

Abstract

Taking a humanistic and integrative theoretical approach and drawing on both personal experience and clinical practice, my dissertation will explore how childhood developmental deficits may impact the adult grieving process. Informed by attachment theory as an approach to the grief process in therapy, I will focus on how the death of a life-partner, representational of the death of a secure base, in conjunction with an anxious-ambivalent attachment style may impact and impede the grieving process, leading to a traumatic bereavement experience, or complicated grief. I will explore how the role of the bereavement counsellor as a temporary secure base can facilitate an integrative exploration of relational and developmental aspects of psychological functioning, encourage the formation of an internalised secure base and aid the grieving process.