



**CMHC**  
Counselling and Mental Health Centre

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**YORK  
ST JOHN  
UNIVERSITY**

**York St John University Counselling and Mental Health Centre  
in collaboration with Online Events**

# ST 1 UK INTERNATIONAL ONLINE BEREAVEMENT CONFERENCE

**RESPONSES TO LOSS AND GRIEF  
FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:  
PERSONAL, PROFESSIONAL  
AND POLITICAL**



**Saturday 28th November 2020**



**Robert A. Neimeyer PhD**



**George A. Bonanno PhD**



**Tess Moeke-Maxwell PhD**

**Chaired by Professor Lynne Gabriel, Director, York St John University Counselling and Mental Health Centre**

**Co-chair and conference organiser Dr John Wilson, Director, Bereavement Service, York St John University Counselling and Mental Health Centre**

This powerful event brings together inspirational speakers from the UK, US and New Zealand. The theme of the conference focuses on the personal, professional and political responses to bereavement from and during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The conference provides a contemporary context in which to engage with key players and international leads in the field of bereavement and loss. We are facing global challenges in relation to Covid-19 bereavement, loss, trauma and associated mental health challenges. Now more than ever, we

need collaboration and connected personal and professional communities to support those who have been bereaved.

The event will be of interest to a wide range of stakeholders including: individuals and organisations working in mental health, grieving people and families, researchers, frontline and mental health practitioners, counsellors and therapists, pressure groups and public health workers.

We look forward to having you join us for an engaging, powerful, and memorable occasion.

## The Keynote Speakers:

### When Grief Goes Viral: Psychological Assessment and Intervention in the COVID Crisis **ROBERT A. NEIMEYER, PHD**

With the global pandemic of COVID-19 has come the loss of a world of once familiar routines, relationships and resources that previously conferred on our lives a sense of security and meaning. This presentation provides carefully validated screening tools for both coronavirus anxiety as the contagion spreads and the complicated bereavement it will leave in its wake and suggests evidence informed interventions for dealing with these disturbances constructively. Because of the pervasiveness of changes engendered by the Coronavirus and policies required to mitigate contagion, ambiguous losses and challenges to our assumptive world compound grief associated with bereavement and call for greater recognition and support by mental health professionals.

Robert A. Neimeyer is Professor Emeritus of the Department of Psychology, University of Memphis, maintains an active consulting and coaching practice, and also directs the Portland Institute for Loss and Transition, a “university without walls” for international online training in grief therapy. Neimeyer has published 30 books, including Routledge’s series on Techniques of Grief Therapy, and serves as Editor of Death Studies. The author of over 500 articles and chapters and a popular workshop presenter, he is currently working to advance a more adequate theory of grieving as a meaning-making process. In recognition of his contributions, he has been given Lifetime Achievement Awards by both the Association for Death Education and Counseling and the International Network on Personal Meaning.

### **DR TESS MOEKE-MAXWELL** NGĀI TAI, NGĀTI POROU PhD, B Soc Sci (With 1st Hons), MNZAC

Tess has dedicated her life to helping Māori, especially through the end of life research she does with Māori whānau. This is a sacred time when the spirit prepares to transition to the heavenly realm. Whānau, as caregivers, have an important role in caring for their dying, and helping the dying person’s wairua to transition ‘well’.

She believes that end of life and dying are important opportunities for us to release the past, forgive, be forgiven, and to love without conditions. Writing and speaking about these things from the perspectives of whānau are the greatest enjoyments of her academic career.

In the 1980s Tess worked voluntarily for Rape Crisis as a sexual abuse counsellor which led her to undertake degrees in psychology and gender studies at the University of Waikato. She has won numerous scholarships and grants to help her undertake her post graduate work and

PhD. Māori ethnic diversity is another research passion and her PhD thesis is about Māori women’s bi/multi-racial post-colonial identity.

In the late 1990s Tess registered as an ACC sexual abuse clinician and researched in the areas of sexual violation and healing pathways, for one study of which she was the lead Māori researcher. Tess also served on the ACC Sensitive Claims Advisory Board from 2010-2017.

