needs of these teenager's parents. The session will conclude with an examination of warning signs and ways in which grieving teens can best be supported.

F. Grief and Mourning Across Cultures

Robert Reyes, Ph.D., CFLE & Winston Seegobin, Psy.D.

This presentation examines and describes grief and mourning in various cultures, and focuses on how these processes function in families who have experienced losses.

G. The Journey of Adoption: Coping with Loss Along the Way

Maryellen B. Miller, RN, MS, CFLE & Bethany Willis Hepp, BA (MS, pending)

This workshop will focus on coping with loss in the adoptive family. Areas of loss in the Adoption Triad will be explained and the on-going issues of grieving and loss for the adopted child will be described, including developmental grieving and yearly struggles. Ways to help children grieve will be discussed with specific emphasis on the losses of country, culture, and language that occur in international adoption. Examples of dialogues verbalizing feelings of loss and ideas for coping in the adoptive family will be demonstrated. Discussion will also include the often forgotten loss of the nations of origins and home cultures.

Session 3: Concurrent Workshops - 1:45-2:35 p.m.

H. Promoting Positive Attitudes Toward Children with Disabilities and Their Families

Ronnie Martin, Ph.D.

One objective of this workshop will be to demonstrate how child welfare professionals may change not only their attitudes toward or misunderstanding about children with disabilities but also the attitudes or misunderstandings of individuals and the community regarding children with physical disabilities. Participants will also be able to address and understand the issues of loss experienced by families with children with disabilities. A third objective of this workshop will be to give the participants the opportunity, through the replication of experiential and didactic material presented during the workshop, to conduct similar workshops in their community. The participants will be able to return to their community and put into practice what they will learn from this workshop.

I. Perinatal Loss and the Subsequent Child: Family Impact

Joann M. O'Leary, Ph.D.

In the last ten years studies have examined what the impact of perinatal loss can have on the health care needs for families during their pregnancy that follows. Yet to be addressed is how this type of loss influences the parenting relationship with children, especially the child that follows a loss. This presentation will provide helpful interventions for family life education around issues of parenting after the loss of a baby.

J. Coping with Disenfranchised Grief: Themes from Narratives of Bereaved Domestic, Gay and Lesbian Partners

Carolyn Walter, Ph.D., LCSW

There is little literature about partner loss for cohabitating couples from both same-sex and opposite-sex relationships. This presentation seeks to examine themes from narratives of these bereaved partners regarding how they experienced and coped with disenfranchised grief. Living in a society in which there is stigma present regarding relationships which are not legally sanctioned makes coping with death of partner from such a relationship quite difficult and painful (Doka, 1987, 1989, 2002). This presentation will address both the ways in which helping professionals and organizations can respond more appropriately to this population, as well as how the bereaved partners themselves can more openly express their needs.

K. We Used to Share a Room...An In-Depth Study of Sibling Loss

Leslie Delp, M.A. & Jill Anderson, B.S., (M.Ed., pending)

The presentation will focus on the importance of helping a child who is faced with the death of a sibling. The professional will learn strategies to support developmental mourning of a sibling within the grieving family. The presentation will address the many "myths" surrounding the bereaved sibling. A video will be used to underscore the importance of supporting the bereaved sibling, during an illness and after the death of their beloved family member. The outline for an eight week educational support program for bereaved families will be introduced.

Session 4: Concurrent Workshops - 3:10-4:00 p.m.

L. Transitioning into Adulthood

Heather Spaan, B.A., (MSW, pending), CFLE

Many youth turn eighteen and plan to live on their own, especially if they have been in foster care placement for an extended period of time. These youth often do not have the tools, skills, or the supplies they need to become successfully independent. They no longer have the food, shelter, clothing, etc., that was once provided through the county child welfare agency. While the transition to adulthood is an exciting time, it also evokes anxiety and fear. Youth Transition Conferences give youth and their support systems an opportunity to plan for the future and see what resources they may have and what resources are needed to become a successful independent adult.

M. Using Multiple Intelligences to Learn about Grief and Loss

Debra L. Berke, Ph.D., CFLE & Tawny Smay

Teaching about grief and loss can be challenging because individuals not only go through the grieving process differently, but they also learn information and skills in many different ways. Participants will use an inventory to identify their preferred ways of learning or multiple intelligences; individuals will also learn how to use these intelligences to develop ways to teach others about grief and loss.

N. What about Me? Addressing the Needs of Grieving Children and Adolescents

Rev. Brian Medkeff-Rose, M.Div., M.A.

Children and adolescents when preparing for or experiencing the death of a love one are faced with many challenges. This workshop will explore ways caring adults may provide support to grieving children and adolescents as they navigate through the storms of life.

