



**Association for  
Death Education and Counseling®**  
*The Thanatology Association®*

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**ADEC 31st Annual Conference**

# Living Beyond Loss:

**Mending Body, Mind and Spirit**

**Final Program  
April 15-18, 2009**

**Pre-Meeting Program  
April 14-15**

Hyatt Regency Dallas • Dallas, Texas, USA

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



## Poster Session II – Friday, April 17, 9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

lower levels of death anxiety, death avoidance and fear of death; and higher levels of both neutral and approach acceptance, than would either Mexican-Americans or Indian-Americans, who are raised in the United States. Results generally supported the hypotheses and implications for future research will be presented.

### Poster # 7

#### Religion, Life History, Illness and Death: Experience of Brazilians Families

**Category:** Dying Process  
**Indicator:** Religious/Spiritual  
**Presentation Level:** Introductory

**Bousso, Regina, PhD<sup>1</sup>; Serafim, Tais, Undergraduate Student<sup>2</sup>**  
*<sup>1</sup>University of Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil; <sup>2</sup>Student, Sao Paulo, Brazil*

The importance of religious cults in providing healing for Brazil's families is now widely acknowledged. The purpose of this study was to explore Brazilian families' experiences with one of their member illness and report findings about the influence of religious faith and life history on families' spiritual and secular responses to illness. We developed an interpretive study, using symbolic interaction as the framework, and in-depth interviewing for data collection. The study focused on the history of the illness of a family member who resorted to several religious therapies at the beginning time of onset of the disease. Sample included 22 families' members from 12 families living with one of their members with a variety of illness. Families professed a variety of beliefs and devotional practices. Four dimensions of religious faith were related to families decision making: God determined the outcome of the illness, Families had obligations to God, Intercession with God by others was often sought by or offered to the family, and Faith encouraged optimism. Family members took spiritual and secular actions to assure the best possible familial and professional care for their member and sought to influence Gods good will on behalf of the individual and family.

### Poster # 8

#### Death and Dying at a Children's Mental Health Agency

**Category:** Assessment and Intervention  
**Indicator:** Family and Individual  
**Presentation Level:** Introductory

**Graves, Karen, MA**  
*Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Blooming Grove, NY, United States*

This poster will examine how a children's mental health agency approaches death and dying with its clients and staff. Green Chimneys Children's Services provides residential and day treatment to children and adolescents with emotional, behavioral, and learning difficulties from New York City, upstate New York, and Connecticut. The agency also operates a farm and wildlife rehabilitation center which involves the children in several ways: farm/wildlife classes, jobs caring for the animals, animal-assisted therapy, as well as other activities. When animals become ill or need to be euthanized, a special opportunity is presented for working on clients' bereavement issues. Many children at Green Chimneys have experienced multiple losses, including death, trauma, divorce, abuse, and neglect. The farm provides opportunities to experience and process death in health ways. Staff who work with the animals are encouraged to examine how culture and personal experiences color their own views of death, and learn ways to appropriately discuss death with the children.

### Poster # 9

#### Meaning Making of Family After Long-Term Foster Care

**Category:** Loss, Grief and Mourning  
**Indicator:** Family and Individual  
**Presentation Level:** Intermediate

**Lawrence, Carrie, BS**  
*Indiana University Bloomington, Bloomington, IN, United States*

This study focuses on young adults, who have grown up in foster care and who have been either emancipated or who are not longer wards of the court, grief and ambiguous or invisible loss (Doka, 2002) associated with not having a traditional family and how they explain their meaning of family. One thing is clear from the existing literature, a life without a family for these young adults is challenging for both the individual and our society. Results from this study show that former foster youth showed a variety of meaning in family depending on each individual experience, in describing how even in foster care never feeling as though they were part of a family. In addition, the participants gave examples of feeling disenfranchised because of how child welfare takes their family away from them and how they were never able to see their birth family again.

The methodology used for this study was a phenomenological analysis within a qualitative research design. Phenomenological analysis seeks to discover the meaning, structure and essence of the lived experience of the phenomenon for a person (Patton, 2002). I took the participants' recorded interviews, transcribed them verbatim, and then analyzed the transcriptions. Qualitative research is based on the philosophy that views reality as multilayered, interactive, and share social experience interpreted by individuals (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997). Hopefully, the interpretations of the study in addition to the process of the use of Photo Elicitation methods and interviews will help give the participants and professionals insight as to how to better assist former foster youth in coping with their grief and loss and with their transition to adulthood.

### Poster # 10

#### Teaching About Near-Death Experiences Using "The Day I Died"

**Category:** Death Education  
**Indicator:** Resources and Research  
**Presentation Level:** Introductory

**Holden, Janice Miner, EdD, LPC-S, LMFT, NCC<sup>1</sup>; Oden, Kathryn, PhD, LPC<sup>2</sup>**

*<sup>1</sup>Department of Counseling and Higher Education, University of North Texas, Denton, TX, United States; <sup>2</sup>Counseling Department, Texas A&M University - Commerce, Commerce, TX, United States*

In 2002, the British Broadcasting Corporation produced the hour-long documentary, The Day I Died: The Mind, the Brain, and Near-death Experiences. Now available in the U.S. for use in educational venues, the production explores the question of the relationship of mind and brain through the narratives of several near-death experiencers; reenactments of recent near-death research in hospitals in the U.S., U.K, and Netherlands; and interviews with leading researchers in the field of near-death studies. In the process, viewers learn about the characteristics and aftereffects of near-death experiences (NDEs), the circumstances under which they occur, and the diversity of people who experience them.