

Fifth Annual Conference

# **Childhood Grief and Traumatic Loss**

Restoring Joy to Children and Their Families

**March 26, 2009**



*Original photo by Brian Gamberg*

## **Registration Booklet**

**The California Endowment**  
1000 North Alameda Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
(213) 928-8900

# Childhood Grief and Traumatic Loss

## Restoring Joy to Children and Families

### Directions to The California Endowment



The California Endowment  
1000 North Alameda Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Phone 213.928.8900  
Fax 213.928.8901  
www.calendow.org

Conference Center Hours of Operation  
Monday-Friday: 7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.



#### Walking from Union Station

- Walk out of Union Station at Alameda Street exit
- Turn right at sidewalk
- Walk 112 blocks north to front entrance

#### From Santa Monica/West Side

- 190 East
- CA 110 North
- Just past downtown, follow signs on right to "10 East San Bernardino/ 5 South Santa Ana" (US 101 South)
- Exit Broadway
- Left on Broadway
- Right on Cesar E Chavez
- Left on Alameda
- Right at Bauchet St. (1st stoplight)
- Continue to The Endowment parking lot

#### From San Fernando Valley/Hollywood

- US 101 South
- Exit Broadway
- Left on Broadway
- Right on Cesar E Chavez
- Left on Alameda
- Right at Bauchet St. (1st stoplight)
- Continue to The Endowment parking lot

#### From Pasadena/Northeast LA

- CA 110 South
- Exit Hill Street. go straight
- Left on Alpine
- Right on Broadway
- Left on Cesar E Chavez
- Left on Alameda
- Right at Bauchet St. (1st stoplight)
- Continue to The Endowment parking lot

#### From San Gabriel Valley

- HO West
- US 101 North
- Exit Alameda Street
- Right on Alameda
- Right at Bauchet St.
- Continue to The Endowment parking lot

#### From Harbor Area/South LA

- CA 110 North
- Just past downtown, follow signs on right to "10 East San Bernardino/ 5 South Santa Ana" (US 101 South)
- Exit Broadway
- Left on Broadway
- Right on Cesar E Chavez
- Left on Alameda
- Right at Bauchet St. (1st stoplight)
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## Restoring Joy to Children and Families

### Continuing Education Credit

MARCH 26, 2009

#### Important Notice:

To receive CMEs/CEUs, you are required to sign in and out at the CEU table on the day of the conference.

- Sign in must be no later than 8:30am
- Sign out will be no earlier than 4:30pm. At the time of sign out, you will need to also return your completed evaluation (which will be provided to you at the conference).

There will be no exceptions.

#### Physicians



The Perinatal Advisory Council - Leadership, Advocacy, and Consultation (PAC/LAC) is accredited by the Institute for Medical Quality / California Medical Association (IMQ/CMA) to provide continuing medical education for physicians. PAC/LAC takes responsibility for the content, quality and scientific integrity of this CME activity. This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the Institute for Medical Quality and the California Medical Association's CME Accreditation Standards (IMQ/CMA) through the Joint Sponsorship of PAC/LAC and ICAN Associates. PAC/LAC designates this educational activity for a maximum of **6.0 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)**™. Physicians should only claim credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity. This credit may also be applied to the *CMA Certification in Continuing Medical Education*.

#### Nurses



PAC/LAC is also an approved provider by the California Board of Registered Nursing. This course is approved for **7.0 Hours** of continuing education credit. PAC/LAC's provider number is CEP 5862. Licensee must retain this certificate for a period of four years.



#### LCSWs / LMFTs

CEUs for LCSWs and LMFTs will be provided by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. This course is approved for **6.5** Continuing Education Units by the California Board of Behavioral Science Examiners (provider Number PCE 3704).

#### Child Life Specialists

In order to obtain PDH credit for this conference, you must provide proof of registration along with a conference program as you will need to document the content outline mandated by Child Life Council. If you registered online, your email confirmation is your proof of registration. If you registered by mail or on site, please pick up your proof of attendance at the registration table on the day of the conference. There is no additional fee to obtain credit for CLS.

