A Yoga Program as a Complimentary and Alternative Intervention for Adults Experiencing Symptoms of Grief: A Grant Proposal

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Introduction

• According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2015), 2.5 million Americans die annually.

• Bereavement is a stressor that can cause mental or physical health problems for the survivor (Ghesquiere, Shear, & Duan, 2013).

• For the majority of individuals who experience a loss that was expected and health-related, their symptoms will dissipate naturally after a relatively short time span (Rosner et al., 2011).

• for some individuals their negative emotional symptoms persist or worsen, instead of diminishing over time (Jordan & Litz, 2014).

Overarching Goals of Project:
• To examine the effectiveness of an complementary and alternative treatment for prolonged grief disorder (PGD).
Social Work Relevance

• Social work has increasingly recognized the interplay of psychosocial, social, and biological systems in human behavior (Leung, Chan, Ng, & Lee, 2009).

• In the mental health field, professionals frequently encounter clients who suffer from symptoms of PGD after a loss (Jordan & Litz, 2014).

• Research shows that displaying a mindful and compassionate presence helps moderate long-term negative psychiatric symptoms of a traumatic loss (Walsh, 2007).

• Mindfulness skills may also create a strong professional relationship with a client, which is a source of support, validation, and understanding (Turner, 2009).
Cross-Cultural Reference

• The social work field places an emphasis on cultural competence and social diversity, meaning that professionals should obtain information and an understanding of clients’ needs regarding influences of race, ethnicity, and religion (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2008).

• Integrative mind-body-spirit modalities are congruent with the healing methods practiced by many racial-ethnic groups in the United States and this contributes to culturally competent practice (Raheim & Lu, 2014).

• Providing an approach rooted in Eastern cultures in addition to the mainstream Western modalities will result in a more inclusive program.

• Additionally, to meet the needs of the target population in Los Angeles County, yoga therapy classes will also be held in Spanish.
Methods

• The target population for this short-term yoga therapy program will consist of bereaved adults, 18 years and older, who are receiving individual or group therapy at PTCH, located in Los Angeles County, California

• Potential funding sources were explored at the city, county, state, and national levels through online databases

• The Give Back Yoga Foundation was found to be the most appropriate potential founder for the proposed program
Methods Continued

• A needs assessment was conducted by evaluating current literature and consultation of bereavement service providers.

• The Projected Budget Range and Categories: The estimated budget for the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Training Workshop is $87,582.00. The funding will include 1 MSW Program Director, 1 Yoga Instructor, and Indirect and direct program costs. The program will be offered eight times per year for the first year.
Grant Proposal

• **Program Summary:** A Mindfulness-Based will provide yoga techniques to treat grief in order to enhance the psychological and physical health of participants, and increase healthy coping skills. Stress and burnout experienced by the bereaved. This 60 minute class will be held in a series 8 times a year at Providence Trinity Care Hospice.

• **Population Served:** The target population for the Mindfulness-Based Yoga class are adults who reside in Los Angeles County and have experienced the loss of a loved one.

• **Sustainability:** The proposed yoga therapy class will be evaluated for its efficacy and upon positive outcomes in the first year, will be continued through funding.
Grant Proposal

• **Program Objectives:** The four goals set for this program are to: (1) decrease grief related feelings of loss among bereaved adults who are experiencing grief symptoms, (2) enhance the psychological well-being of the participants who have experienced the loss of a significant loved one, (3) increase the overall physical health of participants who may have suffered actual or psychosomatic symptoms of grief, and (4) increase healthy coping skills that will assist bereaved adults with the adjustment to the loss of their loved one.

• **Program Evaluation:** Two evidence based measures will administered: the Inventory of Complicated Grief and Short-Form Health Survey to participants as pre and post tests (Prigerson et al., 1995; Ware & Sherbourne, 1992).
Lessons Learned

• Analysis of numerous studies indicates that grief does not respond to the same treatment methods that are effective in alleviating depression.

• The benefits of complementary and alternative methods are twofold: they can improve the well-being of the client and the clinician, especially in an field such as grief that can cause burnout among clinicians.

• The competition for grant funding is competitive as the number of nonprofits in LA County had doubled since 1995 (The Nonprofit Partnership, 2015).
References