

THE WELL OF GRIEF AND LOVE

Primary Mentors: Elizabeth Johnson and Marv Klassen-Landis

Honorary Mentors: Tom Golden and Wendy Howard

“Those who will not slip beneath the still surface on the well of grief... will never know the source from which we drink... .” David Whyte in “The Well of Grief”

“When we fully honor our many losses, our lives become more fully able to embody the wild joy that aches to leap from our hearts into the shimmering world.” Francis Weller in *The Wild Edge of Sorrow: Rituals of Renewal and the Sacred Work of Grief*

In this track we gain understanding of many kinds of grief and the varying ways people experience and express loss. We learn healing practices and skills for helping ourselves and others. We explore and share our own journeys with individual and collective grief—through silence, storytelling and listening; through reading, writing and discussion; through ritual, nature and the arts. We not only learn about grief, we also experience powerful ways to personally draw water from the well.

When we lose a person, a place or a community we deeply love, we experience the sensation of the ground opening up beneath our feet and we fear falling into emptiness. We may feel pressure to deny this and move on from loss. But if we enter into our grief and honor our losses, in time we find the well, the source of love and life—even “wild joy.”

PRIMARY LESSONS:

- Through a wide and deep-hearted exploration of the human and spiritual dimensions of grief and loss, we will provide safe channels for grief and grow our resilience and capacity for companioning ourselves and one another.
- We can be equally spacious and grounded when navigating our own and others’ grief.

TOPICS:

- Sources and types of grief: bereavement, anticipatory, ambiguous, disenfranchised, complicated, collective, eco-grief, etc., especially through the lens of Francis Weller’s five gates to grief: “everything we love we will lose, the places that have not known love, the sorrows of the world, what we expected and did not receive, ancestral grief.”
- Grief experiences of children, parents, partners, veterans, victims of injustice and violence.
- Effects of social/cultural expectations (gender, familial, culture/community) around grief.

- Grief rituals from a diversity of cultural and spiritual traditions.
- The power of storytelling and writing in healing.
- The role that spirituality and religion can have in grief work as supports and/or deterrents to healing.
- Paradoxes of grief: Loss/Gratitude, Absence/Presence, Pain/Healing, Disintegration/Reintegration, Sorrow/Joy.
- The role of the Anamcara in supporting others in grief and loss.

SKILLS/TECHNIQUES:

Explore ways to care for ourselves to maintain equilibrium when personally navigating grief or companioning another—mindfulness, prayer, contemplation, arts, nature, movement, somatic practices, growing confidence.

- Use interactive tools and develop Code of Care practice: active and embodied listening, healthy boundaries, compassionate presence, confidentiality.
- Meet people where they are in the moment.
- Find or create rituals that work for us and those we work with.
- Learn writing practices for individuals and groups.
- Share prompts (aka “third things”) to initiate journaling and/or personal sharing.

“Long after the initial loss has passed and the period of grieving has ended, an unattended sorrow lingers within us accounting for a host of physical, emotional and spiritual maladies... By courageously confronting this sorrow with mercy and compassion, we can travel a smoother path to healing the heart.” Stephen Levine in *Unattended Sorrow: Recovering from Loss and Reviving the Heart*

WEBINAR DATES:

Please note that each monthly webinar will take place from 8:30-11 am PST/11:30-2pm EST. The webinars are always on Saturdays, and each webinar falls on the 2nd Saturday of the month, except for April which falls on the 1st Saturday.

Webinar dates for the Well of Grief and Love track are as follow:

- ❖ September 14, 2024
- ❖ October 12, 2024
- ❖ November 9, 2024
- ❖ December 14, 2024
- ❖ January 11, 2025
- ❖ February 8, 2025
- ❖ March 8, 2025

- ❖ April 5, 2025
- ❖ May 10, 205
- ❖ June 14, 2025