Her post-doctoral research was about Māori palliative care (Kia Ngawari study) and she continues to explore ways to improve Māori palliative care, particularly for kaumātua. Currently Tess is employed as a Research Fellow in the School of Nursing, University of Auckland, and she is a founding member of the Te Ārai Palliative Care and End of Life Research Group. Since 2011 Tess has sat on Hospice New Zealand’s (HNZ) governance boards. She has also contributed to a revision of the HNZ Palliative Care Standards and regularly contributes to the HNZ Kaimahi Roopu conferences.

Recently Tess was awarded a grant from the Health Research Council (Rangahau Hauora Māori) to lead the Pae Herenga study, a three year end of life study on traditional Māori end of life care customs and contemporary adaptations.

Tess is a trustee of Umupuia Marae (Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki Makaurau), Maraetai, South Auckland. Tess and her partner are very involved with raising their mokopuna. Following her partner’s diagnosis with breast cancer Tess wrote Stars of Aroha Meditations, a book of guided meditations. This draws upon pūrākau, and several resources (MeditationNZ App by Stars of Aroha; Luna’s Lullaby audio book and Stars of Aroha audio book1), to help people relax and find inner peace.

### **GEORGE A. BONANNO, PH.D.** Professor of Clinical Psychology, Columbia University

Professor Bonanno received his Ph.D. from Yale University in 1991. His research and scholarly interests have centred on the question of how human beings cope with loss, trauma and other forms of extreme adversity, with an emphasis on resilience and the salutary role of flexible coping and emotion regulatory processes. Professor Bonanno’s recent empirical and theoretical work has focused on defining and documenting adult resilience in the face of loss or potential traumatic events, and on identifying the range of psychological and contextual variables that predict both psychopathological and resilient outcomes. In 2019, he received lifetime achievement awards from both the Association for Psychological Science (APS) and the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA). His most recent book is The Other Side of Sadness: What the New Science of Bereavement Tells us about Life After Loss (2009 Basic Books).

## And in alphabetical order:

Professor Divine Charura, Professor of Counselling Psychology York St John University.

***Trauma, love and loss rethought: Covid-19 as a shadow in the light of our interconnectedness.***

Jo Goodman, Founder, Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice UK.

***Stories of Loss, Campaigning for Justice.***

Andy Langford, Clinical Director, Cruse Bereavement Care UK.

***The responses of CRUSE to the Covid Pandemic.***

Deborah Lewis, founder, Covid19 Families UK.

***Supporting Covid families on social media.***

Paul Parsons, Bereavement Service Coordinator St Christopher's Hospice.

***Adapting our bereavement service to the changing COVID-19 environment***

Alison Penny, Director, Childhood Bereavement Network. Coordinator, National Bereavement Alliance.

***The bereavement sector's responses to the challenges of the pandemic – What further support is needed by families and by services***

Professor Andrew Reeves, Associate Professor in the Counselling Professions and Mental Health, Senior Fellow, Higher Education Academy (Advance HE), Fellow, British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

***Personal and Professional Reflections on Covid-19 Loss and Grief***

Dr Lucy Selman, Senior Research Fellow, University of Bristol. I will be co-presenting with Dr Emily Harrop, Marie Curie Research Associate, Cardiff University.

***Bereavement during the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK: Interim findings from a national survey***

## Tickets

**We are offering a self-select fee so that delegates can choose a registration fee that is appropriate to their budget, between £20-£40. Tickets from:**

**[www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/covid-19-bereavement-conference-tickets-123961695769](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/covid-19-bereavement-conference-tickets-123961695769)**

## Event Recording and platform:

**The event will be taking place on the online zoom platform Saturday 28th November  
Once you have bought your ticket, a Zoom link will be emailed to you**

**The conference will be recorded and all ticket holders will have access to this recording after the event.**

**For any who cannot make the conference the recordings can be purchased from the next day in segments according to speakers.**



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