

## AUTISM & GRIEF



### DESCRIPTION:

A 90-minute continuing education program designed to empower social workers, nurses, paraprofessionals, speech therapists, occupational therapists, and other caring professionals in their service to adults with autism experiencing grief and loss. Expert panelists will examine the disenfranchisement that can occur for grieving people with autism and discuss ways to enfranchise them during their grief journey. The program will also address grief after non-death losses, anticipatory mourning, and how adults with autism may best be supported.

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### PROGRAM DETAILS:

This recorded presentation features experienced professionals offering their own expertise on the topic. On the screen, you will see the slide presentation and will be able to see and listen to the experts. Videos will also be used to enhance the presentation.

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|-------------------------|--|
| <b>LENGTH:</b>          | 90 minutes   |
| <b>CEs:</b>             | 1.5 hours for a wide variety of professional boards*<br>*CE approvals expire 5/31/25, but may be renewed   |
| <b>FEES:</b>            | Complimentary program viewing and CEs  |
| <b>CONTENT LEVEL:</b>   | The program is mainly for professionals already working in the field but is practical for all levels of education – entry level, intermediate or advanced.                             |
| <b>TARGET AUDIENCE:</b> | Health care clinicians, social service clinicians and others working in the hospice, palliative care, counseling, hospital, nursing home, funeral home or faith community environments |

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### TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

To view this online program, you will need a computer and screen, reliable internet access, and speakers. If you are showing to a large group, you will need a way to project on a large screen and a sound amplification system.

Install Zoom on the computer you will be using to view the program. It will only take a few minutes to sign up. If you already have Zoom, please check for updates.

Click here to download: <https://zoom.us/support/download>.

Please test your system ahead of time to ensure you have the capabilities to view and hear the program. TEST LINK for Audio and Video: <https://zoom.us/test>

**Technical Questions?** Please go to <https://zoom.us/> and click “support”

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### PROGRAM ACCESS / MATERIALS:

View the program and access course materials from HFA’s website at:  
<https://hospicefoundation.org/Education/Autism-and-Grief-All-Professionals-Program>.

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## LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

At the conclusion of this webinar, participants will be able to:

- Describe the autism spectrum and the highly individual nature of both autism and grief.
  - Discuss the many ways that an adult with autism may react – or not -- to loss.
  - Define Doka's theory of disenfranchised grief and indicate how disenfranchisement can complicate the grieving process, particularly for adults with autism.
  - Identify three ways to enfranchise adults with autism in the grieving process.
  - Discuss the ways that persons with ASD may experience their own life-threatening illness or that of a loved one.
  - Identify several support techniques when addressing serious illness and loss, taking into consideration effective communication and other person-centered techniques.
  - Discuss strategies for partnering with clergy and others who may be involved in grief supports.
  - Identify three ways in which, in the context of your work or your community, you can help support autistic individuals and their families in their ongoing grief beyond the immediate period of the funeral and burial.
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## PROGRAM OUTLINE:

1. Introduction to Autism (15mins)
    - a. Diagnosis – spectrum aspect
    - b. Language – person first vs. identity first
    - c. Support needs
  2. Grief Reactions (30mins)
    - a. What grief may look like for autistics
    - b. Types of losses
    - c. Disenfranchisement – reasons and ways to avoid it
    - d. Ways to support autistic grief
  3. Serious Illness (10 mins)
    - a. Autism and hospice care
    - b. Tips for hospice professionals
  4. Rituals (20 mins)
    - a. Types of rituals following a death
    - b. Challenges for autistic grievers
    - c. Ways to support and prepare
  5. Ongoing Support (15 mins)
    - a. What works well
    - b. Maintaining support throughout the grief journey
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## CONTINUING EDUCATION (CE) CREDITS:

This program is valid for 1.5 continuing education contact hours. CE hours are available until September 14, 2025.

A complete list of board approvals for this webinar program is posted to HFA's website at <https://hospicefoundation.org/Education/Autism-and-Grief-All-Professionals-Program>.

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## COURSE COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS:

Participants must attend the entire 1.5 hour program. Partial credit is not awarded. Participants must also complete the entire CE process online, before the CE deadline (see above for specific

CE deadlines). In order to go online, attendees will need to enter in a Course Code, which is only provided at the end of the program. 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). Attendees will be able to choose the board they wish to receive credit from (from Hospice Foundation of America's list of board approvals\*) and will then be able to print their CE certificate immediately after completing all CE requirements online (on HFA's CE site at [educate.hospicefoundation.org](http://educate.hospicefoundation.org)).

