

Grief and Loss Across the Lifespan: A Biopsychosocial Perspective

By Carolyn Ambler Walter PhD, Judith L. M. McCoyd

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"[Grief and Loss Across the Lifespan] represents a significant advance because it looks at the issues from a bio-psychosocial perspective. To a social worker who has worked mainly in a medical and nursing environment, this is a great step forward."

--Bereavement Care

"[Offers] valued sensitivities, knowledge, and insights, and most importantly, age-appropriate interventions for a range of significant losses....Counselors will want to keep this indispensable work close at hand."

-Kenneth J. Doka, PhD

Author, *Counseling Individuals With Life-Threatening Illness*

"By taking a lifespan view, this book fills a gap in the literature on loss and grief and takes theory and practice in new and invigorating directions. It will be welcomed by those professionals of all disciplines who daily listen to and help re-write narratives of loss."

-Jeffrey S. Applegate, PhD

Professor Emeritus

Graduate School of Social Work & Social Research

Bryn Mawr College

"[A] thorough, thoughtful, sensitive, and up-to-date contribution that may be the best book available today for teaching bereavement, grief, and mourning. Highly recommended for experienced grief professionals as well as for students."

-Jeffrey Kauffman, MA, MS, LCSW, BD, CT, CAS, BCETS

Psychotherapist in private practice, Philadelphia, PA

"Walter and McCoyd have written a well-organized and comprehensive examination of grief and bereavement that will be useful to the seasoned professional as well as the student new to grief and loss. The historical analysis of grief theory from classic to postmodern is interesting reading and essential for a full understanding of grief and loss in modern society. "


--**Paige E. Payne, MS, MSW, LSW**
Support Services Manager
PinnacleHealth Home Care and Hospice
Harrisburg, PA

Grief and Loss Across the Lifespan is unique in its treatment of grieving patterns and intervention strategies for different age groups. With this book, students and practitioners will learn how grief is influenced by biological responses to stress, psychological responses to loss, as well as social norms and support networks.

The authors utilize a developmental framework, as each level of development from infancy through old age is addressed in four ways:

- Reviews normal developmental issues, abilities, and challenges for the age in question
- Analyzes how individuals of each age cope with serious loss of a significant other, and how they may experience life-threatening illness themselves
- Examines how significant others react to and mourn the death of someone in that age range
- Identifies the normative losses a person is likely to experience, and addresses protective and risky ways of coping with those losses

The authors review important grief theories, such as postmodern and Dual Process Theory, and discuss current topics in grief, including continuing bonds, meaning making, ambiguous loss, and disenfranchised loss. With the help of this book, practitioners and students of grief counseling can learn to help patients of all ages understand that loss is at the heart of life and growth.

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Editorial Review

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About the Author

Carolyn Ambler Walter, PhD, LCSW, is a Professor Emerita at the Center for Social Work Education at Widener University, Chester, PA. In addition to teaching part time at Widener, she has served as a mentor and instructor in the DSW program at University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Policy and Practice and maintains a private clinical social work practice. Dr. Walter is the coauthor of *Grief and Loss Across the Lifespan: A Biopsychosocial Perspective* (2009) and the author of *The Loss of a Life Partner: Narratives of the Bereaved* (2003). She is the coauthor of *Breast Cancer in the Life Course: Women's Experiences* and the author of *The Timing of Motherhood*. Dr. Walter has published many articles in professional journals on such topics as women's issues, grief, and social work education. Dr. Walter has also given professional presentations at state and regional hospice conferences throughout the United States, at Association for Death Education and Counseling, National Association of Social Workers, and Council on Social Work Education national conferences.

Judith L. M. McCoyd, PhD, LCSW, QCSW, is an Associate Professor at Rutgers University—School of Social Work, teaching in the Advanced Clinical curriculum and working with both the PhD in Social Work and DSW doctoral programs. She worked in perinatal, emergency room, and oncology settings during her active practice life before academia and continues to maintain a small private practice with perinatal and end-of-life care as specialties. She is coauthor of *Grief and Loss Across the Lifespan: A Biopsychosocial Perspective* (2009) and coeditor (with Toba S. Kerson) of *Social Work in Health Settings: Practice in Context* (3rd ed.—2010). She presents at national and international conferences such as Council on Social Work Education, National Association of Perinatal Social Work, and the Interdisciplinary Conference of Social Sciences, and publishes in journals about perinatal decision making, technology and health care, societal aspects of bereavement, and social work education. Her research agenda involves exploration of the ways perinatal technologies impact the experience of child-bearing and bereavement when perinatal loss occurs.

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