



Addressing Empathy Fatigue, Managing Grief for Healthcare Professionals

COURSE SYLLABUS

2025

Course Facilitator: Jocelyn Brown, RN, MN

Course Authors: Dr. Mary Jane Esplen, Jocelyn Brown

Course Offering: de Souza Institute

Course Format: eLearning and Video Conferencing

Contact Information: jocelynebrown@hotmail.com

Registration: Required

A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on teaching health care professionals how to recognize and assess the impact of grief and loss on their practice and apply effective communication and coping mechanisms to reduce the risk of empathy fatigue.

The main mechanisms to facilitate learning in this course will entail eLearning and six 1.5 hour weekly real time videoconference sessions. Lectures and case-based interactive learning will let participants explore a variety of key themes.

Domain of Practice	Developing Professional practice and Leadership
Learning Hours	13.0 hours
de Souza Credit	0.25 credits

B. COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Describe the types of grief experiences and their specific impacts on health care professionals;
2. Apply tools for self-assessment to recognize indicators signaling difficulties in coping and managing grief and loss;
3. Plan communication strategies to facilitate coping and build support systems to facilitate work life balance.

C. MODE OF LEARNING

The main mechanisms to facilitate learning in this course will entail eLearning and six 1.5-hour live videoconference sessions.

eLearning

eLearning, offered through the de Souza eLearning center, will cover the following activities: the application of knowledge, self-directed reading assignments, and discussion forum participation. The eLearning environment fosters a self-directed approach for participants to progress through the modules at a convenient time each week, either at home or work. The course timetable on page 4 of the course syllabus outlines weekly expectations for participants.

- Readings are provided each week, intended for participants to prepare for the weekly videoconference sessions around the key content areas.

- Discussion forum(s) via the eLearning platform is intended to engage all participants enrolled in the course. This is a form of learning that really depends on the active participation of the group. Online discussions regarding module content, readings or activities will enhance knowledge acquisition, understanding, and sharing. It is encouraged that you share experiences, ideas or resources from clinical practice with others in the course.
- Technical support will be provided throughout the course.

Videoconference Sessions

This course includes weekly 1.5-hour videoconference sessions, during which there will be lecture as well as case based interactive learning through the live videoconferencing system. The videoconference sessions will typically occur between 5:00pm to 6:30pm EST.

D. MODES OF EVALUATION

As part of the evaluation process and to receive a certificate of completion you are required to complete the following:

Before the start of the course, you need to complete:

- A baseline evaluation: this survey assesses your knowledge, attitude, confidence, and learning methods before you begin the course.
- A case study of a clinical scenario on the discussion forum with the following content – "describe a case where the death of a patient (remove any patient identifying info) had significant impact on you". This description is to be posted to the eLearning centre during the first two weeks of the course.

Videoconference session requirements:

- You will be required to attend and actively participate in 4 out of 6 videoconferences.
- Weekly required readings and discussion forum postings: It is expected that you will participate in a meaningful way to demonstrate learning through the weekly collaborative forum discussions. There will be a total of 5 discussion forums.

After the last videoconference session (session six), you need to complete:

- Assignment: submit an assignment at the end of the course on three strategies to promote self-care and a supportive environment and how these strategies might be helpful when applied to your case study submitted at the beginning of the course.
- Post evaluation: At the end of the course, you will be required to complete a post course evaluation. This will be facilitated electronically through eLearning.

When you have successfully met all the above requirements, you will receive 13 learning hours as well as credit towards obtaining your de Souza designation. An email will be sent to you containing instructions on how to download your certificate of completion via your "My account".

E. TIME REQUIREMENT AND EXPECTATIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

To be successful in completing this course, you are encouraged to set aside 2 to 3 hours each week to participate in live sessions and complete weekly readings and discussion form postings. The total learning hours for this course is **13 hours**.

Attendance policy

Participants are expected to engage in **four out of six** sessions in order to receive a certificate of completion and be able to use this course towards a de Souza designation.

Pre-reading and slides will be provided in advance of each session so that participants may adequately plan their study pace during this course. It is strongly recommended for participants not to plan a vacation during the course offering period. Emergency notice for absence will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Faculty members can be contacted by email anytime. For more information, please see the [Cancellations, Incomplete and No Show Policy](#).

F. FACILITATOR AVAILABILITY

The facilitator for this course will be responsible for answering questions related to the course content, guiding online discussion, leading video conferencing sessions, and be available for questions from participants throughout the course. The response time for an enquiry is within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours on the weekend. Technical support is available at support@desouzainstitute.com

G. COURSE TIMELINE

The following sections/modules are to be completed in sequential order.

Section/ Module	Topic	Date to complete session activities
Orientation	eLearning Center Orientation, baseline survey	Completion by the end of 1 st week
1	Introduction to Empathy Fatigue	Completion by the end of 1 st week
2	Personal Strategies for Healthcare Providers Deadline to post your case study	Completion by the end of 2 nd week
3	Models of Grief and Reflective Practice	Completion by the end of 3 rd week
4	Attachment Theory, Communication and Interpersonal Strategies	Completion by the end of 4 th week
5	Team and Organization Strategies	Completion by the end of 5 th week

6	Integrating Knowledge into Practice	Completion by the end of 6 th week
Post course tasks	Online submission of three self-care strategies Completion of post course evaluation	By course closing date, two weeks post course

H. FACILITATOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Jocelyn Brown, RN, BA, BScN, MN

Jocelyn completed her masters and undergraduate studies in nursing at the University of Toronto. She has worked as a pain and palliative care clinical nurse specialist at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre for the past 14 years. This role includes collaborating with the interdisciplinary team on acute care wards to develop patient's symptom management plans, discuss advance care planning, end of life care, goals of care and provide psychosocial support. She also works in the cancer pain clinic with patients that experience pain before, during or after their cancer treatments. She has been a nurse for over 18 years and loves providing a holistic approach for patients and families. She has done volunteer work with Camp Ooch, Young Adult Cancer Canada and Dr Jays Children's grief centre and all of these organizations hold a place in her heart. She recently published a book containing reflections on being a palliative care nurse titled, "Love & Loss", a collaboration with artist Ramune Luminaire. She is passionate about the idea of staying connected to creativity and how this can increase resilience, empathy and compassion.

Additional Information Regarding Learning at de Souza Institute

A. VIRTUAL LIBRARY

The de Souza Institute has a virtual library that can be accessed to those registered in this course or any other de Souza Institute continuing education program. This invaluable resource enables you to access over 1500 e-Journals, 200 e-books and 8 on-line databases such as CINHAL or Ovid-Medline. You can use the virtual library to access the required reading materials for your course. The virtual library can be accessed 24 hours a day at any location that has internet access using a login and password.

The direct link is <http://links.desouzainstitute.com/library>

B. TECHNICAL SUPPORT

eLearning Centre Orientation

If this is the first time you are taking a course offered by the de Souza Institute, please complete the eLearning Centre Orientation course (free of charge). The Orientation course is designed to introduce you to online learning and help you understand how to navigate through the de Souza Institute eLearning centre and courses.

de Souza Support

If you have questions about the content of a course please email your course facilitator. If you need assistance accessing or navigating the eLearning Centre, please refer to the eLearning Orientation course. If you have questions or have any general technical difficulties please contact support@desouzainstitute.com

C. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

[Academic Honesty and Copyright Policy](#)

[Cancellations, Incomplete and No Show Policy](#)

[Request for Accommodation Policy](#)

Course content and resources provided in this course are based on best practice guidelines from provincial and national bodies. Local protocols and policies vary among healthcare organizations. Please consult educators within your organization if you have specific questions related to local protocols and policies.