

J. William Worden

Bereavement Overload: The Challenge of Grieving Multiple Losses

When people experience multiple losses from death in a short period of time, they often experience what Kastenbaum calls "Bereavement Overload." Their grief may seem overwhelming and become shut down or manifest itself in physical and psychological symptoms. Strategies for helping them jump-start the process in a way that feels safe and enables them to better process their grief will be discussed.

Learning Objectives

1. To identify the key issues stemming from multiple losses.
2. To understand how multiple losses may result in "Bereavement Overload."
3. To learn how to help mourners process multiple losses without getting stuck, or if stuck, how to move forward towards the best adaptation to these losses.



J. William Worden, PhD, ABPP, is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association and holds academic appointments at the Harvard Medical School and at the Rosemead Graduate School of Psychology in California. He is also Co-Principal Investigator of the Harvard Child Bereavement Study, based at the Massachusetts General Hospital. Recipient of 5 major NIH grants, his research and clinical work over 40 years has centered on issues of life-threatening illness and life-threatening behavior. Dr. Worden has lectured and written on topics related to terminal illness, cancer care, and bereavement. He is the author of *Personal Death Awareness*; *Children & Grief: When a Parent Dies*; and is co-author of *Helping Cancer Patients Cope*. His book *Grief Counseling & Grief Therapy: A Handbook for the Mental Health Practitioner*, now in its fourth edition, has been translated into 14 foreign languages and is widely used around the world as the standard reference on the subject.