

Grieving a Lost Childhood: *Somatic Interventions & Mindfulness Techniques for intangible losses*

Dr Janina Fisher

Video Course

CPD hours: 6 / CE credits: N/A

Price: £145



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Grief is complicated and there is no “right” way to experience it.

Our societal norms are geared towards primarily only recognising tangible losses caused by catastrophic events including war, natural disaster, or death of a loved one. These are obvious losses that we can *see*. The loss of a secure and loving childhood, the absence of being safe and cherished, are not obvious, tangible losses. These abstract losses then, very often, go unrecognised and unacknowledged.

Yet, as therapists, we know the cost to our clients when these intangible losses are never acknowledged or comforted.

- Because grief is such a painful emotion, the universal instinct of all human beings is to avoid feelings of sorrow. That **leaves our clients angry at the failure of their attachment figures or angry at themselves for not being good enough to be loved, unable to resolve their grief because it is too frightening to ‘go there.’**
- In addition, such anger can reflect as hostility, physical / emotional aggression, lack of self-worth and relationship / behavioural difficulties in clinical manifestations.
- Often the clients are grieving for an intangible loss (like the loss of safety) without being fully aware of what that loss is. Sometimes, the lack of acknowledgement of this loss from parents/caregivers is even more devastating for the clients than the actual loss itself
- Addressing this **wide gamut of psychological manifestations requires us to get to the root of the presenting challenge and assist the grieving process for ‘lost’ childhoods.** By validating their intangible, abstract, profound loss and allowing them to grieve, we can help support trauma recovery of our clients.



But as psychotherapists and counsellors, how do we help our clients grieve when they fear sadness or re-opening the wounds of childhood?

At this intellectually challenging and therapeutically oriented two-evening online webinar with globally acclaimed trauma specialist Dr Janina Fisher, we will address the special challenges involved in grieving early losses of safety, welcome, comfort, and kindness. Using clinical vignettes, we will first examine how **never feeling important or cherished or delighted in, is a different kind of loss than the socially recognized loss of a parent or partner, further complicating bereavement.**

In addition, the early loss of safety results in diminished capacity to tolerate emotional pain, making it harder to grieve without getting overwhelmed by it. We will then consider how can we help our clients to feel less frightened of their grief and better able to acknowledge it.

Specifically, we will consider how a mindfulness-based approach to grief and loss is gentle and less anxiety-causing than other approaches. We can **use mindfulness to help clients learn to tolerate an optimal level of sadness, not too much that it becomes overwhelming and not so little that it results in avoidance.** *Mindful grieving* helps us befriend grief and diminishes the sense of aloneness so often felt by those grieving emotional losses of childhood by themselves. Through case studies, delegates will be introduced to step-by-step somatic approaches for letting sadness arise and then flow through our clients' minds and bodies, creating release and healing. We can help our clients to transform and heal the grief they carry and find the emotional resilience they need to move on.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe the physical and emotional consequences of intangible loss, especially the loss of childhood
- Identify three variables associated with the complicated bereavement of intangible losses
- Summarize the practice of *mindful grieving*
- **Identify two somatic interventions for regulating the intensity of grief**
- Integrate our painful past experience/loss into our current reality so we can move towards a more fulfilling life

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About the speaker

Janina Fisher, Ph.D. is a licensed clinical psychologist in private practice; Assistant Educational Director of the Sensorimotor Psychotherapy Institute; an EMDRIA Approved Consultant and Credit Provider; former president of the New England Society for the Treatment of Trauma and Dissociation; and a former instructor, Harvard Medical School. An international writer and lecturer on the treatment of trauma, she is the co-author with Pat Ogden of *Sensorimotor Psychotherapy: Interventions for Attachment and Trauma* and author of *Healing the Fragmented Selves of Trauma Survivors: Overcoming Self-Alienation* and *Transforming the Living Legacy of Trauma*. Dr Fisher lectures and teaches nationally and internationally on topics related to the integration of the neurobiological research and newer trauma treatment paradigms into traditional therapeutic modalities. For more information, go to www.janinafisher.com.

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