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is a seasoned psychotherapist with more than 30 years' experience working with individuals, couples and groups. Sussillo is Coeditor Emeritus of Psychoanalytic Perspectives. She is consultant, MIP, Trauma Studies Program. Sussillo is supervisor, City College, Psychology Center.

Sussillo formerly held positions as Manager, EAP, International Paper; Senior Associate, Harris Rothenberg International EAP consulting to Wall Street financial and law firms, and Senior Clinician, Payne Whitney Psychiatric Clinic, New York Hospital. Mary has a bereavement specialty in Private Practice and has authored "Beyond the Grave—Adolescent Parental Loss: 'Letting Go' and 'Holding On'". She has also conducted bereavement workshops for professional groups internationally, including for Ukrainian psychology students and professionals.

Artwork: Twilight Oak III by Dennis Rhoades
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NEW UNDERSTANDINGS OF MOURNING

Each individual's unique experience of grief needs to be respected, rather than expected to follow prescribed stages of mourning.

While mourning is a very private experience, it does not occur in a social vacuum. The bereaved needs the witness and engagement of others.

Mourning is an active process. The bereaved need to find meaning in their loss and understand its' impact on their lives.

The mourner balances the complicated tasks of "letting go" (gradual acceptance of the loss) and "holding on" (sustaining a sense of connection) to the lost loved one.

Periods of grief, while profoundly painful, often provide an unbidden window to examine personal needs and to grow in unforeseen ways.

Mourning often involves a lifelong process, rather than a time-limited period with a definite "closure" endpoint.



"Death ends a life, not a relationship."

—Robert Anderson, playwright



SUPPORT DURING MOURNING

Bereavement research highlights that social support is a significant variable in healthy mourning. The presence of family and friends is crucial to the healing process.

WHEN IS MORE HELP NEEDED?

If you find yourself:

- Depressed and guilt ridden
- Overly anxious about the future
- Socially withdrawn and isolated
- Having difficulty eating/sleeping
- Feeling ongoing numbness and agitation
- Increasing the use of alcohol/other drugs
- Experiencing chronic anger/bitterness
- Unable to regain a sense of meaning in your life

You may have experienced family/friends no longer able to listen to the pain of your grief.

Perhaps you are coping fairly well yet may also find a grief counselor and a group of peers to be a powerful anchor at this often destabilizing time.

TYPES OF LOSSES ADDRESSED

Death of: Partner, parent, grandparent, child, sibling, friend, coworker, classmate, student, mentor, and other significant individuals.

Delayed Grief: Mourning is hindered by a lack of empathy from others and an absence of a sense of safety to feel deeply.

Traumatic Grief: Accidents, murder, suicide, or other sudden deaths, natural disasters and terrorists attacks. Also, any death that is experienced as devastating. (See website for "Complicated Grief.")

Hidden Losses: Miscarriage, infertility, adoption, failed adoption.

Anticipatory Grief: Protracted illness (Cancer, Alzheimer's Disease and others), old age.



*"Give sorrow words;
the grief that does not speak whispers
the oe'r fraught heart and bids it break."*

—Shakespeare, Macbeth



SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS

Individual grief counseling and therapy—short and longer term.

Group grief counseling—8 to 12 weeks with option to continue.

Group for adults with Early Parental Loss (prenatal to age 20)—open-ended.

FOR PROFESSIONALS

Grief Workshops for:

- Schools
- Employee Assistance Programs and H.R. Departments
- Clergy
- Funeral Homes
- Palliative Care and Hospice Programs
- Other Caregiver Organizations

Consultation

Crisis Intervention and Debriefing Supervision

Workplace Grief Policy and Procedures

CONTACT THE CENTER

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Note: Fees located on website