



The Congregational Health Bereavement Program

Supporting Bereavement in Faith Communities

A Community Bereavement Project of your Congregation in Partnership with Baptist Health South Florida

When the Congregational Health Bereavement Program began in 2000, we had no idea that we would tap the nerve of a profound need in our community for bereavement support. The response to our leadership training for bereavement facilitators has been tremendous. Over 200 bereavement facilitators have been trained.

The strengths of the Congregational Health Bereavement program are:

- The facilitators are knowledgeable and accountable for the faith communities they serve.
- The facilitators are able to provide culturally appropriate bereavement support.
- The training is conducted by professionals grief counselors and chaplains experienced in bereavement.
- The training incorporates “spiritual assessment” as a tool for listening.
- Faith language is welcomed as a resource for coping with grief.
- Follow up support and resources are provided through meetings, a newsletter, a resource guide, and the website.

We have contracted with a professionally certified bereavement counselor Dr. Teddy Tarr to conduct the training course for facilitators of bereavement support groups. This training is offered to laypeople from area congregations who have been recommended by clergy. Following the workshop, those trained will establish a bereavement support group in their own faith community.

A resource guide of bereavement support groups led by facilitators led by our training program has been published and it is continually updated to facilitate the appropriate referrals of bereaved persons to the Congregational Health bereavement support groups. This guide will enable doctors, social workers, chaplains, funeral homes, etc. to make culturally and religiously appropriate referrals. Access to the **Congregational Health Bereavement Resource Guide** is provided on our web page at www.baptisthealth.net/ch



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A Course Description

Fall 2009

Summary: The Congregational Health Bereavement Program provides bereavement training to volunteer facilitators from cross-cultural congregations. The training consists of 16 hours of interactive, intensive education in support group dynamics, support group leadership, active listening skills, understanding of bereavement issues, cultural diversity issues, culturally specific grief responses and spiritual tools for coping with grief.

About the training: This training will consist of two sessions of eight hours each, beginning on **November 7** and **14**. The pedagogical methodology of the classes will be to incorporate the small group process into the training experience. Consequently, the size of the class will be limited to twelve people. The class will be closed after the workshop to promote and maintain the integrity of the group process. A workbook will be provided to each facilitator supplemented by handouts. Facilitators will be expected to begin forming their support group following the training. They will be provided evaluative feedback and encouragement during the support group building process. The training will be conducted by Teddy Tarr Psy.D. and the Rev. Shirley Brown, M-Div., BCC

About your participation: All the applications will be placed in a waiting list. A selection committee will choose only twelve people (a maximum of two per congregation) to participate in the training. The requirements for being a qualified participant are:

1. The participant must obtain the clergy's approval. The clergy must sign the application form.
2. The participant must have had a personal grief experience.
3. The participant desires to lead a bereavement support group/program, and
4. The participant has the commitment to organize a bereavement support/program in his/her congregation once the training is finished.

Ongoing support: Facilitators will receive ongoing support as needed from the Congregational Health Bereavement Program staff which is available to them for questions, problem-solving, orientation and support.

Continuing Education: 16 hours of CEU will be available for psychologists, nurses, social workers, mental health and marriage family therapists.



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Survey Tool

For clergy to Screen Applicants

The strength of bereavement support in faith communities hinges on the skills and preparation of the bereavement facilitators. Please select up to two individuals that you feel represent the spiritual position of your church or synoagogue and who meet the following criteria.

Characteristics of a Bereavement Support Group Facilitator:

1. The person reflects the devotional/spiritual position of your faith community.
2. The person demonstrates good social skills, is an effective communicator, and has the ability to make others feel comfortable.
3. The person appears healthy (emotionally, physically, mentally and spiritually) and would be an example for others who have had losses.
4. (If the need arose) You would attend a bereavement support group led by this person and you would feel safe with this individual as a leader.
5. Please review the enclosed "Facilitator Qualities" self-report check list. If you like, you may have candidates review the self-report and let them decide if they are ready or not for the training.

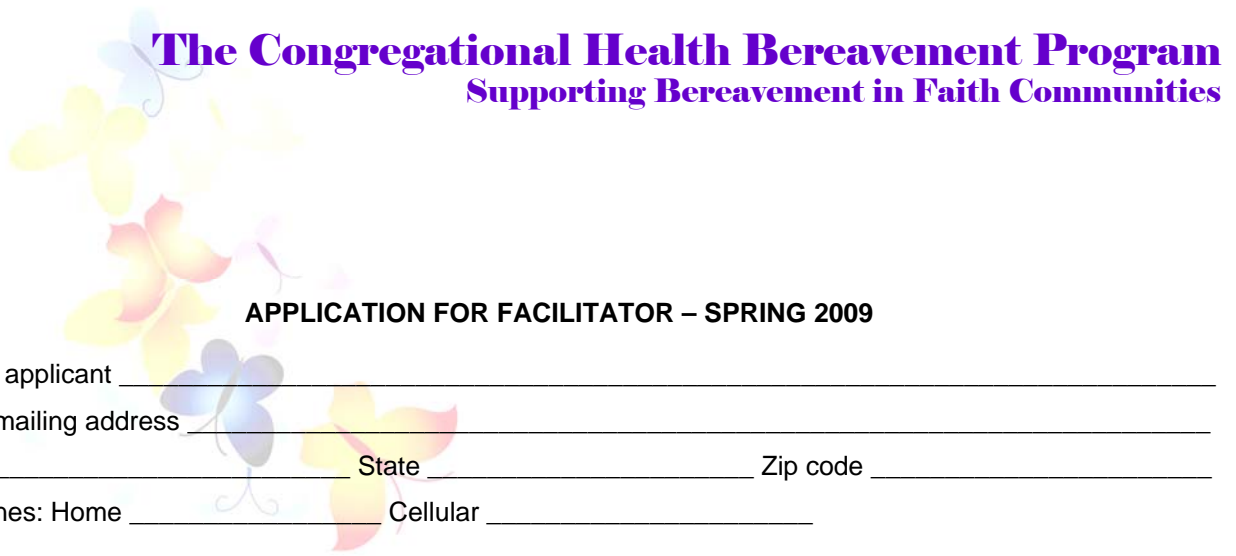


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Facilitator Qualities Self Report

- I am respectful.
- I am non-judgmental.
- I am flexible.
- I am sensitive to the feelings of others.
- I am a good communicator
- I am assertive (as opposed to passive or aggressive)
- I am empathic/kind
- I have had a personal experience with loss that has been worked through.
- I reflect the character and spirituality of my faith community.
- I am friendly and have good social skills.
- I have a willingness to learn.
- I am eager to be a part of a non-denominational learning experience.
- I recognize that my personal death anxiety may be triggered by death/bereavement education.
- As a facilitator, I recognize that I will need to look at my own losses and how they impact me and whether my personal losses may interfere with my helping others.



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APPLICATION FOR FACILITATOR – SPRING 2009

Name of applicant _____

Current mailing address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Telephones: Home _____ Cellular _____

E-mail _____

Denomination _____

Congregation name _____

Congregation address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Name of clergy _____

Telephone _____

Education

College _____

Seminary _____

Other _____

Degree

Describe your activities/participation/leadership in your congregation:

Statement of Applicant:

If accepted, I am committed to establishing a bereavement support group in my congregation.

Signature of applicant

Statement of Clergy:

I have interviewed this person and recommend her/him for this training. She/he has experienced the loss of a loved one in her/his life.

Signature of clergy