



## Latest SSWLHC News



On December 8th, **Representative Keri Ingle** spoke to SSWLHC members about her journey from being a practicing Licensed Master Social Worker in child welfare, hospital, and mental health care to a democratic representative for District 35 in the Missouri House of Representatives. To see the full presentation [click here](#).

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## The Leadership Institute

21 attendees graduated from the recently held SSWLHC 21st Leadership Institute! The LI took place from December 10-11, 2021 and attendees earned 11.5 CEU's.

Objectives of the Leadership institute are:

- Appreciate, demonstrate, and communicate the unique role of social work leaders and leadership.
- Identify assumptions about leadership, understand personal leadership style and competencies.
- Identify core leadership competencies and articulate ways to leverage them to achieve specific goals.

**SIGN UP NOW**



**Sign up for the  
SSWLHC  
newsletter here.**

## What LI participants are saying...

"I really enjoyed this presentation, facilitators did such a great job of allowing valuable conversations, creating a safe place, and valuing everyone's experiences and opinion."

"Excellent The instructors were very knowledgeable and supportive".training!

"Everyone's participation and engagement were so very refreshing!

*Each month we will focus on a topic or issue that relates to Health Social Work. We welcome your suggestions for topics!*

Interested in hosting your own Leadership Institute? Contact SSWLHC at [info@sswlhc.org](mailto:info@sswlhc.org).

# Upcoming SSWLHC Events, Webinars

## January 2022

**Jan. 13th from 3-4pm:** Join members of the **Texas SSWLHC Chapter** for: Virtual Social Hour in Texas!

Discussion will include:

- National society membership benefits
- Reintroduction of the SSWLHC Texas chapter
- Texas chapter committee member recruitment and initiatives



*To register for any of the above, and for a full listing of all available and on demand Webinars and educational materials, please go to the website [here](#).*

## SSWLHC Vision:

To be the leading professional organization for social workers in healthcare.

## Issue Focus: Professional Grief

**“The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet.”**

Remen. Kitchen Table Wisdom. 1996.

The holiday season often brings with it sadness, grief, anxiety and depression. As clinicians, we help our clients navigate these difficult emotions during this time. We also need to pay attention to our own feelings of grief and loss. For many, professional grief is not seen as something that is experienced and impacts our work. For instance:



- Professional grief is often hidden and its expression unsanctioned.
- It is generally internalized and unexpressed; it has no natural outlet; and work demands may quickly overshadow the loss.

But, our work must be done through a personal connection. We are all vulnerable to the helplessness that accompanies death.[1]

Papadatou[2] outlined the results of some research on this topic in 2000 including the following spoken and unspoken rules:

- Health professionals are expected to invest in and develop close relationships with their patients and families.
- Health professionals are expected to express their grief in anticipation of, at the time of, and after the death of their patient.
- The expression of grief must be tempered and controlled.
- Grief must never be so intense as to impair clinical judgement or result in an emotional breakdown.
- The grief of professionals must never exceed that of families.
- Other patients and families should never know you are grieving or experience your mourning.
- Support of your colleagues is expected but must only occur in specific gathering places.

(continued on page 4)

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“With proper training and support, we shall find that repeated griefs, far from undermining our humanity and our care, enable us to cope more confidently and more sensitively with each succeeding loss.” Parkes 1987[4]

”

## Issue Focus: Professional Grief (con't)

As social workers, we know we are touched by the experience of grief and loss of others. We are aware that these experiences may mirror important losses we may have experienced personally; losses may reflect losses we may face in the future; and existential anxiety – one's own personal death awareness that may be elicited through pt stories (especially true when we share characteristics) [3].

We also may need reminding of successful strategies to acknowledge, sanction and accept this expectable consequence of difficult work. That includes:

- Know your personal limitations.
- Practice active grieving (allowing yourself to feel the sadness and other feelings) Don't feel guilty if you don't grieve the same way for each death.
- Reach out for help, know where your support comes from.
- Institute guidelines in your workplace to normalize grief reactions and rituals:
- Set aside times to talk about the deaths
- Establish your own rituals in your practice
- Support each other in their grief
- Do not visit your grief upon the grieving family.

