

Dr. Lisa Caraway Oliver, EdD

Expert Witness in the Psychosocial Impact of Traumatic Loss

ACPE-Trained Chaplain | Adult Educator | Consultant

Atlanta, Georgia • 678.730.0783 •

LCOliver@TraumaGriefConsultants.com •

www.TraumaGriefConsultants.com

PROFILE

Expert in trauma, grief, and bereavement with a Doctorate in Adult Education and clinical experience in Level I trauma hospital settings. Specializes in the analysis and explanation of the psychological, relational, and existential impact of sudden and violent death on individuals and families.

Provides trauma-informed educational interviews, case analysis, and structured written opinions grounded in established bereavement research, trauma theory, and family-systems frameworks. Work focuses on grief trajectories, indicators of complex and disrupted grief, and the effects of death on identity, functioning, and long-term adjustment.

Regularly consults with attorneys and delivers expert testimony that translates complex grief and trauma responses into clear, structured, and defensible explanations for legal audiences. Maintains active engagement with interdisciplinary research in traumatic stress, bereavement science, and trauma psychology through affiliations with the Association for Death Education and Counseling, International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, and American Psychological Association.

EXPERT WITNESS ROLE

Expert Witness – Psychosocial Impact of Traumatic Loss

Provides expert education and interpretation regarding the psychological, relational, and existential impact of sudden and violent death on surviving individuals and families. Offers analysis grounded in established bereavement research, trauma-informed frameworks, and clinical chaplaincy experience, including the effects of homicide, accidental death, and other traumatic losses on grief processes, family systems, meaning-making, and long-term adjustment. Testimony focuses on explaining normative and disrupted grief responses following violent death for legal audiences.

Scope of Expert Testimony

- Education regarding grief and bereavement following homicide, vehicular fatalities, and other violent or sudden deaths
- Interpretation of trauma-informed grief responses without clinical diagnosis
- Analysis of family-systems disruption and secondary losses following death
- Explanation of meaning-making, identity disruption, and continuing bonds
- Clarification of common misconceptions about grief duration, “closure,” and functional appearance
- Review of records, depositions, and survivor statements for consistency with established grief research

CORE EXPERTISE

- **Grief & Bereavement Analysis in Legal Contexts**
Normative, traumatic, cumulative, and disrupted grief responses following sudden, violent, or accidental death, including homicide, vehicular fatalities, and medical injury.
- **Trauma-Informed Assessment & Interpretation**
Analysis of grief responses informed by trauma theory, attachment frameworks, and bereavement research, without clinical diagnosis.
- **Family-Systems Impact of Death & Loss**
Examination of relational disruption, secondary losses, role shifts, and long-term adjustment following traumatic death.
- **Death, Dying, & End-of-Life Education**
Expertise in end-of-life decision pathways, advance-care planning, and distinctions between hospice and palliative care, grounded in clinical and educational practice.

- **Meaning-Making, Identity Disruption, & Continuing Bonds**
Interpretation of existential, spiritual, and identity-related impacts of death and loss, including misconceptions about “closure” and functional appearance.
- **Cultural & Contextual Considerations in Grief**
Grief expressions and expectations within Black families, immigrant communities, and multigenerational systems, with attention to cultural norms and systemic factors.
- **Psychoeducation for Legal Audiences**
Translation of complex grief and bereavement concepts into clear, accessible explanations for juries, judges, and attorneys.

EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL FORMATION

Doctor of Education (EdD), Adult Education

University of Georgia, Athens, GA

Dissertation: *How Do Caregivers Learn? Exploring the Informal Learning of Hospice Care Professionals*

Research Foci: Death and dying; emotion work; informal learning

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE)

Level I-B, II-A

Arthur M. Blank Hospital, Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta

Level I-A

Grady Health System, Atlanta, GA

About the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE): ACPE is the primary accrediting body for professional chaplaincy education in the United States. Its nationally recognized, graduate-level clinical formation model prepares chaplains and spiritual care providers for trauma-informed, ethically grounded, and culturally responsive engagement with individuals, families, and interdisciplinary teams navigating illness, crisis, grief, loss, and complex life transitions.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS (TRAUMA & BEREAVEMENT SCIENCE)

- Association for Death Education and Counseling
- International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies
- American Psychological Association

Affiliations reflect ongoing engagement with interdisciplinary research and applied frameworks in traumatic stress, bereavement, and the human impact of sudden and violent death.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Life-Transitions Consultant & Educator – Dr. Lisa Oliver, LLC

Provide grief-focused consultations, death-and-dying education, and trauma-informed client interviewing for individuals, families, and organizations. Draft interpretive summaries integrating behavioral science, chaplaincy insights, attachment theory, and trauma responses. Support attorneys with case analysis involving death, bereavement, and emotional impact.

Clinical Chaplain Resident – Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta (Level I Pediatric Trauma Hospital)

Provide spiritual care, crisis intervention, and family-systems support during life-threatening injury, critical illness, or traumatic death. Work with the interdisciplinary team to integrate spiritual assessment and anticipatory-grief perspectives into comprehensive family support.

Clinical Chaplain Intern – Grady Healthcare (Level I Adult Trauma Hospital)

Provided bedside support, acute grief intervention, and spiritual care during high-intensity medical and trauma situations.

Educator & Program Developer

- Independent Educator & Facilitator, the Hospice Foundation of America and Pennsylvania State University “Let’s Talk” program
- Community educator, Fulton, Gwinnett, and Fayette County Library Systems
- Guest Lecturer, Florida State University — Death & Dying: Not Only for People, Pets & Plants

PUBLICATIONS

Books

- Oliver, L. C. (2022). *Final Wishes: A Workbook for Planning a Funeral* (2nd ed.). Dr. Lisa Oliver, LLC. ISBN-13: 978-0578366746 (ISBN-10: 0578366746)

Peer-Reviewed articles

Papers

- Watkins, K. E., Ellinger, A. D., Suh, B., Brenes-Dawsey, J. C., & **Oliver, L. C.** (2022). *Further evolving the critical incident technique (CIT) by applying different contemporary approaches for analyzing qualitative data in CIT studies.* *European Journal of Training and Development*, 46(7–8), 709–726. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJTD-07-2021-0107>.

SERVICES OFFERED TO ATTORNEYS

- **Case Consultation & Issue Framing**
Early and mid-case consultation regarding grief, bereavement, and trauma-related issues relevant to violent or sudden death.
- **Record & Materials Review**
Review of medical records, depositions, discovery materials, and survivor statements for consistency with established grief and bereavement research.
- **Trauma-Informed Educational Interviews**
Structured, non-diagnostic interviews with survivors and family members to inform case understanding and narrative development.
- **Interpretive Written Summaries & Expert Reports**
Preparation of written analyses explaining grief trajectories, family-system impact, and trauma-informed responses for legal use.
- **Attorney Preparation & Case Support**
Consultation to support attorney understanding of grief-related evidence, themes, and common misconceptions relevant to case strategy.
- **Deposition & Trial Testimony**
Expert testimony offering clear, research-informed explanations of grief, bereavement, and the human impact of traumatic death—translating complex loss into terms understandable to triers of fact.