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Association for Death Education and Counseling®
The Thanatology Association®

Connects

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President's Message December 2018

Louis A. Gamino, PhD, ABPP, FT



When my daughter, Claire, was in high school, she benefited from having a very creative choir director who developed a top-notch ensemble to perform at public functions and represent her school in a high profile manner. They even sang at the December Dickens Festival in Galveston, Texas complete with Elizabethan period costumes. Sadly, when that dynamic director retired, the show choir disbanded and the music program has not reached those impressive heights since then.

When the holidays roll around, I think back fondly to the great privilege it was to see and hear my daughter perform in that outstanding show choir. At the time, I did not fully appreciate how much their achievements reflected the artistic vision and special talents of that particular director. It turns out his productions were more ephemeral—a moment in time. When the key personality left the scene, the lights went out.

The end-of-year holiday season also brings to mind key persons who are no longer here but who have played an important part in my life. As William Shakespeare said so eloquently in *As You Like It*, “All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players; they have their exits and entrances...” Like you, I cherish loved ones who have pre-deceased me and count myself fortunate to have benefited from their unique contributions in my lifetime. Working in the field of thanatology keeps me constantly aware of the existential brevity of life.

Likewise, each one of us also performs on the world’s stage but, in the greater scheme of things, has a relatively minor role. Ephemeral though we may be, we nonetheless have a chance to shine brilliantly during our time on this “mortal coil.” The transitory nature of our lives is not an excuse to do nothing but rather a compelling call to be all that we can be during the short span of our existence. Those persons who love and care about us are counting on it.

As an association, ADEC is like an organic being. Its life force consists entirely of the energy exuded by a passionate membership devoted to supporting each other in our professional endeavors of helping and educating those with whom we work. ADEC’s founders lit a torch that we second and third generation members strive to keep burning brightly. We want the movement to keep going, not flame out as ADEC’s pioneers entrust the association’s legacy to us.

A great example of such effort occurred recently when several members stepped up and ensured that two different bequests made to ADEC by (now deceased) founding members Edie Stark and Shirley Scott were sufficiently funded to create an endowed scholarship in their names. Based on input from Edie’s daughter, Cindy, this new scholarship will be designated to help a deserving early career female professional attend our annual conference, starting with Atlanta in 2019. More on that later.

As your President this year, I have been extremely impressed by how “many hands make light the load.” There are indeed so many of you working diligently on behalf of our beloved association that I want each of you to know how grateful I am for you and how you support ADEC. Witnessing this kind of momentum tells me that ADEC’s time in the sun will not be just an ephemeral flash-in-the-pan but rather something more sustained and substantive. In a world constantly stung by regrettable violence, natural catastrophes, and personal disasters, that presence is really needed. I salute you for being part of this noble cause.

ADEC's January Webinar



W • E • B • I • N • A • R

Helping Clients Find Meaning Through Personal Rituals & Memorials

Presented by: Sandra Howlett, Ed.D.

Wednesday, January 16

12 to 1:30 pm CDT

Grieving is never easy, and in spite of pressure from friends and family over time to "get over it," grief has no absolute finish line. Although there are many things that can slow or even halt the grieving process, other actions can help people move more smoothly through the many feelings associated with a loss. A ritual by definition denotes a transition, a passage from one state to another. For centuries, human cultures have recognized the power of ritual to help recognize and release the pain of losing loved ones. Today we see many of those once commonplace rituals as outdated enough to actually be uncomfortable. However the purpose behind them still has value.

As grief counselors, helping our clients develop their own personally meaningful rituals and memorials can encourage them to move through their grief journeys with engagement and healing. This webinar offers a contemporary perspective on rituals with abundant examples that show the bereaved how to develop their own personalized actions to empower them during this difficult time in their lives..

[Register Now](#)

Student Profile

So that the ADEC community can get to know its students, Connects will continue to feature stories on ADEC students as well as scholarship recipients.

