

Completing the Unfinished Goodbye: *Releasing Grief Held in the Body*

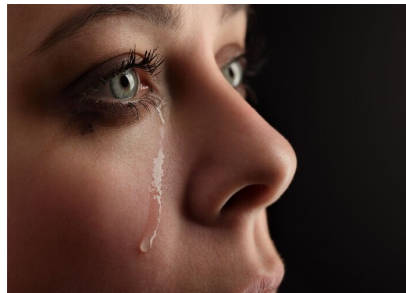
An online webinar over 2 evenings with
Jacquie Compton

Zoom Webinar
22 & 23 April 2026, Wednesday & Thursday

Times on both days:

6:00 pm – 9:00 pm, London UK
1:00 pm – 4:00 pm, New York, USA

CPD hours: 6 / CE credits: N/A



Location: Online streaming only
(all our webinar tickets now include complimentary access to a video recorded version for 1 year)

"It's been seven years since her sister died, but Leah (not her real name) still can't bring herself to enter her childhood home. Each time she drives near it, her chest tightens, her vision narrows, and her stomach turns. She tells her therapist she's 'over it' — and yet she avoids birthdays, skips family gatherings, and wakes most mornings with an unnamed ache in her ribs. No tears. No words. Just a body that won't stop bracing."

Her therapist wonders: Is this trauma, grief, or both? Should they encourage emotional expression — or protect her from overwhelm? When grief lives in the body, not the story, how do we learn to listen?

Why This Training Fills a Critical Gap

Most grief interventions fail because they target the wrong system. While traditional approaches focus on cognitive reframing or emotional catharsis, recent neuroscience reveals that grief is fundamentally a **somatic phenomenon** — encoded in the autonomic nervous system as dysregulation, in the musculature as chronic tension, and in the implicit memory networks as embodied rupture (Porges, 2011; van der Kolk, 2014).

When clients like Leah say they're "over it" while their bodies remain frozen in protective vigilance, they're revealing a profound therapeutic gap: **the disconnect between narrative recovery and nervous system integration**.

This training offers something radically different — a clinically sophisticated, trauma-informed approach that meets grief where it actually lives: in the rhythms, gestures, and implicit memories held within the body's



intelligence. Drawing on sensorimotor psychotherapy principles, polyvagal theory, and embodied art-based practice, trauma therapist Jacquie Compton guides us beyond the limitations of talk therapy into the transformative terrain of somatic grief work.

This isn't another training about the stages of grief. This is about becoming clinicians who can **attune to grief's organic movements** — practitioners skilled in the delicate art of titration, presence, and embodied witness that allows healing to unfold at the pace the nervous system can integrate.

What Makes This Approach Distinctive

The Somatic Difference

While conventional grief therapy often rushes toward resolution, this approach recognises that **grief has its own timeline, rhythm, and intelligence**. Research in affective neuroscience demonstrates that unprocessed grief creates lasting changes in stress response systems, immune function, and neural connectivity (Shear, 2012; O'Connor et al., 2019). We learn to work *with* these embodied responses rather than against them.

The Integration of Art and Soma

Art-based interventions access the right-brain processing networks where trauma and grief are often stored below the threshold of language (Malchiodi, 2020). Combined with somatic awareness, creative expression becomes a pathway for **symbolic completion** — allowing clients to process what cannot be spoken but must be felt, witnessed, and integrated.

The Trauma-Informed Foundation

This training recognises that grief and trauma are intimately interwoven. We learn to differentiate between adaptive grief responses and trauma-based dysregulation, applying the precision of window-of-tolerance work to ensure that grief processing remains **safely embodied rather than retraumatising**.

What We Will Explore

Across two immersive evenings, Jacquie guides us through a sophisticated curriculum that weaves together cutting-edge neuroscience, somatic practice, and clinical artistry. Each session combines theoretical grounding with experiential learning, ensuring participants develop both conceptual understanding and embodied skill.

Module One: Gathering Ground — The Neurobiology of Embodied Grief

In this foundational session, we establish the theoretical framework and practical skills needed to approach grief as a **relational and somatic process**. We explore:

- **Redefining grief through a polyvagal lens:** Understanding how loss impacts autonomic regulation and why traditional cognitive approaches often miss the mark
- **Somatic tracking as clinical intervention:** Developing precision in reading the body's grief signatures — the micro-expressions, postural shifts, and breathing patterns that reveal the nervous system's state
- **Art-based safety building:** Learning how creative expression can serve as both assessment tool and therapeutic intervention, allowing clients to externalize overwhelming internal states
- **The neuroscience of attachment and loss:** Examining how grief represents a fundamental challenge to our neurobiological systems of connection and co-regulation



- **Cultural somatics:** Exploring how internalized beliefs about grief expression create embodied patterns of suppression, and how to work therapeutically with these conditioned responses
- **Building somatic resources:** Practical interventions for nervous system regulation that support grief tolerance without bypassing the essential work of feeling