\*A complete list of board approvals for this webinar program is posted to HFA's website at <https://hospicefoundation.org/Education/Autism-and-Grief-All-Professionals-Program>.

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### EXPERT PANELISTS:

**Lisa (Elizabeth) R. Morgan, MEd, CAS-A**, certified autism specialist and advocate of the autism community with regards to crisis supports, suicide prevention, and postvention. A co-chair of the Autism and Suicide committee of the American Association of Suicidology and author of 'Crisis Supports for the Autism Community—a toolkit. A subject matter expert as an autistic adult with valuable lived experience in the field of suicidology: as a suicide loss survivor, co-researcher, teacher/trainer, and speaker.

**Lara Palay, LISW-S**, is a licensed social worker and clinical supervisor. She teaches clinical social work at The Ohio State University College of Social Work. Ms. Palay served as the first Project Manager for the Mental Illness/Developmental Disabilities Coordinating Center of Excellence for the Ohio Department of Mental Health and the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities. Presented [Supporting Individuals with Autism in Grief and Loss \(aaidd.org\)](http://aaidd.org)

**Kenneth J. Doka, PhD, MDiv**, is Senior Vice President, Grief Programs at HFA and recipient of the 2019 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association for Death Education and Counseling. He serves as editor of HFA's *Living with Grief*<sup>®</sup> book series and its *Journeys* bereavement newsletter. He is a prolific author, editor, and lecturer; past president of the Association for Death Education and Counseling (ADEC); and a member and past chair of the International Work Group on Death, Dying, and Bereavement (IWG). In 2018, the IWG presented Doka with the Herman Feifel Award for outstanding achievement in thanatology. He received an award for Outstanding Contributions in the Field of Death Education from ADEC in 1998. Doka is an ordained Lutheran minister and a licensed mental health counselor in the state of New York.

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### BIBLIOGRAPHY/REFERENCES:

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Volume 23, Issue 7, October 2019, Pages 1782-1792  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361319829628>

'People should be allowed to do what they like': Autistic adults' views and experiences of stimming'  
Steven K Kapp<sup>1</sup> Robyn Steward<sup>2</sup> Laura Crane <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4161-3492> Daisy

Elliott1 Chris Elphick1 Elizabeth Pellicano<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7246-8003>,3 Ginny Russell1

Ahlers K, Gabrielsen T, Lewis D, Brady A, Litchford A. Supporting individuals with autism spectrum disorder in understanding and coping with complex social emotional issues. *School Psychology International*, (2017), 586-607, 38(6).

Dietz, P.M., Rose, C.E., McArthur, D. *et al.* National and State Estimates of Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *J Autism Dev Disord* **50**, 4258–4266 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-020-04494-4>

“I wouldn’t know where to start”: Perspectives from clinicians, agency leaders, and autistic adults on improving community mental health services for autistic adults. *Volume: 24 issue: 4*, page(s): 919-930. Article first published online: November 1, 2019; Issue published: May 1, 2020

[Brenna B Maddox](#)<sup>1, 2</sup>, [Samantha Crabbe](#)<sup>1</sup>, [Rinad S Beidas](#)<sup>1, 2</sup>, [Lauren Brookman Frazee](#)<sup>3, 4, 5</sup>, [Carolyn C Cannuscio](#)<sup>1</sup>, [Judith S Miller](#)<sup>1, 6</sup>, [Christina Nicolaidis](#)<sup>7, 8</sup>, [David S Mandell](#)<sup>1</sup>

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**CE certificates for this program may only be obtained through HFA.** CE instructions will be provided at the end of the program.

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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](mailto:educate@hospicefoundation.org) or call 800-854-3402, or write to HFA, 1707 L Street NW, Suite 220, Washington, DC 20036.

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#### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST:**

Planners (Panelists and Review Committee Members) disclose no conflict of interest relative to this educational activity. None of the planners or presenters for this educational activity have relevant financial relationships to disclose with ineligible companies.

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#### **FOR QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, OR ADDRESSING GRIEVANCES**

**Please contact Hospice Foundation of America (HFA)**

Hospice Foundation of America

1707 L Street NW, Suite 220, Washington, DC 20036

[educate@hospicefoundation.org](mailto:educate@hospicefoundation.org)

1-800-854-3402 toll-free / (202) 457-5811 phone / (202) 457-5815 fax