# Childhood Grief and Traumatic Loss

Restoring Joy to Children and Families

## Conference Training Agenda

- 7:00 am – 8:00 am**      **Registration**
- 8:15 am – 8:45 am**      **Welcome & Introductions**
- Conference Overview**  
Joan Cochran, MA, CT, Michael Durfee, M.D., Linda Garcia, CCLS
- Official Welcome**
- 8:45 am – 10:00 am**      **Panel Presentation**
- Children and Teens Affected by Death**  
*Facilitated by:*  
Donna Schuurman, EdD, CT and Michael Durfee, MD
- 10:00 am – 10:15 am**      **Choir Presentation**  
Grant A.M.E. Youth Choirs and Children from The Center for Grief and Loss for Children, a Program of Hathaway-Sycamores Child and Family Services
- 10:30 am – 12:00 pm**      **Workshop Session One**
- 12:15 pm – 1:15 pm**      **Lunch / Presentation**
- Infant Grief and Traumatic Loss**  
*Presented by:*  
Connie Lillas, Phd, MFT, RN
- 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm**      **Workshop Session Two**
- 3:15 pm – 4:45 pm**      **Workshop Session Three**

# Childhood Grief and Traumatic Loss

## Restoring Joy to Children and Families

### Workshop Session I

10:30am – 12:00pm

#### **1a. The ABCs of Whole-Family Grief Counseling in a Home-Based Setting**

*Michelle A. Post, MA, LMFT, Clinical Aftercare Specialist, One Legacy*  
*Amanda Mahoney, MA, MFT Trainee, Aftercare Intern, One Legacy*

When a sudden death occurs, a family has little time to adjust, re-establish roles and communication, and return to activities and demands of daily life. At OneLegacy, Southern California's Donate Life organization, we have seen families forced to adjust to deaths that are not only sudden and traumatic, but often involve more than one family member, the legal system, and/or the foster care system. The process of a family adjusting in these situations can seem like a daunting task as they learn to adapt to all the changes ahead of them. Yet, sooner or later, a grieving family must learn how to reconnect with each other and communicate after the death of someone close.

#### Objectives:

1. Describe the benefits of and avoid pitfalls in working with whole family units who are grieving the death of someone close
2. Apply age-appropriate activities to engage all members of the family in the grief counseling
3. Utilize tools to manage time, make sessions effective, cope with sibling rivalry, foster communication, address sleep hygiene, overcome resistance, and connect families to resources in their community

#### **2a. "Thinking Inside the Box": How to Talk to Kids about Funerals, Cremation and Create Meaningful Mourning Rituals**

*Lauren Schneider, LCSW, Clinical Director of Child and Adolescent Programs, Our House*

Since the beginning of time human beings practiced funerary rituals to memorialize the deceased. These rituals help the bereaved begin their mourning process and have a supportive element that benefits both adults and children. In this mixed-media workshop, we will discuss ways to assist families to emotionally and physically plan their funerary rituals. Participants will explore their own beliefs and customs with the aid of a guided imagery; learn age-appropriate language to use when discussing death, funerals, cremation and beliefs about the unknowables (i.e. the afterlife). There will also be an opportunity to learn interventions to utilize with children following that both aids in their understanding of death related concepts and helps them hold on to important memories of the funerary rituals.

#### Objectives:

1. Learn age appropriate language to use when talking to children about funerals, cremation and "what happens when someone dies"
2. Gain an understanding of one's individual preferences and beliefs about what happens when someone dies
3. Acquire intervention strategies to use with newly bereaved families

# Childhood Grief and Traumatic Loss

## Restoring Joy to Children and Families

### **3a. Childhood traumatic grief and later antisocial behaviors including violence**

*Michael Durfee, MD, Child Psychiatrist, Chief Consultant, ICAN NCFR  
Herman Perrault, MA, LMFT, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist; Grief Therapist*

A 16 year old was tried as an adult and sentenced to life for murder. Eight years earlier he reportedly saw his father beat his younger sister to death and no one helped him understand and grief the loss. Traumatic loss to death seems to correlate with later antisocial acts. Intervention can be powerful including visiting a grave, talking about the lost loved one and revisiting memorabilia. Even incarcerated individuals can revisit such loss to temper past trauma and potentially change present destructive behaviors. Parallels will be drawn to similar themes in "normal" people, e.g. the rest of us.