[Refuge in Grief](#) website has a lot of resources for someone who is grieving, friends of someone grieving and more.



1. Attilio, T., Otis-Green, S., Oxford Textbook of Palliative Social Work. Vol. 1. 2011: Oxford Press.
2. Papadatou, D., A Proposed Model of Health Professionals' Grieving Process. OMEGA - Journal of Death and Dying, 2000. 41(1): p. 59-77.
3. Worden, J.W., Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy. Fourth Edition ed. 2009: Springer Publishing Co.
4. Parkes, C.M.B.S.o.g.i.a.l., Bereavement: Studies of grief in adult life. 2nd ed. 1987, Madison, Conn: International Universities Press.

# Resources for Health Social Workers

Applegate, J. (2010). The holding environment: An organizing metaphor for social work theory and practice. *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, 68(1).

Gerbino, S., Raymer, M. (2011). Holding On and Letting Go: The Red Thread of adult bereavement. In T. Altilio, Otis-Green, S. (Ed.), *Palliative Social Work*. Oxford Textbook.

Stroebe, M., & Schut, H. (2010). The dual process model of coping with bereavement: a decade on. *Omega (Westport)*, 61(4), 273-289. <https://doi.org/10.2190/OM.61.4.b>

## More Good Articles

Barbara Muskat, Shelley L. Craig & Biju Mathai (2017) Complex families, the social determinants of health and psychosocial interventions: Deconstruction of a day in the life of hospital social workers, *Social Work in Health Care*, 56:8, 765-778, DOI: 10.1080/00981389.2017.1339761

Abigail M. Ross, Samantha Schneider, Yudy F. Muneton-Castano, Adolfo Al Caldas & Elizabeth R. Boskey (2021) "You never stop being a social worker:" Experiences of pediatric hospital social workers during the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, *Social Work in Health Care*, 60:1, 8-29, DOI: 10.1080/00981389.2021.1885565

Helena Ross, Ryan Dritz, Barbara Morano, Sara Lubetsky, Pamela Saenger, Audrey Seligman & Katherine A. Ornstein (2021) The unique role of the social worker within the Hospital at Home care delivery team, *Social Work in Health Care*, 60:4, 354-368, DOI: 10.1080/00981389.2021.1894308



## Journals of interest

HEALTH & SOCIAL WORK  
SOCIAL WORK IN HEALTH CARE  
SOCIAL WORK IN PUBLIC HEALTH  
JOURNAL OF INTERPROFESSIONAL CARE

# SSWLHC Member Benefits

There are so many reasons to be a SSWLHC member. Here are just a few:

Networking with other health social workers

Access to the latest news for Health Social Workers!

Mentorship Program

Annual SSWLHC Educational Conference Discount

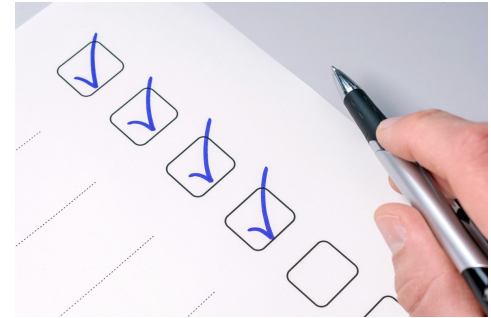
The Leadership Institute

Discount on Educational Materials and Webinars

Discount on APHSW-C Certification Exam Fee

Access to SSWLHC Career Center

**THE professional organization for Health Social Workers**



- Sign up to be a Member
- Participate on a Committee
- Become a Mentor or Mentee

email us at  
[info@sswlhc.org](mailto:info@sswlhc.org)  
for more  
information!

