



## Learning Objectives

### GENERAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Describe many ways loss, defined both psychologically and theologically, correlates with quantifiable mental health outcomes across generational cohorts and multicultural populations
2. Learn evidence-informed principles for detection and intervention, emphasizing resiliency in bereavement, relationship loss, socio-political adversity, and miscarriage—all expressions of loss.
3. Apply intervention strategies to professional mental health service, pastoral/religious counseling, and lay helping to improve networks of care and a culture of mutual assistance.

### PLENARY

#### **Knocking Down a House of Cards: C. S. Lewis and the Phenomenology of Loss and Recovery**

*Philip Irving Mitchell, Ph.D., Director of University Honors Program, C.S. Lewis Scholar, Dallas Baptist University*

C. S. Lewis's series of journal entries, published as *A Grief Observed*, is an account of suffering gradually becoming a narrative of understanding. Lewis records a phenomenology of grief that includes bodily impact, self-doubling, consciousness of deception, and a destabilizing picture of God. In writing this down, Lewis moves through a breaking apart of his trusted worldview to a new narrative that affirms a reality transcending his past constructs.

Learning objectives:

1. Identify elements of a phenomenology of grief and how these destabilize meaning systems.
2. Model how a system of belief's internal resources may be used to construct new personal narratives.

For Beginner to Intermediate Audience

### BREAKOUT SESSIONS

#### **Breakout 1 | To be a Witness: Supporting those who are Grieving**

*Alyssa Strenger, Psy.D. Licensed Psychologist, Founder and Owner of The Mendery*

This talk will explore the science and art of being with those you love and care for as they grieve. In grief, as in life, most people do not remember the specific words you say but they do remember what it is like to be with you. Our own emotional noise makes this more complicated than it needs to be, leaving those who are suffering feeling misunderstood and alone. We will explore new ways of understanding grief as a shared experience in humanity to be witnessed and embraced.

Learning objectives:

1. Identify misconceptions about grief and how best to support people who have lost loved ones.
2. Identify one's own biases and beliefs about grief, empathy, and being with those who are suffering.
3. Identify practical ways to be with those who are grieving.

For Intermediate Audience

#### **Breakout 2 | Gen Z and Relational Ruptures: Conflict, Loss and the Importance of Meaningful Relationship**

*Angela Patterson, Ph.D., Media Psychologist and Head Writer/Editor, Springtide Research Institute*

Today's young people are coming of age in a time an increasingly divisive and hardened political climate. Springtide Research Institute's latest work on young people and politics shows they often enter into political conversation with hesitancy, as they fear disagreement and conflict could sever relationships. This session will take a deeper look at young people and how fear of relational loss colors their interactions, what that means for society, and how adults can be a part of the meaningful relationships they often crave.



Learning objectives:

1. Recognize the patterns of mental and emotional reasoning young people exhibit with regard to emotionally charged interactions
2. Identify how these patterns at the individual level have larger implications for interactions at the group and system levels
3. Outline the ways adults can support young people in navigating these interactions while preserving meaningful relationship

For Intermediate Audience

### **Breakout 3 | Holding Space for Healing: Understanding and Coping with Perinatal Loss**

*Katie Sardone, Ph.D., Licensed Psychologist, Founder and Owner of Behavioral Health Dallas*

*Sarah Hosseini, Psy.D., Licensed Psychologist, Behavioral Health Dallas*

Experiencing the loss of a pregnancy or infant can result in significant pain and distress. Grief can manifest in various ways based on the individual and the type of loss. It is important to consider during which stage the perinatal loss occurred when understanding one's unique experience of grief. This presentation will include case examples to depict these differences as well as discuss evidence-based ways to provide treatment and support to those grieving perinatal loss.

Learning objectives:

1. Identify the psychological, social and functional impact of perinatal loss on parents and families.
2. Describe evidence-based interventions for addressing grief and trauma associated with perinatal loss
3. Discuss case examples to enhance understanding and confidence in working with perinatal loss

For Intermediate Audience

### **KEYNOTE**

#### **Trauma and the Resilience Paradox**

*George A. Bonanno, Ph.D., Professor of Clinical Psychology, Department of Counseling and Clinical Psychology, Teachers College, Columbia University*

Decades of research has shown that response to potentially traumatic events produce various prototypical trajectories of outcome, the most common being a stable trajectory of healthy functioning, or resilience. Paradoxically, correlates of these patterns show uniformly small effects, i.e., they say little about who will actually be resilient and who not. Logical explanations for this paradox include the fact that the challenges presented by highly aversive situations are variable and that virtually all traits and behaviors have both costs and benefits. Thus, what works in one situation may not work as well, or may even be harmful, in another. How can people solve this paradox and find their way to resilience? The most likely answer, I argue, is the process of flexible self-regulation. I elaborate on this process in some detail and conclude the talk by reviewing recent studies and possible means of building regulatory flexibility.

Learning objectives:

This talk is designed to help you:

1. Distinguish prototypical patterns trauma reactions.
2. Apply knowledge of divergent response patterns to clinical practice and/or mental health settings
3. Gain knowledge about flexibility as the underlying process involved in resilient outcomes.

For Intermediate Audience