Module Two: Moving with the Rhythms — Advanced Somatic Interventions

With safety and awareness established, we move into the sophisticated clinical skills needed to support grief's organic unfolding. This session focuses on:

- **Titration and oscillation mastery:** The core principles that allow clients to process grief in tolerable doses while building capacity for greater intensity over time
- **Differentiating grief states:** Learning to distinguish between trauma-based shutdown, adaptive grief responses, and complicated grief reactions — and tailoring interventions accordingly
- **Somatic inquiry techniques:** Developing skill in the gentle art of inviting the body's wisdom — following impulses, tracking sensations, and supporting the natural movements of grief
- **Symbolic completion through embodied ritual:** Using art-making and somatic practices to support the completion of interrupted attachment bonds and unfinished emotional business
- **The neurobiology of co-regulation in grief work:** Understanding how therapeutic presence becomes a nervous system resource that supports integration and healing
- **Solitude versus isolation:** Helping clients navigate the essential balance between healthy withdrawal and problematic disconnection during grief processes
- **Cultivating therapeutic presence:** Developing the embodied awareness and regulated nervous system that allows clinicians to hold space for grief's intensity without rescuing or overwhelming

What You Will Develop

By the end of this training, you will possess a sophisticated toolkit for working with grief that integrates the latest neuroscience with time-tested somatic wisdom. Specifically, you will:

Assessment and Formulation Skills:

- ✓ Recognise the somatic signatures of grief versus trauma, and assess for nervous system dysregulation patterns specific to loss and attachment disruption
- ✓ Identify when grief processing is within therapeutic range versus when trauma-informed stabilisation is needed first

Clinical Intervention Skills:

- ✓ Apply titration principles to grief work, ensuring clients remain within their window of tolerance while still engaging meaningfully with their loss
- ✓ Use somatic inquiry to invite the body's natural grief movements — tremors, gestures, stillness, sound — supporting organic processing
- ✓ Integrate art-based interventions that access preverbal dimensions of grief, supporting symbolic expression and completion

Advanced Therapeutic Skills:



- ✓ Differentiate between various forms of disconnection (emotional numbing, dissociation, healthy withdrawal) and respond with precision
- ✓ Support clients in developing a **lifelong relationship with grief** that honours loss while cultivating resilience and meaning
- ✓ Maintain therapeutic presence during intense grief states, using your own nervous system as a co-regulating resource

About the Trainer

Jacque Compton (she/they) is an RP, RCAT, trauma therapist, clinical educator, and SPI-approved consultant with over 18 years of experience in embodied approaches to healing. A faculty member at the Toronto Art Therapy Institute and a trainer with the Sensorimotor Psychotherapy Institute, Jacquie is recognised for her integration of somatic psychology, art therapy, and anti-oppressive practice.

Her clinical work is grounded in the understanding that healing happens not through interpretation but through **restoration of the body's capacity for regulation, connection, and meaning-making**. To study with Jacquie is to be invited into a different tempo of therapeutic work — one where grief is not treated as pathology to be resolved, but as sacred territory to be honoured.

Who Should Attend

This training is designed for **experienced mental health professionals** seeking to deepen their capacity to work with grief from an embodied, trauma-informed perspective. It will particularly benefit:

- Trauma therapists wanting to expand their grief-specific skills
- Art therapists seeking to integrate somatic approaches
- Clinicians working with complex grief, childhood loss, or attachment trauma
- Practitioners interested in cutting-edge applications of polyvagal theory and embodied healing

Both seasoned grief specialists and those newly encountering grief work in their practice will find practical, immediately applicable skills.

Join Us in This Essential Work

Grief is not something we complete. It is something we honour. In this training, we learn not only how to support clients in grief, but how to listen — through presence, through the body, and through the small gestures that allow healing to unfold.

In a field often focused on symptom reduction, this training offers something more profound: the skills to support transformation through embodied presence and the wisdom that emerges when we learn to move with grief rather than against it.

"The embodiment of love also holds within it the landscapes of loss." — Jacquie Compton

About the speaker

Jacque Compton (she/they), RP, RCAT, is a trauma therapist, educator, clinical consultant, and poet. She is an art therapist, a certified advanced practitioner in Sensorimotor Psychotherapy, and an SPI-approved clinical consultant.



Jacque is a faculty member and clinical supervisor at the Toronto Art Therapy Institute, where she teaches courses on trauma-informed practice, embodiment, anti-oppressive practice, and cultural humility in art therapy. She is also a trainer with the Sensorimotor Psychotherapy Institute.

With over 18 years of clinical experience, Jacque continues to develop an embodied, trauma-focused practice that integrates art-based and somatic approaches. Her work is deeply rooted in anti-oppressive, anti-racist, decolonizing, feminist, and trauma-informed praxis.

She believes in the embodiment of practice beyond the therapeutic relationship, and invites others to experience the beauty of being in relationship — with themselves, with others, and with the world around them — through the wisdom of the body.

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