#### Objectives:

1. Define the evidence that traumatic childhood grief can increase later antisocial behavior
2. Define some intervention that may temper that loss
3. Define a potential use of this information in their professional or person life.

### **4a. Untold Stories: Stillbirth and Infant Mortality from the African American Perspective**

*Nicole Alston, President, Skye Foundation  
Sandra Guine, MSW, LCSW, Program Manager, Maternal Child and Adolescent Health Program,  
Department of Public Health*

This workshop is designed to create space for a much-needed healthy dialogue about the untold stories surrounding the death of a baby from the African American perspective. Mounting research shows that African Americans are 2 to 3 times as likely to experience poor birth outcomes. Yet, accessible, culturally appropriate bereavement support has not been commensurate with the numbers of African Americans who find their lives irrevocably changed by this tragic experience. The session will also explore how culture may complicate the grieving process for African Americans after a baby dies.

When African American families lose a child, there are few opportunities for them to discuss the feelings which impact loss. Programs which address drug, alcohol, and homelessness should also address grieving and loss of a child.

#### Objectives:

1. Identify factors that complicate grief for African Americans
2. Comment on impact of grief from the father's perspective
3. Describe culturally appropriate strategies to support African Americans after infant death

### **5a. Grief – Restoring Joy to Children and Their Families**

*Joan Cochran, LMFT, Executive Director, Founder, The Center for Grief and Loss for Children  
Shirley Erker, LCSW (30 years working with teens in jails for the Youth Authority)  
Arvis Jones, BA, MT, Assistant Director, Music Therapist, The Center for Grief and Loss for Children  
Amalia Sirolli, Ph.D, Specializing in therapeutic interventions with recent immigrants and their special needs.*

From the first hours to the first weeks after the tragic death of a loved one, the staff from The Center for Grief and Loss for Children works with children and teens to restore hope in their lives. Our staff combines education, experience and a varied cultural background to generate trust and a working model for children and teens residing in the poorer areas of our city/county.

#### Objectives:

1. Describe benefits of First Response Model and explain cultural differences in responding.
2. You will know how to implement a strategy for safety for family members after the tragedy.
3. Ongoing therapy models for the families, both group and individual will be discussed.

# Childhood Grief and Traumatic Loss

## Restoring Joy to Children and Families

### Workshop Session 2

1:30pm – 3:00pm

#### **1b. The Supervisors Role: How to Care for Your Staff When Clients or Colleagues Die**

*Michele Winterstein, Ph.D., Executive Director, For the Child*

*Tiffani Morton, MFT, Program Director, Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services, For the Child*

When clients or colleagues die, managers and supervisors are called upon (often without preparation) to teach, guide and support their staff in responding to death. How can supervisors help staff attend to the needs of clients and their own grief at the same time? Through the use of case examples, film clips and discussion, this workshop will assist the supervisors of social workers, child protection workers, in-home counselors, first responders, therapists, and case managers who encounter the death of clients or colleagues.

##### Objectives:

1. Learn to implement organizational practices that support staff in preparing for, and responding to, death encountered as part of job duties
2. Identify boundary issues inherent in playing different roles (those of helping professional and mourner) and will learn strategies for resolving inherent conflicts
3. Learn the indicators of Compassion Fatigue and how to differentiate it from the normal process of grieving

#### **2b. First Scene Responders: The Need for Line Support**

*Linda Boyd, MN, Consultant for professionals in multiple agencies, LA County Department of Mental Health*

*Michael Durfee, M.D., Child Psychiatrist, Chief Consultant, ICAN National Center on Child Fatality Review*

*Paula Gamboa, BS, Supervising Children's Social Worker, Emergency Response Command Post DCFS*

*Bonita Wirth, Ph.D., Occupational Psychologist, Los Angeles City, Department of Personnel Medical Services Division.*

Support for line staff comes from peers, supervisors, friends and family. Some agencies add separate crises consultants. This workshop will discuss old, new and proposed programs. Audience input will include a focus on what helps and what hurts. Initial professional contacts at crises are called First Scene Responders, who are traditionally police investigators and fire EMT. Cases involving children and death may add child protective services, coroner investigators, health, mental health and schools. This workshop should increase support for line staff and improve services for people they serve.

