Picking Up the Pieces: Understanding the Impact of Patient Suicide on Clinicians and Clinical Practice: Implications for Prevention and Postvention
Course Information Document

Target Audience: Experienced mental health clinicians, supervisors, administrators, and organizational leaders seeking to establish, expand, or improve postvention within an organization, agency, or group practice. No personal history of patient suicide loss is required.

Instructional Level: Intermediate

Course Description:
Patient suicide can have profound psychological and professional consequences for clinicians, affecting well-being, professional identity, clinical judgment, and subsequent patient care. This workshop examines the hidden layers of loss; distinguishes disenfranchised grief, traumatic stress, and moral injury; and considers factors that compound clinician injury. Particular attention is given to the relationship between clinician competency and patient outcome, organizational response, the potential for healing or harm in case review, and internal and external sources of postvention support. The role of peer supports and professionally facilitated peer support groups is considered within a broader postvention response.

Learning Objectives:
At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Discuss disenfranchised grief, traumatic stress, and moral injury following patient suicide and identify implications for support.
2. Identify at least three factors that may exacerbate psychological or professional injury following patient suicide.
3. Explain the distinction between clinician competency and patient outcome and its relevance to clinical case review.
4. Identify at least three elements of an effective organizational postvention response.
5. List at least three common themes clinicians report experiencing following a patient suicide.

Date: Tuesday, February 2, 2027
Time: 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM **ET**
12:00 PM – 4:00 PM **CT**
11:00 AM – 3:00 PM **MT**
10:00 AM – 2:00 PM **PT**
Duration: 4-hour workshop (3.75 CEs available)
Where: Zoom
Training Cost: No Fee

Meet the Presenter

Paula D. Marchese, LCSW



Paula D. Marchese, LCSW, is a psychotherapist in private practice in NYC and NJ with over 30 years of clinical and supervisory experience. As part of the leadership team with the Coalition of Clinician Survivors, she is the Coordinator of Support Services for Patient Suicide Loss. She initiated, developed and has continued to facilitate nationwide on-going support group and short term support groups offered virtually throughout the years for clinicians who have experienced the suicide or murder-suicide of a patient(s) and has had the privilege of working with over 200 clinician survivors through groups, consultation, supervision and/or in ongoing psychotherapy. Postvention trainings and consultations are offered to clinical staff, program administrators, postvention teams and psychiatry residents aimed at identifying common gaps in suicide prevention training and postvention responses, and providing recommendations to help build clinician resilience, mitigate the potential for moral injury associated with patient suicide and increase safety for both clinicians and the patients they continue to care for following a devastating loss. The instructor has presented at national and international conferences on broadening the behavioral health field's understanding of the hidden layers surrounding patient suicide loss to inform both suicide prevention and postvention. She offers a healing through storytelling workshop entitled, "Drowning in Guilt - A Lifeguard Analogy" (2022) and is author of a comprehensive postvention manual, After a Patient Suicide: A Postvention Guide for Clinicians and Behavioral Health Organizations; Supporting Clinician Recovery, Increasing Patient Safety, and Advancing Suicide Prevention (2026).

Paula Marchese received her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Mt. St. Mary's University, graduate degree from NYU and earned a two year certification in Analytic Group Psychotherapy. In addition to her volunteer work with clinicians-survivors and as a mental health advocate for 30 years, she is also part of volunteer research team focused on marine conservation under the leadership of Lenin Oviedo Correa, PhD, studying the impact of human and environmental conditions on whales and dolphins to keep life balanced.

Paula D. Marchese, LCSW, is a volunteer Coordinator of Support Services for Patient Loss with the Coalition of Clinician Survivors (CCS). She receives payment for facilitating CCS 10-week support groups through group member fees and private donor support.

Special Accommodations

If you require special accommodations due to a disability, please contact the STRONG STAR Training Initiative at admin@strongstartraining.org one week prior to the workshop so that we may provide you with appropriate service.

Continuing Education

The STRONG STAR Training Initiative offers attendees 3.75 Continuing Education (CE) Credits for participating in this training. To obtain CE Credits, attendees must sign in at the start of the course and sign out after its conclusion. Inquiries regarding CE may be directed via email to admin@strongstartraining.org.

Our continuing education credits have historically been recognized by most professional state licensing boards. However, this is not guaranteed. Please check with your licensing board for verification.

The University of Texas at San Antonio Long School of Medicine and the STRONG STAR Training Initiative (SSTI) are approved by the American Psychological Association (APA) to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. The University of Texas at San Antonio maintains responsibility for this program and its content.

Cancellations

There is no fee for this training, so no refund applies. Cancellation is not required.
For additional information, please contact the STRONG STAR Training Initiative at:
admin@strongstartraining.org.

Agenda

Please note this agenda is in the Eastern Time Zone

Time	Session
1:00 PM – 1:15 PM	Welcome and introductions; course overview and confidentiality; excerpt from Grief on a Tightrope (Marchese, 2022)
1:15 PM – 2:00 PM	Understanding why clinicians may be profoundly impacted: stigma and isolation; disenfranchised grief, PTSD, and moral injury; why language matters; hidden layers of loss; contributing factors
2:00 PM – 2:45 PM	Postvention protocols: contact with families, legal issues, clinician competency review versus clinical case review, monitoring clinician and patient safety. Q&A
2:45 PM – 3:00 PM	**Break**

Time	Session
3:00 PM – 3:45 PM	Brief self-care video. Healing wounds: common themes; gaps in suicide prevention training; building a culture of safety; leadership's role in postvention
3:45 PM – 4:30 PM	Building resilience and post-traumatic growth: common missteps of supervisors, agencies, and colleagues; peer supports and support groups; professional identity reconstruction; postvention recommendations
4:30 PM – 5:00 PM	Q&A
5:00 PM	End of Part 1