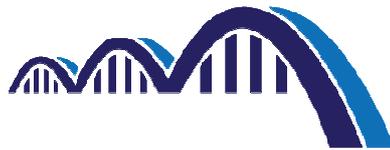


# Grief Therapy as Meaning Reconstruction



Portland Institute  
For Loss and Transition

## Training and Basic Certification Program in Meaning Reconstruction in Loss and Transition

*Grief Therapy as Meaning Reconstruction Training and Basic Certification program* offers intense, professional training in grief therapy, counseling and bereavement support which acquaints participants with a broad range of practical techniques, as well conceptual understanding relevant to their practice. By participating actively in systematic experiential workshops and mentoring, learners develop competencies in helping the bereaved:

- process traumatic loss
- reconstruct a symbolic bond with the deceased
- access new implicit meanings as essential sources of change and renewal
- explore interpersonal and intrapersonal relations in dialogue
- re-compose their identity in the wake of loss and transition

**Module 2** includes varied techniques, applicable in the individual and in group settings, and practicum hours. In this program it focuses on work with bodily sensed meanings, the multiplicity of the self and healing dialogues and includes work with ambiguous and non-death-related losses. It consists of a deepening process, in which introduced techniques build one on another in order to a) facilitate the openness and receptivity to the implicit and unspeakable (i.e. Listening to the Body and Analogical Listening), b) differentiate the complexity of the self and emotions (i.e. Composition Work), c) process interpersonal and intrapersonal relations (e.g., Chair Work), and d) construct new life meanings in the wake of loss.

### *Onsite Training Program Overview*

#### **Module 2. Re-composing the self in loss and transition**

##### **Day 4. Accessing the wisdom of the body: Work with implicit meaning in grief therapy**

At a deep sensed level, we know more than we can say, so that grief therapists often must assist a client in the delicate process of meaning symbolization, in which an attitude of ‘not knowing’ and curiosity can be an entrance to the ‘knowing body.’ The body carries the implicit sensed seeds of feelings, which can ripen into the explicit fruits of new meanings if given attention in an open, soft and patient way. This subtle process of bottom-up emergence of new meanings requires focusing on pre-verbal, somatic experiencing, which can be more easily expressed in figurative, symbolic, and metaphoric terms, rather than through a linear narrative account. This day of training coaches participants on this implicit quest for meaning using Analogical Listening and related body-centered procedures and imaginative techniques, which contribute new perspectives on client needs and possibilities for recomposing their life and self in the wake of loss and transition.

##### **Day 5. Re-composing the multiple self in loss and transition**

Starting from the implicit, bodily sensed level, participants learn to work with the multiplicity and complexity of the self in loss and transition. Expanding awareness of the body beyond our habitual focus, listening to the messages of vaguely sensed feelings located in different parts of the body may invite and allow less accessible, ignored parts of ourselves (“I-positions” in the language of Dialogical Self Theory or DST) to be recognized, validated, and recruited to support adaptation to a changed life. Participants will learn to use Composition Work to differentiate those aspects of their identity and social world involved in the loss and transition, explore their relations (e.g. internal and external conflicts) and experiment with possibilities for their reorganization (e.g. possible integration). Differentiation of a broad range of self-aspects involved in the process of adaptation can then reveal a need for the further processing of relations between these elements in a transformative dialogue.

## **Day 6. Healing dialogues: Addressing conflicts, reconstructing the continuing bond**

In order to construct new meanings in the process of loss and transition, a variety of intra-subjective and inter-subjective relations may need to be processed and transformed in dialogue. Training in variations in chair work for addressing *internal conflict* (e.g., self-blame or ambivalence) and *unfinished business* (e.g. unfulfilled wishes or unresolved conflict with the deceased) will help participants address these common problems that complicate adaptation to loss. In addition, symbolic experiential dialogue with a growth-enhancing “promoter position” in the client’s “community of self” or in relation to internalized significant others. Alternative formats for fostering this dialogue will also be considered such as therapeutic correspondence and journaling.

Module two satisfies 5 technique modules and one case study module. Practicum hours are (optionally) introduced in the module 2.



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For more information about training and  
Certification in Meaning Reconstruction in Loss,  
navigate to:

**[www.portlandinstitute.org](http://www.portlandinstitute.org)**