##### Objectives:

1. Describe types of stress on professionals who work with violence
2. List three factors that increase stress on line staff
3. List three factors that may decrease line support
4. Describe a program that may support line staff in your profession

# Childhood Grief and Traumatic Loss

## Restoring Joy to Children and Families

### **3b. Domestic Violence: Grief and Loss and How it Affects the Lives of Children**

*Janisa Spears, MA, MFT, President & CEO, Seeking Peaceful Solutions, Inc.*

Janisa Spears, M.A./M.F.T. is prepared to speak on Domestic Violence and how it affects the lives of children. Children are the victims/survivors of domestic/family violence and must cope daily with the loss and/or separation from the abusive loved one, or worse yet, the death/loss of one parent at the hands of the other. The abusive caregiver and/or the caregiver that died may also have represented financial/emotional stability for the family and is now gone from the home.

#### Objectives:

1. How to help the child stop blaming themselves for the loss/separation
2. Assisting children in developing healthy coping mechanisms for the loss/separated loved one
3. Addressing the dynamics of Anger, Denial and Depression that children may experience

### **4b. Helping Children Move Beyond a Terminal Diagnosis**

*Traci Aoki-Tan, CCLS, RTC, CTRS, Child Life Specialist, Kaiser Permanente, Sacramento*  
*Cammie Woodward, MA, CCLS, Child Life Specialist, Kaiser Permanente, Sacramento*

Prior to preparing a child for a terminal diagnosis, the support and trust of their parent/guardian is vital. When a death is expected, families are able to prepare their children in advance, giving them the opportunity to cherish each moment. In order for a child to have the opportunity to grieve, it is essential to discuss the reality of death with them in an age-appropriate manner. Unfortunately, when working with these children, time is of the essence. It may take a lot of time for the family to come to accept the prognosis, shortening the amount of time you have to work with them. It is extremely important to start the preparation process before the child is too sick to participate.

#### Objectives:

1. Gain a general understanding of a child's cycle of grief
2. Recognize the importance of preparing children for the dying process
3. Learn to facilitate three age-appropriate memory making activities
4. Obtain a basic repertoire of resources to educate children and families on the topics of death, dying, and bereavement

### **5b. Universal Needs of Bereaved Children and Teens**

*Linda Garcia, MA, CCLS, Manager, Child Development Services, Childrens Hospital Los Angeles*  
*Maria Tomé, BA, CCLS, Child Life Specialist, Childrens Hospital Los Angeles*

The experience of death and dying for everyone creates intense grief, confusion, and sadness. Children and teens become more vulnerable if they are not supported when experiencing the loss of a loved one. When children mourn a loss they also mourn the loss of self, security, and meaning. The greatest challenge comes to those who are responsible for helping and explaining death to children and teens. The lack of knowledge, one's own personal history of losses, cultural influences, and societal expectations are factors that inhibit an adult's ability to support children and teens. This presentation will provide a universal framework in understanding developmental stages of death, talking to children and teens about death, cultural considerations, and provide resources to help children and teens.

#### Objectives:

1. Understand grieving process for children and teens
2. Understand children's developmental stages and reactions to loss
3. Be able to provide age-appropriate explanations
4. Become aware of cultural differences and rituals

# Childhood Grief and Traumatic Loss

## Restoring Joy to Children and Families

### Workshop Session 3

3:15pm – 4:45pm

#### **1c. Using Drawings in Working with Children and Adults**

*Lynne Ann DeSpelder, MA, FT, Professor of Psychology, Cabrillo College*  
*Ronald Keith Barrett, PhD, FT, Professor of Psychology, Loyola Marymount University*

Would you like to develop and expand your resources for working with individuals and groups? Laying aside projective analyses, this workshop guides participants in exploring the use of drawings to enhance communication with children and adults in educational or therapeutic situations. Replacing analysis with curiosity, you will learn how to use drawings to facilitate your understanding of you own and another's thoughts, feelings, and concepts in death-related situations. Investigate the impact of important factors in death experiences including culture through the use of drawings. Participants will prepare at least one drawing and practice using it to communicate, if they choose, with others in the workshop. This experiential learning will be enhanced by viewing drawings obtained in various circumstances by the presenters.