O. Families Surviving Loss: The Red Cross Response

Patti Homan, Ph.D., LPC, FT

This presentation will review the role of the American Red Cross in local and natural disasters, examine grief and mourning in response to loss, and discuss psychological patterns evident in crisis response. Participants will learn how to respond to grief, how to meet the needs of children and families suffering loss, and how to become involved with the American Red Cross. The session will close with the presenter's own experiences and photos from Shanksville, Somerset County, following 9-11.

MEET THE SPEAKERS

Jill Anderson, B.S. (M.Ed., pending) - Jill holds a B.S. in Human Development from Pennsylvania State University and is currently enrolled in a Master's program at Millersville University. She has worked as the Program Director at Olivia's House since 2003. Her experience with grieving children has extended to summer camps and group work within the elementary and middle schools in York County.

Debra L. Berke, Ph.D., CFLE, is Associate Professor of Family Science and Women's Studies in the Department of Human Development and Family Science at Messiah College. She teaches courses in family policy and human services, human sexuality, family life education, and urban families. Her areas of research include work and family, family policy, human sexuality, and teaching methodologies. She directs the Gender Studies Project at Messiah College. She is the Past Chair of the Family Policy Section of the National Council on Family Relations as well as the Immediate Past President of the Family Science Association.

Leslie Delp, M.A. - Leslie holds a B.S.Ed., in Elementary Education from Pennsylvania State University and a Master's degree in Counseling Psychology from Towson University. She is responsible for creating the "Hearts Can Heal" Children's Bereavement Support Program. Leslie is the owner of Grief and Bereavement Services, a consulting practice, specializing in Bereavement Education. She is the founder of Olivia's House - A Grief and Loss Center for children in York, Pennsylvania and has served as the Executive Director since 2002.

Kandy Ferree, MCP, serves as the President & CEO of the National AIDS Fund, a Washington, DC based organization with 29 Community Partnerships across the United States. The organization builds partnerships with foundations, corporations and other national organizations interested in building community capacity toward creating stronger, more sustainable HIV/AIDS prevention and care services.

Ms. Ferree has extensive experience in designing, implementing and evaluating HIV/AIDS prevention and care services, community capacity building, group facilitation and corporate training, as well as philanthropy and grantmaking at the community and national levels. Committed to HIV/AIDS as a public health and social justice issue, Ms. Ferree's vision is to create innovative, public-private partnerships that empower community-level decision-making and build community capacity.

Originally from south-central Pennsylvania, Ms. Ferree holds a Bachelors degree in Family Studies with a minor in Gerontology from Messiah College and a Masters degree in Community Psychology from the Pennsylvania State University. Her professional interests include building strategic philanthropic relationships with corporations and foundations; her research interests include implementing/evaluating community-based prevention interventions and managing community and organizational systems change.

Elizabeth Fisher, Ph.D., LSW, is Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Work and Gerontology at Shippensburg University. Her teaching, research, practice, and volunteer service focuses on community and organizational issues, including leadership, gender issues,

after school programs, and social justice/human rights. She currently works with several community-based social service organizations in Carlisle and Shippensburg, PA and most of her courses engage students in community projects.

Gerald Gaugler, M.S., holds a B.A. in Psychology/Philosophy from Bloomsburg University and a M.S. in Clinical Psychology from Millersville University. He has worked in various mental health settings, including residential treatment facilities, inpatient units, foster care, shelters, partial hospital and intensive outpatient programs. He has been employed by Highmark Caring Place since 2003 and he currently holds the position of Education and Outreach Coordinator at their site in Central Pennsylvania.

Bethany Willis Hepp, B.A. (MS, pending) is currently a master's student in Human Development and Family Studies at the University of Delaware, concentrating in Family and Human Development Research. She earned her BA from the History and Political Science Departments at the University of Delaware. Bethany studies multicultural, multiethnic family structures with a special interest in international adoption. She is currently working on two research projects associated with the University of Delaware. Bethany has been working with and for children of all ages and their families in multiple capacities since 1998.

Patti Homan, Ph.D., LPC, FT is Program Director for the PATHways Center for Grief & Loss at Hospice of Lancaster County. For more than twenty years the focus of her clinical training, practice, and teaching has been on issues of death and dying, crisis, trauma, and loss. Patti has presented at numerous national conferences as well as the state and local level. Patti is recognized as a fellow in thanatology with the Association for Death, Education and Counseling and is serving her second three-year term as the Bereavement Professional Section Leader for the National Council of Hospice and Palliative Care Professionals. At the PATHways Center for Grief & Loss, Lancaster County's first not-for-profit counseling center dedicated to support anyone in the community coping with the death of a loved one, Patti oversees a wide variety of bereavement services for adults, children and teens. She is also an active volunteer with the American Red Cross and the Lancaster County Critical Incident Stress Management Team, providing debriefings and support in the community when local tragedies occur.

