

Dr. Sara Murphy



Speaker Details

Sara Murphy, PhD, CT, is a death educator, Certified Thanatologist (Association for Death Education and Counseling), and suicidologist with fifteen years of scholarly, pedagogical, and professional experience in the field. She is a faculty member at the University of Rhode Island where she has developed and taught over fifty interdisciplinary courses on thanatological theory; death, dying, and bereavement; biopsychosocial grief experiences; grief writing; and stigmatized means of death. She is also an affiliate faculty member in the Thanatology Graduate Program at Marian University, where she teaches courses on suicide and on the literature of loss.

Session Details

Disenfranchised Grief

Disenfranchised grief can be experienced by anyone who is suffering a loss when:

- Their grief is not openly acknowledged
- Their grief is not socially validated
- Their grief is not publicly observed

When grief is not openly acknowledged, survivors may feel the need to grieve secretly and silently, hiding their grief from others because their loss isn't recognized. Similarly, when grief is not socially validated, survivors may attempt to share their loss with others only to experience attempts by others to diminish their grief. When grief is not publicly observed, survivors are not given the recognition and support needed to move forward in their mourning process.

When someone experiences disenfranchisement of their grief, all of these emotional responses can increase in intensity and become overwhelming.