

The Minnesota Psychological Association cosponsors Friday Forums with the Metropolitan State University Psychology Department

FRIDAY FORUM

Friday, July 29, 2022

The Myth of Closure: Ambiguous Loss in a Time of Pandemic and Change

Pauline Boss, Ph.D., MPA Scholar Lecturer

Program:

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

*Intermediate: Assumes post-doctoral education status
and general familiarity with topic.*

Location:

Registrants will receive a Zoom link to access the webinar online.

Attendees are encouraged to join the webinar five to ten minutes prior to the start.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM:

This program qualifies for 3.0 continuing education credits.

Dr. Boss, who coined the term ambiguous loss in the 1970s, describes it as a loss that remains unclear and unverified, and thus, without resolution. Not knowing the whereabouts of a loved one, or whether they are alive or dead, as well as the confusion about loss of interaction during the pandemic, tends to freeze grief, and lead to feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, anger, anxiety, and isolation. Grief therapy does not work because those left behind understandably will not acknowledge that death has occurred. During the pandemic, losses have skyrocketed so this is now a time of massive unresolved grief. How do we assess this situation? It requires both/and thinking, plus clinical strategies to help people cope with the ambiguity and uncertainty surrounding their losses. Dr. Boss describes individual and family symptoms, plus six non-recursive guidelines for treatment and intervention that have been applied and tested across cultures. Taking into account cultural differences, these guidelines for coping with ambiguous loss are based on meaning, mastery, identity, ambivalence, attachment, and new hope. She also describes how we, as professionals, can increase our own tolerance for ambiguity. There will be ample time for questions and answers.

Participants will be able to:

1. Define and describe ambiguous loss, its two types, its relational assumption, its effects, and how it differs from ordinary loss.
2. Recognize what ambiguous loss is not and why closure is a myth with ambiguous loss, and perhaps to a lesser extent, with the clear loss of death.

3. Apply the six guidelines to treat individuals and families with different kinds of ambiguous loss—e.g., catastrophic: terminal illness, dementia, the disappeared or missing; more common: adoption, foster care, divorce.

ABOUT THE PRESENTER:

Pauline Boss, Ph.D., received her Ph.D. in Child Development and Family Studies with a minor in Family Therapy from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dr. Boss, Professor Emeritus, University of Minnesota, is a Fellow in the American Psychological Association and the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, and a former president of the National Council on Family Relations. She practiced family therapy for over 40 years. With her groundbreaking work in research and practice, Dr. Boss coined the term ambiguous loss in the 1970s and since then, developed and tested the theory of ambiguous loss, a guide for working with families of the missing, physically or psychologically. She summarized this research and clinical work in her widely acclaimed book *Ambiguous Loss: Learning to Live with Unresolved Grief* (Harvard University Press, 2000). Her other books include *Loss, Trauma, and Resilience* (W. W. Norton, 2006), *Loving Someone Who Has Dementia* (Jossey-Bass, 2011,) and *The Myth of Closure: Ambiguous Loss in a Time of Pandemic and Change* (W. W. Norton, 2022). For more information about her writings and the ambiguous loss online training program, see www.ambiguousloss.com.

The speaker has indicated the following conflict of interest:

Dr. Boss' book, *The Myth of Closure: Ambiguous Loss in a Time of Pandemic and Change* (W. W. Norton), was published in 2022.

PLEASE NOTE: You must attend the full program to get continuing education credit for the event.

About First Friday Forums:

The Minnesota Psychological Association is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. The Minnesota Psychological Association maintains responsibility for this program and its content.

CONFIRMATION/CANCELLATION: You will receive an emailed confirmation of your registration. You will be notified by mail, e-mail or telephone if your selection is filled or cancelled.

REFUND POLICY: A 100% refund will be made if the event is cancelled. Refunds, less a \$5 handling fee, will be given if a written cancellation is received at least two working days before the scheduled program begins. No refund or transfer is given the day of the program.



MPA Friday Forum • July 29, 2022

Name: _____ Degree: _____ Licensure: _____

Institution/Agency: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip _____ Please check: Home Work

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____ Please check: Home Work Fax: _____

Registration is available until the event begins.

Fee: MPA member: **\$60** Non-member: **\$95** Student: **\$15** Retired-member: **\$30** (No CE Credit)*

**Retired members have the option to pay the regular member rate to receive CE credit or take advantage of the discounted price with no CE.*

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Check (made payable to MPA) Visa MC American Express

All credit card fields are required

Card Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____ Security Code: _____

Cardholder Name (print): _____

Cardholder Signature: _____

Credit card billing address: Same as above

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Please do not email credit card information. Fax or mail your registration form to protect this information.

or Register online @ www.mnpsych.org

Return To:
Minnesota Psychological Association

4248 Park Glen Road
Minneapolis, MN 55416
P: 952-928-4657 • F: 952-929-1318



The Minnesota Psychological Association is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. The Minnesota Psychological Association maintains responsibility for this program and its content.