Ronnie Martin, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke in the Department of Social Work, and serves as the Assistant Director of the Social Work Program there. His primary focus of research interest is in the field of disabilities and childhood obesity. Dr. Martin earned his doctorate in social work from the University of South Carolina.

Brian Medkeff-Rose, M.Div., MA is a Chaplain with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and has twenty five years experience counseling and guiding individuals and families through critical life issues. Brian currently is providing care to children, adolescents and families with PinnacleHealth Hospice. Brian is the father of two college age daughters, is an avid gardener, and attempts to enjoy life to the fullest.

Maryellen B. Miller, RN, MS, CFLE holds an MS in Family and Consumer Sciences from Louisiana Tech University, Ruston, LA. Thesis research: Nutritional and Developmental Status of Asian Indian children adopted into U.S. families. In addition to teaching in the Health and

Physical Education Department of Montgomery County Community College, Maryellen is a graduate student in Human Development and Family Studies at the University of Delaware and a parenting education instructor for Child, Home, & Community, a United Way Agency serving pregnant and parenting teens in Bucks and Montgomery Counties. Her Adoptive Parenting Courses have been taught to prospective adoptive parents in Northeast Louisiana and Montgomery County, PA. Maryellen's family is an international adoptive family. She and her husband are the parents of three children through birth and adoption.

Joann O'Leary, Ph.D., a Parent-Infant Specialist with a doctorate in Work, Community and Family Education and a minor in Spirituality and Health, is an adjunct faculty member in the University of Minnesota, School of Nursing. She is licensed in Parent Education and Special Education and is certified in the Brazelton Neonatal Assessment. She was a Preschool Special Education Teacher before working 18 years in a Perinatal Center as the coordinator of the Childbirth Education Program and a consultant to staff and parents on parenting concerns of families. Joann's area of research is parenting and the subsequent child. She has published on attachment in pregnancy, parents' experience during the subsequent pregnancy and fathering. She has done extensive speaking, writing, and consulting in this area, both nationally and internationally.

Linda M. Oravec, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor at Towson University. Her research interests include family and community violence, at risk families and family policy.

Robert Reyes, Ph.D., CFLE, serves as Associate Professor of Family Science & Multicultural Studies and Director of the Latino Partnership at Messiah College. He is a Certified Family Life Educator and member of the Board of The National Council on Family Relations. His research interests include the study of acculturative stress & coping among Latino immigrants and Puerto Rican migrant families, as well as gender roles and couple formation practices in Spain.

Winston Seegobin, Psy.D., is Associate Professor of Psychology and Counselor for Students of Color, International Students, and MKs at Messiah College. He has published in the areas of Caribbean families, therapy with Asian Indians, and marriage in Trinidad and Tobago.

Joyce Shriner, M.S., CFLE, is the Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Educator and County Director with Ohio State University Extension in Hocking County. The Certified Family Life Educator received her Master of Science in Human and Consumer Sciences Degree from Ohio University. The topic of her thesis was "Sudden Sibling Death during Adolescence: Discovering What Helps and Hinders the Grief Process," a topic she became interested in after the sudden death of her brother. She has written numerous articles on the topic of grief and loss. With her husband of 23 years, Joyce has three children.

Tawny Smay is a junior Human Development and Family Science major at Messiah College.

Heather Spaan, B.A., (MSW, pending), CFLE, graduated from Messiah College with a B.S. in Family Studies. She is currently working on her Masters in Social Work at Temple University. Heather is a Family Support caseworker at Adams County Children and Youth Services and is a facilitator for Adams County Family Group Decision Making. She has been on the Adams County Family Group Decision Making Implementation Team for the past two years. She has

also been an active member of the Public Relations committee for FGDM. Heather has attended three international Family Group Decision Making Conferences. She has participated directly with Family Group Decision Making Conferences in Adams County as both a referring worker and as a facilitator. As part of her Masters program, she has been developing policies and protocol for implementing Family Group Decision Making with the Independent Living Program in Adams County, now called Youth Transition Conferences. During the summer of 2006, she presented on Youth Transition Conferences at the Statewide Adoption Network Conference and the American Humane Association International Conference on Family Group Decision Making.

Carolyn Ambler Walter, Ph.D., LCSW, is a professor at the Center for Social Work Education at Widener University, Chester, PA. In addition to teaching, Carolyn maintains a private clinical social work practice. Dr. Walter is the author of *The Loss of a Life Partner: Narratives of the Bereaved* which was released in March of 2003 by Columbia University Press. She is the co-author of *Breast Cancer in the Life Course: Women's Experiences* and the author of *The Timing of Motherhood*. Dr. Walter has published many articles in professional journals on such topics as women's issues, grief and social work education. Dr. Walter has also given professional presentations at state and regional hospice conferences throughout the US, at ADEC, NASW and CSWE national conferences.