

When It Rains, It Pours! Trauma and Loss on the Job

Grief and loss is a central underpinning in the work of child welfare. This issue affects our children, youth and families in both subtle and tremendous ways throughout the continuum of removal to placement. As child welfare professionals, we are witnesses to our families' trauma and often observe their process of moving through the stages of grief and doing the emotional work that this entails.

Casework, though rewarding, is emotionally draining and even with the best self-care, research indicates that we are at risk for secondary post-traumatic stress disorder as well as compassion fatigue. With the uncertainty of economic times and the downsizing of many county offices, child welfare professionals are experiencing loss on a much more personal level.

This didactic training will address the stages of grief and loss as it pertains to caseworkers. We will explore grief and loss in the work environment, compassion fatigue, secondary post-traumatic stress disorder and effective strategies to maneuver through these complicated issues, using experiential learning activities, lecture, and video.

Learning Objectives

The participant will be able to:

Recognize the stages of grief and loss

Explore the physical and emotional symptoms related to grief and loss

Develop strategies to combat compassion fatigue and secondary trauma

Explore cultural issues related to the reconciliation of grief and loss issues