



BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2017 YEAR-END REPORT FORM

Focus Group _____ Grief and Families Focus Group _____

Chair/Co-Chairs _____ Colleen Murray _____

I. MAJOR ACTIVITIES/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

On Nov. 3, 2016 the focus group met. Attendees introduced themselves, and shared their interests and experiences in the area of family grief and loss. Discussion included concerns about the many myths and misunderstandings that the public and NCFR members in general have about grief and loss, as well as misunderstandings about grief and developmental stages (e.g., young children and older adults), and grief of diverse families. The group expressed interest in proposing a session (perhaps in the form of a panel) at the next annual conference that deals with educating the larger NCFR audience. Other topics of discussion included grief and loss of military families, widows and their narratives, opportunities for child life specialists, and the use (and misuse) of social media. The current focus group chair encouraged members to consider volunteering for the role of chair.

Several members held email discussion as to framing and submitting a proposal for a session at the 2017 conference in Orlando. Consensus was to plan for proposing a session in a future year. The plan for the 2017 focus group meeting is to have open discussion.

II. WHAT HAS THE FOCUS GROUP DONE DURING THE PAST YEAR TO FURTHER NCFR'S INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY INITIATIVES?

Diversity takes many forms. Scholars whose work focuses on death, dying and grief are often excluded and isolated in fields studying families. Consistent with the experiences of many excluded groups, those in the dominant/in-group do not recognize this exclusion exists. The general discomfort with the topic, its avoidance, and its resulting perpetuation of unsupported scholarship (including that which ignores the experiences of ethnically diverse families) has long served to stigmatize the bereaved and those who work, teach and research in this area. The Grief and Families Focus Group was originally established to begin to address the need for a place where these professionals could meet and share their scholarship and experiences in a climate that is both supportive and non-avoidant of death and loss related topics. The Grief and Families Focus Group continues to address that purpose of inclusion and acceptance through its annual meeting.

III. CONCERNS/QUESTIONS/SUGGESTIONS

No comments.

Reporting Date: October 13, 2017 (Prior to the Annual Conference)

Send to: Bethany Cox, Member Relations Manager at bethanycox@ncfr.org