

1:15-2:45 pm:

SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL FOR GRIEF INTERVENTION: LESSONS FROM THE HISPANIC & LATINX COMMUNITIES



Mateo Gomez, Mdiv, CT
Forest Lawn Memorial Park
Glendale, CA

Level of Instruction: Beginner

Presentation Summary: Social media constitutes a powerful tool for death education because of its ability to reach geographically distant and socially disenfranchised populations, as well as cultural groups inherently hesitant regarding mental health intervention. Many members of the Hispanic and Latinx communities do not readily trust services offered through traditional mental health institutions. Yet social media programs in Spanish may be accessed more readily and receive validation through online responses and endorsements. The presenter will describe rich traditions within the Hispanic and Latinx cultures, including celebrations of the Day of the Death (Día de los Muertos), to illustrate how death and grief are understood within these populations. Using examples from bereavement programs sponsored by Forest Lawn Memorial-Parks & Mortuaries, the presenter will show how social media can be leveraged to reach an intended audience and generate participation in death education and grief support endeavors in a manner accepted by a large and growing number of followers.

Objectives: *Upon completion of this lecture, the participant will be able to:*

- Explain how Hispanic and Latinx populations can become disenfranchised from traditional mental health services such as grief counseling and support groups
- Describe collective expressions of grief in the Hispanic and Latinx cultures, such as the traditional celebration of Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead)
- Discuss the role social media can play in promoting awareness of healthy grieving and provision of grief support through online programs and resources as an alternative.

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SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL FOR GRIEF INTERVENTION: LESSONS FROM THE HISPANIC & LATINX COMMUNITIES (CONTINUED)



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References:

- Acevedo, N. (2020). *Latinos rely more on social media as a coronavirus lifeline, Nielsen report finds*. NBC News. Retrieved October 25, 2022, from <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/latinos-rely-more-social-media-coronavirus-lifeline-nielsen-report-finds-n1235968>
- Houben, L. M. (2012). *Counseling Hispanics through loss, grief, and bereavement: A guide for mental health professionals*. New York: Springer Publishing Company.
- Román, I. (October 29, 2020). *Day of the Dead: How Ancient Traditions Grew Into a Global Holiday*. HISTORY. Retrieved October 25, 2022, from <https://www.history.com/news/day-dead-dia-de-muertos-origins>