Ashley C. Overman-Goldsmith, MA, LPC, NCC

Ashley is a doctoral student at North Carolina State University and the director of Sea Change Therapy, PLLC. Ashley received professional training in counseling and psychotherapy through Regent University earning a Master of Arts (MA) in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. Ashley first became interested in Thanatology while working for a private hospice in Virginia. During that time, she worked as a bereavement coordinator and was solely responsible for developing a program where she counseled patients struggling with end-of-life concerns. Ashley's direct work with patients and active participation in the interdisciplinary team inspired her to further her education and specialize in end-of-life counseling and research.



Do you have a mentor/role model who has significantly affected your career path in Thanatology? Tell us why you chose this career path?

Scott Law, a hospice LPN, mentored me when I first started working as an end-of-life counselor in a private hospice setting. His knowledge and understanding of patients' needs at the end of life inspired me to pursue a lifelong career in Thanatology. My personal experiences with grief and loss led me to seek out a position in a hospice setting but ultimately helping terminally ill patients achieve peace before death is what drives my involvement in this field.

What advice would you offer a more junior professional in the field on growing his or her career or keeping the work fresh?

I believe that junior professionals should seek out opportunities to connect and work with senior professionals in the field. We should take advantage of every opportunity to learn from them so that we can further the profession – get involved in new ways. The Student and New Professionals Committee (SNAP) is a great place to start.

What do you think the future holds for your work and that of others like you? How will that impact what you do?

I believe that if we work together not just within our own disciplines but doing interdisciplinary work we can better the experiences of individuals facing the end of life. This particular area of study is both challenging and rewarding and has enormous potential for growth. When we work together, challenge and support each other, we can improve this field of study and, ultimately, end-of-life experiences.

ADEC 41st Annual Conference

April 9-13, 2019 Hilton Atlanta, Atlanta, GA

Pre-Conference Institute: April 9-10, 2019



Registration is now open for the 41st Annual Conference in Atlanta, Georgia!

[ADEC 2019 Conference Website](#)

Conference Keynote Presentations

ADEC is pleased to announce the following keynote presentations for the 41st Annual Conference.

[Learn more about the keynote speakers on ADEC's website.](#)

Dr. Rockey Robbins



Creating a Relational Home for a Six-Year-Old Choctaw Cancer Patient

Thursday, April 11, 8:40 - 9:40 a.m.

Dr. Robbins will present a narrative describing his treatment work with a six-year-old Choctaw boy who was in the process of dying. He will first put the story in the context of traditional Choctaw rituals and ideas as they relate to death and dying. The primary focus of the speech will deal with the transformations that occurred with both the young boy and the speaker. The transformative experiences will be discussed in a developmental context of growth from Becoming to Being; Realistic to Imaginative; and from Death to Love. To conclude, the speaker will relate the experience to his development as a therapist.

Darcy Harris



Non-Death Loss and Grief: Context and Clinical Implications

Friday, April 12, 8:40 - 9:40 a.m.

While most of the theorizing and research related to grief has been associated with death-related losses, there are several studies that identify the presence of grief after losses that are non-death in origin, many of which are ongoing in nature. Significant non-death losses are sometimes referred to as living losses, because the loss (and accompanying grief) will be present in various ways for the rest of an individual's life. In this session, we will explore recent research and literature related to grief that arises from non-death loss experiences, including the unique features and implications this form of grief. We will also discuss the applicability of current bereavement theories, providing an inclusive perspective for grief as the response to all types of losses, and not just those that occur as the result of death.

Harold Ivan Smith



"Oh, I Could Never Do What You Do!!!"

Quilting Stories of Tragedy, Grief and Resiliency

Saturday, April 13, 4:25 - 5:25 p.m.

Individuals in our field frequently hear some variation of, "How do you do that for a living?" Some conclude that we are uniquely able to navigate the world's emotional backwater. Few "get" that the secret is hearing and honoring stories. A death-phobic culture emphasizes facts and details; newspaper and online obituaries and eulogists string facts: date of birth, date of death, graduations, marriage(s) and parenting details, memberships, employment, hobbies. Strung details rarely capture the deceased's particular-ness and, consequently, the bereaver's particular-ness. Bereavers need to rediscover active storytelling. Everyone's story, at whatever stage of development, needs generous hospitality because through storytelling, bereavers often find hope, insight, and encouragement. Grievers need to hear: Your story counts!

