

Hospice Foundation of America's Program

UNDERSTANDING AMBIGUOUS LOSS

Self-Study ONLINE Course

DESCRIPTION

Dr. Pauline Boss, who coined the term *ambiguous loss*, will discuss its two types, research updates, and whether there is some ambiguity even in the finality of death. She explains why traditional grief therapy does not work with ambiguous losses and offers ways of thinking both/and, which helps people manage the stress of “not knowing.” Instead of closure and acceptance, the therapeutic goal with ambiguous loss is to build enough resilience to live with the stress of this unique and ubiquitous kind of loss. Six guidelines are offered to assist therapists and counselors in this work.

PROGRAM DETAILS

Hospice Foundation of America has taken its popular webinar program and created a self-study course for professionals. The online presentation features an experienced professional offering his own expertise on the topic. On the screen, you will see the slide presentation and will be able to see and hear the expert presenter.

- RELEASE DATE:** Program originally premiered December 13, 2022
ON DEMAND: Viewing available to registered individuals for 6 months after purchase.
LENGTH: 90 minutes
CE HOURS: 1.5 hours
CONTENT LEVEL: The program is mainly for professionals already working in the field, but is practical for all levels of education – entry level, intermediate or advanced.
TARGET AUDIENCE: The course is useful to Health care clinicians, social service clinicians and others working in the hospice, palliative care, counseling, hospital, nursing home, funeral home or faith community environments

HOW THE ONLINE SELF-STUDY PROGRAM WORKS

Step 1 - Register/purchase the course

Step 2 - View the course online through the link in your confirmation email or in your account.

Step 3 - Follow the instructions provided to receive your CE certificate*.

*An evaluation and a short exam are a part of this process.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

A computer and reliable internet connection. Mobile service provider charges may apply.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION/FEEES

Register directly online, on HFA's website: www.hospicefoundation.org.

There are no refunds on registration. *Few exceptions may occur depending on the circumstance. To request a refund, a written request must be received (and granted) by HFA.

REGISTRATION POLICY

INDIVIDUAL REGISTRATION

Provides one person, the registrant, access to the self-study course for personal viewing and continuing education. Discounts may be available for multiple viewers. Please check HFA's website at www.hospicefoundation.org for current pricing.

MATERIALS AREA

Course materials (Video, Program Slides, and Viewer Guide) are accessible to all registered individuals online immediately after registering. Download materials are available on HFA's website at <https://hospicefoundation.org/Shop-HFA/My-Account>, under "Orders/Courses."

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

AT THE CONCLUSION OF THIS PROGRAM, PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ABLE TO:

1. Define ambiguous loss, describe its effects, and how it relates to hospice and end-of-life work.
2. Demonstrate a tool for increasing tolerance for ambiguity of absence and presence as end of life nears.
3. Apply six guidelines for your end-of-life work.
4. Transform your tolerance for ambiguity as self-care with end-of-life work.

PROGRAM OUTLINE

Definition and Effects

- I. Ambiguous loss: definition, two types, what ambiguous loss is not, link to disenfranchised grief (10 minutes)
- II. Effects of ambiguous loss, including frozen grief, prolonged grief (5 minutes)
- III. The myth of closure: What does ambiguous loss teach us about closure, cultural beliefs about closure after death, update on loss and grief research (5 minutes)

Treatment and Intervention

- IV. Assessment: rules, roles, and rituals (5 minutes)
- V. Resilience: definitions, update, cautions about, increasing tolerance for ambiguity with both/and thinking (10 minutes)
- VI. Six guidelines for living with ambiguous loss (10 minutes)
- VII. Self-Care (5 minutes)
- VIII. Moderated Question and Answer Session (40 minutes)

CONTINUING EDUCATION

This program is valid for 1.5 contact hours of continuing education. View the current list of board approvals on HFA's website at www.hospicefoundation.org, located on the program's registration page.

COURSE COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS:

Participants must view the entire 90-minute program (online-streaming video). Partial credit is not awarded. Participants must also complete the entire CE process online before a certificate is awarded. The online CE process includes a required evaluation form and exam. The exam must be completed at 80% or above (the exam may be re-taken, if necessary).

EXPERT SPEAKERS

Pauline Boss, PhD, Professor Emeritus at the University of Minnesota is a Fellow in the American Psychological Association and the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, and a former president of the National Council on Family Relations. She practiced family therapy for over 40 years. With her groundbreaking work in research and practice, Dr. Boss coined the term *ambiguous loss* in the 1970s and since then, developed and tested the theory of ambiguous loss, a guide for working with families of the missing, physically or psychologically. She summarized this research and clinical work in her widely acclaimed book *Ambiguous Loss: Learning to Live with Unresolved Grief* (Harvard University Press, 2000). In addition to over 100 peer reviewed academic articles and chapters, her other books include *Loss, Trauma, and Resilience: Therapeutic Work with Ambiguous Loss* (W. W. Norton, 2006) and *Loving Someone Who Has Dementia: How to Find Hope While Coping with Stress and Grief* (Jossey-Bass, 2011). Her most recent book is *The Myth of Closure: Ambiguous Loss in a Time of Pandemic and Change* (W. W. Norton, 2022). Her work is known around the world wherever ambiguous losses occur, and thus her books are now available in 18 different languages. For more information about Dr. Boss, her writings, and the ambiguous loss online training program, see www.ambiguousloss.com.

Kenneth J. Doka, PhD, MDiv, is Senior Vice President, Grief Programs at Hospice Foundation of America (HFA) and the recipient of the 2019 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association of Death Education and Counseling (ADEC). A prolific author and editor, Dr. Doka serves as editor of HFA's *Living with Grief*[®] book series, its *Journeys* newsletter, and numerous other books and publications. He has been a panelist on HFA's *Living with Grief*[®] program for 28 years. Dr. Doka is a past president of ADEC, a former board member of the International Work Group on Death, Dying and Bereavement, and an Advisory Board member to the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS). He is the recipient of The International Work Group on Death, Dying, and Bereavement's prestigious Herman Feifel Award and ADEC's Award for Outstanding Contributions in the Field of Death Education. In 2006, he was grandfathered in as a Mental Health Counselor under New York's first state licensure of counselors. Dr. Doka is an ordained Lutheran minister.

REVIEWER

Angela Novas, MSN, RN, CRNP, *Senior Medical Officer*, Hospice Foundation of America

BIBLIOGRAPHY/REFERENCES:

Knight, C., & Gitterman, A. (2019). Ambiguous Loss and Its Disenfranchisement: The Need for Social Work Intervention. *Families in Society*, 100(2), 164–173. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1044389418799937>

Abigail Nathanson, Madeline Rogers, When Ambiguous Loss Becomes Ambiguous Grief: Clinical Work with Bereaved Dementia Caregivers, *Health & Social Work*, Volume 45, Issue 4, November 2020, Pages 268–275, <https://doi.org/10.1093/hsw/hlaa026>

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NHPCO (National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization), Facts & Figures, 2022; <https://www.nhpc.org/hospice-facts-figures/>

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SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITY (ADA)

Reasonable accommodation may be made available, on an individual basis. To request accommodation, please contact HFA via email at educate@hospicefoundation.org or call 800-854-3402, or write to HFA, 1707 L Street NW, Suite 220, Washington, DC 20036.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Planners (Panelists and Reviewers) disclose no conflict of interest relative to this educational activity.

**FOR QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, OR ADDRESSING GRIEVANCES
PLEASE CONTACT**

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