#### Objectives:

1. Identify the situations whereby drawings enhance understanding and communication
2. Describe the techniques for extracting information communicated via a drawing
3. Develop skills in the use of drawings in therapeutic and educational settings

#### **2c. Palliative Care and Hospice**

*Mario Milch, MD, Medical Director, Kaiser Permanente Los Angeles/West Los Angeles*  
*Helene Morgan, MSW, Trinity Kids Care Hospice*

Palliation is a philosophy of medical care that entails physical, social, emotional and spiritual support for patients and families with terminal or advanced, incurable disease. Palliation is most often carried out as part of a formal hospice program, most often for adults, but equally applicable to children and young adults with a terminal condition. Hospice provides this support by using an interdisciplinary team consisting of nurse, social worker, chaplain, and physician, often supplemented by aides and therapists. Pain and symptom control is a pivotal intervention. In this workshop, we will explore these aspects in an interactive fashion, providing attendees with practical tools to use when providing grief support to children in the home or other non-office setting.

#### Objectives:

1. Define Palliative Care
2. Explain how hospice care can help children and family cope with impending death
3. Teach how pain and symptom control are essential for a "good death"
4. Identify practical tools to support children in their grief in a setting other than an office.

# Childhood Grief and Traumatic Loss

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### **3c. Working with Children/Youth/Teens Impacted by Violence, Homicide, Loss and Trauma**

*Herman Perrault, MA, LMFT, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist; Grief Therapist*

*Joey Ray, Homeboy*

*Troy Campbell, Troyboy International*

This completes our three presentations on violence. This presentation will provide an overview of children, youth, and teens responding to grief and loss and how they cope with the death and loss of a loved one. It will cover identifying trouble signs and learning how to evaluate when grief issues are no longer a problem. Addressed also will be what the adults in their lives can do to help them get to a resolution. The theme of interpersonal has become a central issue for this conference.

#### Objectives:

1. Increase understanding of early indicators of violence following grief
2. Increase understanding of the developmental stages in young people and their response to loss
3. Better understanding of how homicide and other violent loss impacts grief and loss
4. Better understanding of identifying trouble signs and in identifying indicators of when the grief issues are resolved
5. Understand the role you may play with intervention and prevention.

### **4c. Building Resilience and Post-Traumatic Growth Among At-Risk Youth**

*Donna Schuurman, Ed.D., FT, Executive Director, The Dougy Center for Grieving Children & Families*

This workshop will explore the resiliency literature and research, and its applicability to the child/teen “at-risk” population. Additionally, it will discuss the factors inherent in “post-traumatic growth” for youth whose backgrounds include traumatic experiences.

#### Objectives:

1. Understand what “trauma” is, and what it is not
2. Know the symptoms of traumatization among children and youth
3. Learn and apply resiliency research findings to the clinical setting
4. Define and describe post-traumatic growth and its application to at-risk youth

### **5c. Pediatric Organ Donation: A Family’s Journey**

*Jamie Yetter, BA, CFSC, Certified Family Service Coordinator, Arkansas Regional Organ Recovery Agency*

The potential for organ donation is a rare opportunity, even more so within the pediatric setting. In the midst of making end-of-life decisions, including the potential for organ donation, the support offered and provided by the hospital and the Organ Procurement Organization (OPO) is crucial to the grief and healing journey of parents and siblings.

#### Objectives:

1. Provide a basic overview for the creation of an environment where donation can be considered
2. Provide a perspective on the factors contributing to parent’s decision about organ donation
3. Provide information on how the hospital and the OPO support families before, during and after the donation process

# Childhood Grief and Traumatic Loss

Restoring Joy to Children and Families

## Fifth Annual Grief 2009 Conference Sponsor Form

To become a Conference Sponsor, please print and complete this form and mail/fax to the address listed below. The deadline is **Friday, February 20, 2009**

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