Pre-Conference Opportunities

April 9 & 10

Arrive a few days early and enhance your conference experience by participating in one or more of the pre-conference sessions being offered. These specially designed workshops provide an in-depth look at the topics and issues of greatest importance in grief and bereavement. Additional registration and tuition are required for these courses.



ADEC's pre-conference institute includes two kinds of events: Professional Development Courses and Specialty Workshops. However, you can only choose to attend one of the two types of educational activities, as their schedules conflict.

ADEC Professional Development Courses

When you sign up for one of these three courses, you'll be attending two full days of specialized education taught by a subject-matter expert(s). The courses will take place on Tuesday, April 9 and Wednesday, April 10, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on both days. [Learn more about the available courses and faculty.](#)

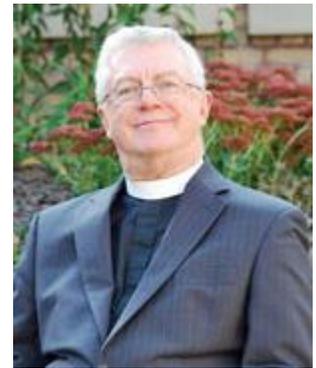
Specialty Workshops

ADEC offers a selection of specialty workshops on a variety of in-depth topics related to the field of thanatology which will take place on Wednesday, April 10. You may choose to attend one or more half-day workshops, or a full-day workshop. [View the workshops offered.](#)

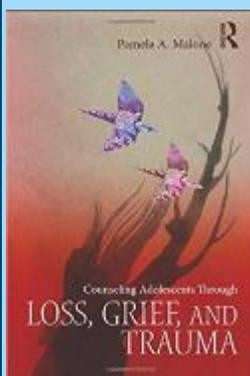
What's New: New Books from ADEC Members

By The Rev Paul A. Metzler, D.Min

What's New offers a brief review of educational materials written or produced by ADEC members. Each review is run once and is intended to showcase the contributions of our membership to the death, dying, and bereavement field. Send a review copy (not just an announcement) of recent material (2016 to present) to:

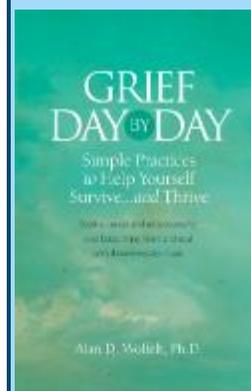


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Malone, Pamela A. *Counseling Adolescents Through Loss, Grief, and Trauma*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-415-85705-5. Softcover, 167 pages.

Malone has joined her considerable clinical and academic expertise to offer an insightful and practical book for those who offer counseling and other supportive help to adolescents coping with a range of death and non-death losses. Her ten chapters cover important conceptualizations of adolescent development, categories of adolescent response patterns, gender differences, the prevalent use of social media by adolescent populations and her own model of Adolescent Grief and Loss groups as a ideal modality. Chapter 10 (“Therapeutic Activities for Working With Adolescent”) will offer clinicians an especially rich consideration of interventions utilizing art, music, narrative writing, bibliotherapy, and other techniques that are specific to



Wolfelt, Alan D. *Grief Day by Day. Simple Practices to Help Yourself Survive...and Thrive*. Ft. Collins, CO: Companion Press, 2018. ISBN: 978-1-61722-268-9. Softcover, 122 pages.

Wolfelt has written a small guidebook that offers what he suggests are “simple” practices that will offer substantive gains to those living in the complexities of grief. These particular practices are an array of rituals – informal and formal – that offer focus, structure and expressive pathways for those who grieve. Like his other guidebooks, this one rests on his familiar “six needs of mourning” as the framework for finding meaning and healing. Chapter 4 (“Getting Ready for Ritual”) offers his perspectives about how to prepare properly for rituals and his encouragement that rituals should be a part of the everyday experience for grievers, not reserved only for special places and moments. This book will help

adolescent meaning making in the midst of life and loss.

many who feel lost in grief to discover meaningful direction to move toward healing.



Contact Connects

Connects is interested in your thoughts and work. Please reach out to us with content submissions, suggestions or ideas.

For consideration in the February 2019 issue of Connects please submit your ideas/content by **Wednesday, January 30, 2019.**

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